

**Eastbourne Borough Council &
Eastbourne Homes Limited**

Here for you and your home

**Your
Home**

**Your
Say...**



We want to know
what you think?

Over the past few months Eastbourne Borough Council has been looking at the different ways your home could be managed.

This has included exploring, with resident representatives and experts from the housing profession, the pros and cons of nine different ways housing management could be delivered.

Two options have emerged as offering a way forward. These are 'Eastbourne Homes in Partnership' and 'Management by the Council'.

Eastbourne Homes in Partnership means that Eastbourne Homes would remain in charge of delivering the major part of housing management services. We believe it is possible to do this more efficiently by creating a closer partnership between Eastbourne Homes and the Council. This is because the two organisations can share support services and costs.

Management by the Council would give easier access for residents to all Council provided services. This option would also make savings through sharing support services. However, there may no longer be a dedicated Management Board as there is now for Eastbourne Homes, which may reduce the way residents could influence the way their homes are managed.

We want to know what you think as it is important that together we make the right decision.

This booklet gives you the information you need to help us do this.



Eastbourne Homes in Partnership

We believe the best way forward is to keep Eastbourne Homes Limited but for it to work more closely with the Council's core services. This is the 'Eastbourne Homes in Partnership' option. It means that the Eastbourne Homes Management Board will remain, complete with resident representatives. Housing management services would continue to be the responsibility of an organisation clearly focused on looking after your home. There would of course be some changes:

- Co-location of team members from both Eastbourne Homes and the Council at the Council's offices at 1 Grove Road. This will reduce office costs.
- The introduction of new technology and working practices where appropriate. This will reduce office costs and deliver better more customer-friendly services.
- Sharing some senior level professionals and managers. This will help reduce costs and allow both organisations to benefit from sharing expertise.
- Integrating 'back office' services including IT, Human Resources, Legal Services and Financial Management and Administration across Eastbourne Homes and the Council. This would save money.
- Having a single Customer Contact Centre at the Grove Road office. This would improve the accessibility to the Council by offering a single point of contact for all services and again reduce costs.

By working in this way, we believe that we can save over £500,000.

What will this mean for residents?

- More money will be available to spend on homes as we will have reduced management costs.
- By joining up systems so people don't need to be sent to and fro to get an answer to their enquiries, we can improve customer service.
- Residents will continue to have a really important say in how Eastbourne Homes runs services.
- Eastbourne Homes will remain focused on what matters to residents.
- By having more support from the Council, Eastbourne Homes may be able to take on work for other organisations so that it can earn money to pay for improved services.

Management by the Council

All housing management services would be delivered directly by the Council. There would no longer be an Eastbourne Homes Board with tenant representation. Instead, residents would make their views felt by speaking to the Council directly.

There would be more changes with this option than there would be under Eastbourne Homes in Partnership. As well as support services being shared, there would no longer be a dedicated organisation with a focus on providing housing management services.

This option would make financial savings of £100,000 greater than those achieved by Eastbourne Homes in Partnership.

What will this mean for residents?

- More money will be available to spend on homes as we will have reduced management costs.
- By joining up systems so people don't need to be sent to and fro to get an answer to their enquiries, we can improve customer service.
- Residents would be able to have a say in how their homes are managed by working with their local Councillors and people employed by the Council.

What's the difference?

We believe that residents value having a separate organisation which works exclusively for them.

Eastbourne Homes in Partnership means that repairs and maintenance, estate management and sorting out tenancy problems will continue to be the responsibility of a dedicated organisation. You will still be able to phone an Eastbourne Homes phone number but it will be picked up by someone who works for Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC). This means they may be able to help with lots of things, other than just housing. It may be more efficient for EBC to undertake routine work such as answering general enquiries, sending out forms or some aspects of rent collection. However Eastbourne Homes will still be able to make visits and offer advice on housing as it does now.

Management by the Council means that there would be no separate organisation with its own Board to focus entirely on housing matters. Housing management services would be provided directly by the Council using its own staff. There would be single telephone number to call for all services provided by the Council – including those that relate to housing management and repairs. Visits and advice to residents would be provided by people employed by the Council.

Both Eastbourne Homes and the Council's preferred option is 'Eastbourne Homes in Partnership'.



The legal stuff

Under both options there will be no changes proposed to your rights or responsibilities as tenants or leaseholders.

You will continue to be secure or introductory tenants, or leaseholders of the Council.



The other options we looked at were...

Retain current arrangements with Eastbourne Homes Limited (Eastbourne Homes)

- Eastbourne Homes has a track record of providing good quality services.
- A stand alone Eastbourne Homes option could deliver efficiencies going forward but may not have the range of skills to deliver all the services people would need.
- Eastbourne Homes is relatively small which means it may not be the optimum way to deliver value for money and safeguard residents/ leaseholders interests.

Expansion of Eastbourne Homes to deliver more services for the Council and other enterprises, both housing and non-housing

- Eastbourne Homes has a good track record of delivery.
- Eastbourne Homes has, to a limited extent, already expanded into some new areas of work.
- Eastbourne Homes's relatively small scale means that it would be difficult to grow as a stand alone business and keep its focus on core housing activity.

Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)

**Transfer to Mutually Owned Co-operative
Residents exercise their Right to Transfer**

- The three options above are not financially attractive. This is because the value of the Council's housing stock – the amount that would need to be paid by a new landlord - would not be sufficient for the Council to clear all the debts taken on to provide the homes.
- The higher borrowing costs of a non-public sector landlord would reduce the amount of money available for maintenance and repair of homes.
- A landlord that is not part of the public sector may have the opportunity to borrow more money than the Council can for investment.

Shared Service Delivery with other Social Landlords

- This could deliver efficiencies through shared costs and more efficient buying of such things as building materials.
- There is a risk of contractual inflexibility to manage homes in a way that meets Eastbourne's needs.
- Services may not be provided by locally based people.


Out-source – let a contract to a third party to manage the homes

- Contractual arrangements may lead to reduced flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and needs.
- This could deliver efficiencies through shared costs and more effective buying.
- There is a risk of a loss of local accountability and control.
- Services may not be provided by locally based people.

Residents exercise their Right to Manage

- The small size of the number of homes owned by the council means that it would be hard to deliver services efficiently.
- Residents would have a high level of control over the way their homes are managed.
- Responsibility for making sure that all services are delivered to a high standard would rest with residents.

None of these options are recommended. This is because no single one delivers a good mix of a local, dedicated focus on housing management and the savings we need to allow for more investment in homes.



**How can
you talk
to us?**

There is a page at the back of this booklet that asks for your preferred option – either ‘Eastbourne Home in Partnership’ or ‘Management by the Council’. There is also space for you to give comments if you think there is anything further we should consider before making a decision.

You can visit our website for more information:

www.eastbourne.gov.uk/haveyoursay

You can email us on our dedicated email address:

housingfutures@eastbourne.gov.uk

You can ring us directly: **01323 415973**

During the consultation, we will be visiting your Area Panels and Retirement Housing Schemes. There will be a number of community events where you can come along and talk to us.

**The deadline for consultation responses is
Sunday 15th June 2014.**

The information contained in this document is available in different formats upon request. Please ring 01323 415973.





www.eastbourne.gov.uk/yourhomeyoursay

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