

Report



# Shaping Future Of Housing Stage 1 Engagement Report

Prepared for

The Gateshead Housing Company

Gateshead Council

By Wood Holmes

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# Shaping Future of Housing

## Stage 1 Engagement Analysis

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2011 Gateshead Council launched a review of how housing services should be provided in the Borough. Housing services such as carrying out repairs, improving homes and collecting rent are currently managed by The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC), an arms length management organisation (ALMO), wholly owned by Gateshead Council.
- 1.2 Wood Holmes was appointed as the Independent Tenants Advisor (ITA) for this process. The role involves providing independent advice to customers of The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC) regarding the review.
- 1.3 In addition to the above Wood Holmes have also independently analysed the responses to the engagement work undertaken by the Council and the Housing Company.

# 2 This Report

- 2.1 This report provides a summary analysis of the outcomes of the engagement to date. This is primarily drawn from the survey questionnaire provide by Gateshead Council and The Gateshead Housing Company, as well as the additional tenant engagement events carried out in Stage 1.

# 3 Overview of Engagement Activity

- 3.1 Since initiating the review, several tenant communication engagement activities have been undertaken by Gateshead MBC and The Gateshead Housing Company in order to understand the views of tenants.
- 3.2 In addition, as Independent Tenants Advisor Wood Holmes has also initiated additional engagement opportunities for tenants as well as providing oversight of the engagement activities undertaken by the Housing Company and Gateshead Council.
- 3.3 A sounding board of tenants and leaseholders has also been established to review proposed engagement materials, make suggestions for further engagement and provide tenant perspective on the process.
- 3.4 Table 1 below provides a summary of the engagement activities carried out in this initial stage of the review.

**Table 1: Summary of Tenant Engagement Activity, Gateshead Housing Review July – September 2011**

<b>Engagement Activities Undertaken by Gateshead MBC &amp; Gateshead Housing Company</b>	<b>Additional Engagement &amp; Oversight Activity Undertaken by Wood Holmes (Independent Tenants Advisor)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Website &amp; Newsletter notifications</li> <li>▪ Tenant Survey</li> <li>▪ Road show events at the six housing offices within the Borough</li> <li>▪ TGHC articles detailing the review in Home Choice, Gateshead News and Chronicle Extra</li> <li>▪ TGHC Twitter feed</li> <li>▪ TARA/SIG Liaison</li> <li>▪ Leaseholder Liaison</li> <li>▪ Tenants Sounding Board</li> <li>▪ Independent Tenant Group Liaison (attendance at TAG meeting)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ITA Website</li> <li>▪ ITA free phone line</li> <li>▪ ITA Twitter Feed</li> <li>▪ ITA Facebook page</li> <li>▪ TARA/SIG Liaison</li> <li>▪ Leaseholder Liaison</li> <li>▪ Tenants Sounding Board</li> <li>▪ Independent Tenant Group Liaison (attendance at TAG meeting)</li> <li>▪ Phone calls to introduce the review to TARA representatives</li> </ul>

## 4 Stage 1 Engagement Key Headlines

- 4.1 The engagement activity in this first stage has been designed to provide a broad picture of tenants' views regarding current service delivery; 'who does what' with regard to housing management, and to see whether tenants have particular views on how housing services should be delivered going forward.
- 4.2 This report provides an overview on these key areas based upon tenant engagement to date.

### Overall views on how the Service is currently delivered

- 4.3 The majority of tenants indicated that they are currently happy with the levels of service they received and generally thought that Housing service was 'good' and in some cases 'excellent'.
- 4.4 In order to generate a quantitative indicator of tenant satisfaction we have 'coded' the responses to this question based upon the tenants comments on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very negative comments and 5 being very positive comments.
- 4.5 Based on this exercise most comments fell within the range of 'satisfactory' to 'very good'. However, it should be noted that this is an indicator only, as the survey was not set up to generate hard quantitative statistics.

**Table: 2 Overall Satisfaction Levels**

Very poor	1%
Poor	8%
Satisfactory	28%
Good	41%
Very Good	22%
Don't Use the services	0%

- 4.6 Given the fairly even geographical spread of responses, we are able to examine satisfaction scores across the various geographical housing areas within Gateshead. This indicator would seem to point to most areas being fairly satisfied with the service they receive.

## Understanding of Who Delivers Those Services

- 4.7 The majority of tenants questioned understood who delivered the housing service and recognised the difference between the Housing Company and the Council. So for example, 61% understood that housing management was delivered by TGHC and 58% knew that the Council was responsible for grounds maintenance (for detailed figures see Appendix 1).
- 4.8 The majority of tenants also understood which *specific* housing related service was either provided by the Housing Company or the Council e.g. homelessness, rent setting etc

## Service Provision In The Future

- 4.9 The majority of those responding seemed to be in favour of continuing to deliver the housing service as it is today. The caveat to this would be; as long as there is no change to rent levels or service levels and that the tenants are still getting value for money.
- 4.10 There were some tenants who specifically advocated bringing the service back under the management of the Council along side others who were quite clear in saying that the service is best provided by a focussed organisation such as The Gateshead Housing Company.
- 4.11 These views, whilst expressed on some survey returns, were most clearly articulated at specific tenant engagement events. This is perhaps not surprising as the tenants at these groups are amongst the most active in terms of engaging with housing management issues in Gateshead (for details of specific events see Appendix 2)

## This Review & Tenant Involvement

- 4.12 Over 400 tenants have taken part in this stage of the review either through the survey or through attendance at events. In addition, there are several tenants and residents groups who are very actively engaged.
- 4.13 Several tenants expressed the importance of tenant involvement in this review process and the importance of reaching as many tenants as possible.
- 4.14 There were several comments on the purpose of the review and the need for further clarity around the whole process, specifically around finance, why the review is taking place, and what impacts a 'change' would bring to tenants. This would aid tenant engagement.

## 5 Recommendations

5.1 The feedback from tenants who participated in this initial engagement phase would indicate that the majority are happy with the way housing services are currently being provided. However, there is always room for improvement.

5.2 With regard to the subsequent stages of the review, we would make the following recommendations:

### Continuing Tenant Involvement

5.3 Several tenants expressed a view that tenant involvement in this process is vital and we would support that.

5.4 At present there are several channels in place by which tenants can become involved; these need to be maintained and resourced.

### Extending Tenant Involvement

5.5 Whilst a large number of tenants have taken the time to provide their views in the initial engagement stage either through the survey, events or through other channels, there is still a large proportion of the tenant body who are not engaged in this review.

5.6 It can't be assumed that every tenant will want to engage with the review; however, the process needs to ensure that it attempts to reach into the wider tenant body before a test of opinion on options is made.

5.7 Continuing efforts should be made to continually reach out to the tenants in a number of engagement media, always ensuring that any barriers to participation are removed.

5.8 Finally, further efforts will be made to make sure that tenants understand they have access to independent advice if they require it.

### Clarity in the Review

5.9 Tenants require clarity in the purpose of the review and in the options they are being presented with. They need to understand what each option means for them, in terms of rent levels, service provision and value for money.

5.10 In addition, tenants have expressed a desire to understand why certain options might have been discounted at this stage.

5.11 Further clarity around these issues going forward may help to raise tenant participation levels as tenants will be more able to engage with a process that is clear.

## 6 Appendix 1 - Detailed Survey Analysis

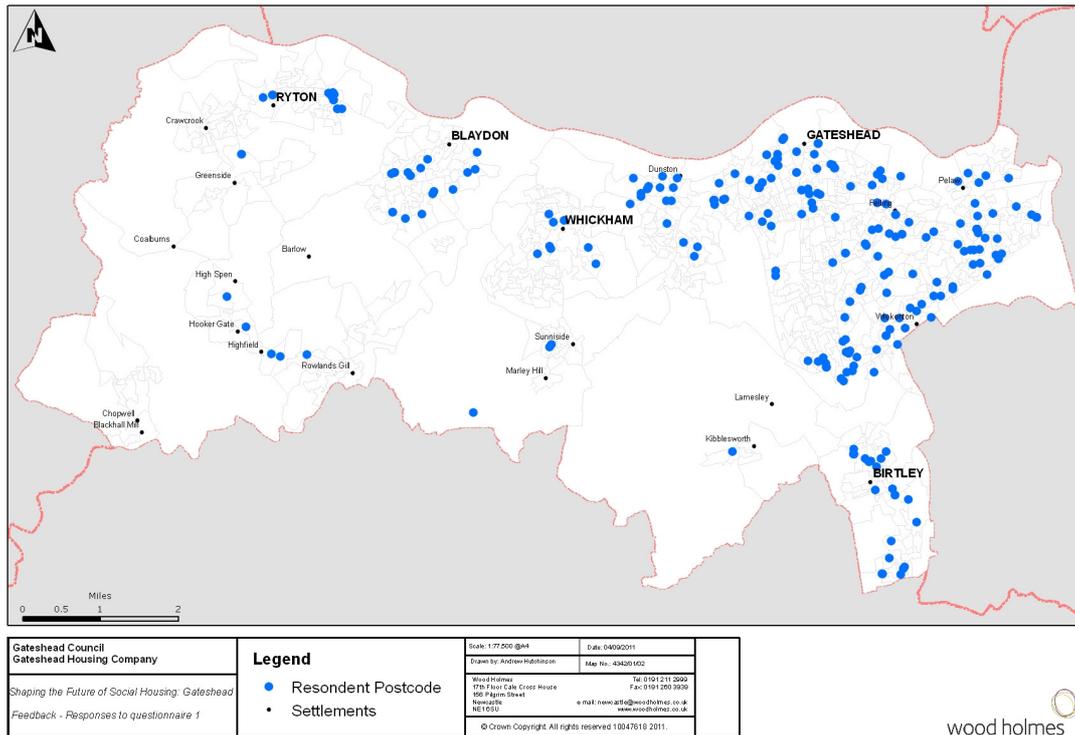
- 6.1 As detailed in the main body of the report a central component of this initial engagement was a survey distributed to the tenant body by Gateshead Council and The Gateshead Housing Company. A copy of this survey is attached in Appendix 3
- 6.2 The survey was not designed as a quantitative test of opinion rather as a means to broadly canvass tenant views and opinions.
- 6.3 The survey consisted of a series of primarily open ended qualitative questions, which probe the tenants' views on levels of service, satisfaction with service, as well as understanding of who provides the service. In addition, there were questions which asked about understanding of and interest in, the review process.
- 6.4 The open ended nature of the questions provides challenges in the analysis, especially in attempting to gauge overall satisfaction levels quantitatively. However, where appropriate, we have 'coded' the data in order to generate a quantitative indication of opinion.
- 6.5 We have grouped the questions into two broad areas for analysis; 'views on the service' and 'views about the housing review itself'.
- 6.6 In addition to the responses to the survey, several engagement events have been held by The Gateshead Housing Company and Gateshead Council. Where appropriate, we have fed output from these events into the analysis.

### Response Level

- 6.7 In total **298** surveys were returned and passed to us for analysis (although not every question was fully answered). The survey was not posted to all 21,000 tenants of the Housing Company at this stage and instead was distributed through Housing & Council Offices, at engagement events and via direct requests.

### Geographical Distribution of Responses

- 6.8 A geo-analysis of survey returns (where post codes were provided) was carried out. Figures 1 below provides an overview of geographical spread. The analysis indicates a good geographical spread of survey returns from across the Borough.



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## Experience of Services

6.9 As detailed above the open ended questions asked in the survey have been grouped into two primary categories: ‘**experience of services**’ and ‘**interest in the review**’. This section is focused on the former and provides a summary of the response to each question in turn.

### ***What is your experience of our repairs service? (thinking about how responsive the service is and the quality of the job completed)***

6.10 There were **more positive than negative** comments regarding the repairs service. Several tenants indicated that the service had improved over the past few years and were also complimentary about the Decent Homes programme. Tenants often stated that they had not had to call the repairs service for a while or ‘not since Decent Homes’ work was completed.

6.11 Positive and negative comments could broadly be divided in to three major themes of **workmanship**, **response time**, and **general customer interface**. Quite often tenants have a specific issue or event which happened to them which they recall which impacts their view of the service.

### ***What about your experience with our housing offices?***

- 6.12 Overall, tenant experience with the Housing Offices was **good** and tenants often stated that they found staff very helpful. In some cases specific members of staff were mentioned by name.
- 6.13 A large number of tenants said they had **no view** on the housing offices as they never needed to go to them. Many of these people indicated they paid by direct debit and had little experience of the offices.
- 6.14 Negative comments tended to focus on the following areas; **office environment & location, staff attitude**, and **general process issues**.

### ***What about your experience with our estate officers/caretakers/concierge/handyperson?***

- 6.15 Overall most people who were aware of their Estate Officer or Caretaker were **very pleased** with the service they provided. However, a large proportion of respondents had 'no experience' of the Estate Officer or had 'not used' the service.
- 6.16 Taking this theme on further, there was a large number of comments about the **visibility** of the EO's. At the most negative, some tenants questioned the value of EO's.

### ***What is your overall experience of the services we provide?***

- 6.17 The majority of tenants indicated that they are **currently happy with the levels of service** they received and generally thought that Housing service was 'good' and in some cases 'excellent'.
- 6.18 In order to generate a quantitative indicator of tenant satisfaction we have 'coded' the responses to this question based upon the tenants comments on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very negative comments and 5 being very positive comments.
- 6.19 Based on this exercise most comments fell within the range of 'satisfactory' to 'very good'. However, it should be noted that this is an indicator only as the survey was not set up to generate hard quantitative statistics.

**Table 2: Overall Satisfaction Levels**

Very poor	1%
Poor	8%
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Good	41%

Very Good	22%
Don't Use the services	0%

6.20 Given the fairly even geographical spread of responses, we are able to examine satisfaction scores across the various geographical areas within Gateshead. This indicator would seem to point to most areas being fairly satisfied with the service they receive.

**Table 3: Satisfaction Scores by Area**

	<b>Gateshead Central</b>	<b>Gateshead East</b>	<b>Gateshead Inner West</b>	<b>Gateshead South</b>	<b>Gateshead West</b>
Satisfaction with services: average score (1 = Very Poor, 5 = Very Good))	3.69	3.87	3.77	3.51	3.47

### ***What do you think we could do better?***

- 6.21 A large proportion of the tenants who responded said that **'nothing' could be improved or that 'everything was fine'** and they 'couldn't complain'. This corresponds with the generally high levels of satisfaction seen elsewhere.
- 6.22 Where tenants provided suggestions for improvement the following broad service areas emerge:
- 6.23 **Grass Cutting & Grounds Maintenance** – 'grass cutting' is mentioned several times, along with items such as 'weeding' and 'tree & hedge trimming'. Also in this area, there are many comments about leaf clearance (speed of), lack of salt or grit on road in winter, and general litter picking.
- 6.24 **Anti Social Behaviour** – where it was raised tenants generally wanted a quicker response to complaints of ASB, a general clamping down on ASB or in some cases action taken (housing removed, benefits stopped) against the perpetrators of ASB.
- 6.25 **Communication & Responsiveness** – there are several suggestions relating to communication which range from simply stating 'it should be better' through to specific ideas on improvements.
- 6.26 **Staff Attitude** – in a small minority of cases, a negative staff attitude seems to be a source of concern for tenants.
- 6.27 **Visibility** – tenants often commented about visibility (or perceived lack of) Estate Officers. This corresponds to the responses discussed earlier.

- 6.28 **Repairs & Maintenance** – there were several comments about how repairs and maintenance could be carried out more effectively. These included comments about giving tenants information on energy efficiency measures in their homes. Several comments related to the need for proactive maintenance and not just reactive repairs.
- 6.29 **Processes & Systems** – many comments related to this broad theme, whereby the systems or processes employed by either The Housing Company or Council have delayed or impacted upon customer service.
- 6.30 **Resident Involvement** – whilst generally very positive about the levels of tenant and resident involvement, there were several comments stressing that this needed to continue and that ‘listening’ and ‘learning’ from tenants was essential.

***Do you know who provides each of the following service?***

- 6.31 Tenants were also asked if they were aware of who provided the housing services they currently receive. The results table below breaks down the percentage awareness of respondents to which organisation provides which service.
- 6.32 In Table 4 below the services Gateshead Council provide are highlighted in red, and the services TGHC supply are highlighted in green. The number of respondents of each question are indicated in brackets after the service listed.

**Table 4: % of Tenants Recognising Who Provides A Specific Service.**

Service	GC	TGHC	Don't Know
Adaptations Service (245 respondents)	31%	15%	54%
Care Call (240)	49%	12%	39%
Caretakers (241)	26%	32%	42%
Customer Involvement (236)	17%	47%	36%
Estate services (241)	22%	52%	26%
Gardening services (241)	49%	22%	29%
Grounds maintenance (240)	58%	16%	26%
Homelessness (237)	37%	32%	31%
Housing management (240)	23%	61%	16%
Improvements (235)	24%	51%	25%
Leasehold services (236)	21%	34%	45%

Lettings policy (237)	29%	40%	31%
Letting properties (228)	19%	44%	37%
Neighbourhood relations (226)	31%	39%	30%
Rent collections (228)	30%	52%	18%
Rent setting (229)	45%	33%	22%
Repairs and maintenance (224)	30%	55%	15%
Right to buy (220)	45%	22%	33%

6.33 Most tenants who completed this part of the survey in appear to know who provides which housing service. There are areas where it is clearer than others. Clearly, some services are highly specialised and therefore it might be expected that those that use these would have more knowledge about them.

***What do you think are the benefits of the way services are currently provided?***

6.34 The major theme would appear to be that **things are fine and should be left as they are**. The caveat to this is; as long as there is no change to rent levels or service levels.

6.35 There were comments stating that the services should be provided by the Council and statements saying that the service is best provided by a focussed organisation such as The Gateshead Housing Company.

6.36 Finally, there was some confusion (see above) regarding who actually provides the services that people experience.

***How do you think services could be provided in a better way?***

6.37 This is a repeat of an earlier question, so the responses are very similar to those listed above.

## Housing Review

***Have you heard about this review & the appointment of an Independent Advisor?***

6.38 Table 5 below indicates respondent's awareness of the review, and respondent's awareness of the appointment of the Independent Advisor in the review.

**Table 5: Awareness of the Review**

	<b>Awareness of Review</b>	<b>Awareness of Independent Advisor</b>
Yes	108	70
No	150	175
N/A	40	53

***Do you have any other initial comments about this review?***

- 6.39 There were a range of responses to this question. A large proportion of respondents either had **no comment** or didn't answer question in. Several respondents were '**pleased**' that the review was underway and a significant number were absolutely clear about **the need for ongoing tenant involvement**.
- 6.40 Others stated views about whether the housing service should return to the Council or remain in The Gateshead Housing Company. Broadly speaking there were cases put for either option.
- 6.41 Finally, there were some negative comments which viewed this review process as 'a done deal' or 'just more words'.

***Do you want more information about this review?***

- 6.42 The majority of those responding to the survey said they would like to receive more information about the review.

***What type of additional information?***

- 6.43 Tenants who stated they wanted additional information had a range of very useful and positive ideas. These ranged from 'regular updates' about the process and 'specific information on meetings and drop in events' through to explanations about what the review is for, what exactly the options might be, and what the scrutiny of the review process is.

***Would you like to be invited to future events?***

- 6.44 Of the 298 surveys received 137 said 'yes' they would like to be invited to future events. 126 said 'No' they wouldn't like to invited to future events. 37 gave no answer (left blank).

## 7 Appendix 2 – Specific Engagement Events

### Road Show Events

- 7.1 GC/TGHC engaged with tenants through a series of ‘road show events’, which took place throughout August and September 2011 at the six housing offices within the Borough (see table below for specific dates). TGHC leafleted tenants to advertise these events, and provided local leafleting to tenants identifying their nearest housing office event. Within each housing office waiting area/communal area, the review, the ITA contact information and the dates of road show engagement was publicised on the plasma TV screens.
- 7.2 The majority of tenants who attended these road shows had general queries regarding the purpose of the review and were encouraged to fill in a survey form. This was either done at the event or at a later date.
- 7.3 The ITA was present at road show events to offer independent advice to any tenant who required this service.

Venue	Date(s)
Leam Lane housing office	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2011 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2011
Dunston activity centre	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2011 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2011
Blaydon housing office	5 <sup>th</sup> August 2011 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2011
Felling housing office	8 <sup>th</sup> August 2011 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2011
Wrekenton housing office	8 <sup>th</sup> August 2011 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2011
Birtley housing office	15 <sup>th</sup> August 2011 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2011
Gateshead Civic Centre (unmanned)	15 <sup>th</sup> August – 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2011

## ITA Additional Engagement

- 7.4 Beyond the engagement activity carried out by the Gateshead Housing Company and Gateshead Council, the ITA has carried out specific activity detailed below

### ITA Free phone & Email

- 7.5 An ITA free phone number (0800 023 4705) and an email address (info@ghoia.co.uk) have been established. This was advertised to tenants through the mail shots carried out by the Housing Company and on the survey forms.
- 7.6 In total, 8 tenants contacted the free phone line requesting independent advice. The requests centred around what the review was about, and how tenants have the ability to share their views. 5 callers requested a questionnaire was sent via post, as well as discussion around the subjects explained above. Two tenants requested additional information about the review and explained they would attend their nearest road show event to complete the questionnaire. One tenant requested additional information about what the review was, which was provided – the tenant did not wish to take any further part in the review.
- 7.7 In addition to the helpline and email address a website, twitter and facebook page were all established by the ITA. These channels have been used to advertise road show events and wider engagement with TARAs, SIGs, and leaseholders and the role of the ITA.

### Tenant And Resident Association (TARA) liaison

- 7.8 The ITA also set out to directly contact all of the relevant TARA representatives (chairperson/secretaries and treasurers) of the registered TARAs operating within the Borough via telephone to explain the project and the need for their input.
- 7.9 The ITA directly spoke to 25 tenants (who represented 23 TARA organisations). Those who remain un-contacted during this period were left voicemail messages. 2 registered contacts were un-contactable after several attempts.
- 7.10 During the calls, TARA representatives were introduced to the review, with an explanation offered with regards to why it was taking place and the organisations involved. Representatives were also invited to attend a meeting at Gateshead Civic Centre to further discuss the project and were offered convenient times for this
- 7.11 Turnout at this meeting was relatively low with 6 tenants attending. Of these 6 attendees, Beacon Lough East Residents Association, Bensham Court Tenants Association, and Chopwell Residents Association were represented.

- 7.12 Attendees welcomed the need for the review, as they felt they had not previously been given all available housing management options to choose from.
- 7.13 Discussions centred around clarity issues with regards to the review. Attendees felt that GC may have pre-determined views on the review and had already drawn up the options to be shown to residents – irrespective of tenant feedback.
- 7.14 Attendees were keen to ensure that when the options are provided, all possible options should be listed, even if they are not feasible. If options have been ruled out for any reason, those options should also be listed with an explanation of why it has been ruled out.
- 7.15 Attendees felt that if tenants are only given a small number of options to choose from, without explanation as to why others have been ruled out, tenants will feel they are being 'led' to a specific option.
- 7.16 One attendee put forward the suggestion that neither GC nor TGHC should attempt to advocate a particular option during the test of opinion period. It was explained that role of the Independent Tenant Advisor is to ensure tenants have the opportunity for independent advice and receive independent support/answers to questions raised.

## Service Improvement Groups (SIGs) Liaison

- 7.17 Representatives from each of the established Housing Company Service Improvement Groups were invited to attend one of three available workshops to introduce them to the review, and give the opportunity to provide feedback. In total 27 SIG representatives attended the workshops.
- 7.18 SIG representatives were generally complimentary towards TGHC and felt that since TGHC was established tenants have been given a better opportunity to become involved with decision making and feedback on issues which impact them. It was also felt that TGHC welcomed scrutiny in order to continually improve.
- 7.19 They also indicated that TGHC are more accountable for their actions/decisions and overall, being a housing services only provider, they were perceived to be more efficient – in both delivery and dealing with issues.
- 7.20 Attendees felt that if the housing services were delivered by Gateshead Council, the standard of care may be lost as the local authority organisation might be too large to manage another service efficiently and with such care. It was also felt that the opportunity for tenant involvement and liaison which TGHC has built may be lost.
- 7.21 Attendees felt that improvements needed to be made to the repairs service as a whole. Currently response times are perceived to be very poor from this group, and post-repair follow up could be improved.

- 7.22 Attendees were sceptical regarding any financial savings. They felt that these would not be great enough to justify moving housing services back into GC. In line with other tenants they expressed a desire to receive information on the proposed savings any change might deliver, and where these savings might be reinvested.
- 7.23 Attendees also felt that information should be provided to tenants on which organisation currently provided which housing service; to ensure tenants are able to make an informed decision on who they feel should provide their housing services.

## Leaseholder Liaison

- 7.24 An event for leaseholders took place on the 31<sup>st</sup> August to gather views from this group.
- 7.25 Attendees felt that communication and feedback from TGHC is very poor and although they have more ability to have their say on issues, when a suggestion is made and is not carried out by TGHC, leaseholders perceive that they get no feedback on why the decision was made.
- 7.26 Leaseholder representatives who attended the event perceived that neither GC nor TGHC were efficient at delivering housing services, and neither should provide these services in the future. The organisation who will provide the housing services in the future should:
- Listen to tenants/leaseholders more
  - Provide feedback to leaseholders on why their requests have not been passed
  - Don't provide too many 'good news stories' because tenants and leaseholders have unresolved issues and problems – and don't want to hear about how good the housing company are

## Tenants Advisory Group (TAG) Liaison

- 7.27 The ITA has a standing invitation to any tenant, group of tenants or other relevant body to discuss the review.
- 7.28 At this stage the only organisation to formally request this meeting was the Gateshead TAG (Tenants Advisory Group), who asked if we could attend their prearranged meeting. The ITA attended the Gateshead TAG meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> August. TAG group members were able to put forward their views on the process.
- 7.29 The members indicated that TGHC may have received positive feedback 12 months previous, but since then, tenants are feeling the effects of cuts to certain services and feel their services have declined. They also felt that the tenants they spoke to were not happy with the communication between themselves and the Housing Company.

7.30 The members were keen to encourage further tenant participation in the review, and between them took 450 questionnaires and free post return envelopes to distribute amongst their community network. They also put forward a series of questions regarding the review which they would like responses to.

## Tenant 'Sounding Board'

7.31 At the outset of the project Gateshead Council and The Gateshead Housing Company, agreed a customer 'sounding board' consisting of tenants and leaseholders should be established.

7.32 This group has been established and is facilitated by the ITA at a neutral venue on a weekly basis.

7.33 The role of the 'sounding board' is to review proposed engagement materials, make suggestions for further engagement and provides tenant perspective on the process.

7.34 Specific feedback to date from the sounding board includes:

- The need for independent leaseholder engagement, as leaseholders consider themselves 'separate' from tenants.
- reinforcement of the perception that social media is a vital tool in engaging with younger tenants, and those who prefer information online.
- the needs to be provide information on which organisation provides which housing service.
- concerns that tenant apathy would be a major barrier to tenant engagement in the process, and stressed that genuine efforts should ne made to engage all tenants and to raise awareness of the review.
- the need for full, detailed and clear information to be provided to tenants and leaseholders on the options available before asking people their opinion.

## 8 Appendix 3 – Survey

### Shaping the future of housing

<b>Mr / Mrs / Miss</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>
<b>Address</b>		
<b>Post code</b>		
<b>Telephone</b>		
<b>Email</b>		

#### **Background**

We want to get feedback from our customers about what you think of the housing services we provide.

The Gateshead Housing Company did the annual survey for tenants and leaseholders in April and May 2011 and this showed that satisfaction had fallen in some areas. We also know that less customers completed surveys and of those who did, more customers said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the services we provide.

So we'd like to try and find out more information about why by asking about your experience of our services.

When answering the questions below try to relate to specific examples to help identify where we are doing well and areas where we can improve?

#### **Questions**

**1) What is your experience of our repairs service? (thinking about how responsive the service is and the quality of the job completed)**

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**2) What about your experience with our housing offices?**

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**3) What about your experience with our estate officers/caretakers/  
concierge/handyperson (delete as applicable)?**

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**4) What is your overall experience of the services we provide?**

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**5) What do you think we could do better?**

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## **Providing housing services in the future**

### **Background**

Gateshead Council set up The Gateshead Housing Company in 2004 to manage the housing stock which continues to be owned by the council. Housing services such as carrying out repairs, improving homes and collecting rent are currently managed by TGHC. Gateshead Council is reviewing the management of these services, to ensure they can be kept at a high level, whilst making sure they also remain good value for money.

The review will take place in the context of the council continuing to own the housing stock.

Wood Holmes have been appointed by a panel of tenants and officers of both TGHC and Gateshead Council to offer independent advice to tenants and leaseholders on this review and to provide more information where required.

Wood Holmes will be collating this feedback to help shape the possible options for how housing services could be provided in the future.

Later in the year tenants and leaseholders will be asked for their view on who manages housing services in the future.

**1a) Have you heard about this review?**

Yes

No

**1b) Have you heard about Wood Holmes' role in the review?**

Yes

No

**2) Do you know who provides each of the following services?**

Service	Gateshead Council	The Gateshead Housing Company	Don't know
Adaptations service			
Care Call (chargeable service)			
Caretakers and concierge			
Customer involvement			
Estate services (estate tours, home welcome visits and low level ASB)			
Gardening Service (chargeable service)			
Grounds maintenance			
Homelessness			
Housing management (including rent collection in offices, sign ups and terminations)			
Improvement works (Decent Homes, DDA Works			

and Fire Safety)			
Leasehold Services			
Lettings policy			
Letting properties in line with the policy			
Neighbourhood relations			
Rent Collection for current and former tenants			
Rent and service charge setting			
Repairs and maintenance service ( including taking reports of repairs and management of the repairs contract)			
Right to Buy			

**3) What do you think are the benefits of the way services are currently provided? (e.g. The Gateshead Housing Company providing most housing services with some still provided via Gateshead Council)**

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**4) How do you think services could be provided in a better way?**

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**5) Do you have any other initial comments about this review?**

.....  
.....

**6a) Do you want more information about this review?**

Yes

No

**6b) What type of additional information do you need?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(e.g. more information on the options? More information about what TGHC's performance? More information about the Council's performance? More information about what the service would look like if it changed? The financial implications of providing housing services)

**7) Would you like to be invited to future events about this review?**

(Eg, meetings, focus groups, briefings)

Yes

No

**Contact details for Wood Holmes are:**  
  
Call: Freephone 0800 023 4705 (calls from mobiles may charge)  
  
Email: [info@ghoia.co.uk](mailto:info@ghoia.co.uk)  
  
Visit: [www.ghoia.co.uk](http://www.ghoia.co.uk)  
  
**You can also follow Wood Holmes on Twitter or find them on Facebook.**  
  
**Thank you for giving us your views.**

If you would like to become more involved with The Gateshead Housing Company please contact our Involvement Team – Louise Taylor, Lisa Wilkinson, Helen Watson or Simon Hand. **Call: 0191 433 5357,**  
  
**Email: [involve@gatesheadhousing.co.uk](mailto:involve@gatesheadhousing.co.uk)**  
  
**Visit: [www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk/getinvolved](http://www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk/getinvolved),**  
  
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