



Join us!

We're not interested in this election versus selection nonsense. Our Committee is a group of tenants from the former Bedminster Area Housing Committee. There is a basic fact here – ANY TENANT OR LEASEHOLDER CAN JOIN OUR COMMITTEE. If you're interested in either coming along to see what its all about, or joining us now and being a Committee Member actively participating at our monthly meetings, please contact your Chair – Gilbert Webster – during office hours on 0784 367 7297.

We meet monthly on the second Thursday of each month at 10.30am in Bedminster. We are currently considering changing this time however, to see if it better suits tenants & leaseholders availability. If you can spare an hour or so a month and think you might be interested in shaping the future of the housing management service in Bedminster, please contact us.

Please don't think this is just another Council initiative, or just a bunch of tenants wasting their time. TMO's are real and exist throughout the country. There's no point in burying your head in the sand – please let us know what you think.

Why a TMO?

We want to tackle and improve the quality of life for all Bedminster tenants & leaseholders.

We are not happy with the constant changes the Council makes to the housing service and we want to ensure that the following priorities are tackled by housing staff who are answerable to tenants & leaseholders directly:

- housing repairs
- the caretaking service
- grounds maintenance
- flytipping & litter
- anti-social behaviour
- estate management

Setting up a TMO will give tenants & leaseholders direct oversight of the housing management service. That means tenants & leaseholders will set local priorities, monitor local budgets and services, and monitor housing staff. This won't happen overnight, in fact the process will take about 18 months from now. This is because overseeing a housing management service takes a lot of training, a lot of Assessment, a lot of negotiation with the Council, and a lot of consultation with ALL Bedminster tenants & leaseholders.

As we said in our last newsletter, we want Bedminster on the map! And a Bedminster TMO will make this happen.



Message from your Chair Gilbert Webster

I would firstly like to say Bristol City Council will always be your landlord. The TMO is about improving the services the tenants and leaseholders receive.

I have recently visited two TMO's that are up and running, one in Birmingham and one in Walsall, and I can see services have been improved. This is about improving also the quality of life and community spirit that seems to be absent nowadays.

Why not get involved? We are looking for committee members, this would mean only two hours a month out of your time, if you are interested please call me or Mark Hibbard of Open Communities. See further on for contact details. Last of all tenants and leaseholders will be consulted at all times along this process.

Thanks for taking the time to read this, Gilbert Webster.

Bedminsternews

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in large print, another language, or audio tape please telephone Open Communities 0800 073 1051

Tenant Management Newsletter

October 2008



WELCOME

TO THE SECOND NEWSLETTER ABOUT BEDMINSTER TENANT MANAGEMENT.

Our last newsletter was sent out in June 2008. Over the next 18 months we will be publishing various regular newsletters, these will give you interesting, consistent, concise, factual information put together by Bedminster tenants, with full Council support.

What are the benefits of a TMO?

A TMO FOR BEDMINSTER will lead to an improved housing management service being delivered. Independent research suggests that TMO's lead to an improved housing management service. All of us want housing staff, repairs staff etc. based in Bedminster and only providing a service to Bedminster tenants & leaseholders; this will lead to a stronger sense of community spirit.

It really is that simple!

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We'd like to clear up some misunderstanding there appears to be about TMO's:

No-one can force anyone to believe anything, and we know that leaflets are being circulated trying to discredit TMO's by blatantly lying about them and the process of setting them up. We can't do anything about this, and have neither time nor interest to be distracted by it. All we can do, is give tenants & leaseholders the facts. Ultimately there will be two independently organised votes (overseen by the Council and by central Government) and people will make up their own minds. We rely on one basic fact – if the majority of voters are in favour then a TMO will eventually be set up; if the majority of voters are against then a TMO won't be set up. Its as simple as that.

We would like to clarify some facts about TMO's and the process of setting one up:

- Under a TMO, there can be no privatisation. No private company is going to take over our homes. A not-for-profit company owned by Bedminster tenants & leaseholders will be set up.
- TMO's can hire & fire. A key way that TMO's become efficient, is to employ staff and contractors that are accountable to tenants & leaseholders directly.
- Exactly what functions a TMO in Bedminster might take over are yet to be decided. This won't be decided for another year or so – and tenants & leaseholders will vote before any final decisions are made.
- The Council is fully aware of, and is carefully scrutinising, the TMO process.
- If a TMO is set up and it fails to perform, the Council will step in and take back responsibility if necessary. Central Government also oversees this.

We are also going to develop our own website and will publicise it when its up and running!



The TMO process to date.

We have been working with our central Government approved Agent – Open Communities – since January of this year to look at maybe setting up a Bedminster TMO. The first “test” was to see if 20% of tenants & leaseholders would pledge their support by signing a Support Form – which was easily achieved. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who pledged their support.

The next 2 “tests” are a Competence Assessment of the Committee & an independently organised postal ballot (or vote) which will take place in a few months time.

We have also served a ‘Right to Manage’ Notice upon the Council, which has been accepted. The Council has also given its support in writing for what we're doing, and for us to proceed.

We will now continue to work with the Council and Open Communities to carry further consultation, undertake detailed training, look at what aspects of the housing management service we would like a Bedminster TMO to have responsibility for, and ensure that ALL Bedminster tenants & leaseholders have opportunities to vote.

What's next?

The next step in our investigation into Tenant Management is called a 'Feasibility Study'. The Feasibility Study will take 6 months to complete.

It will involve:

- Continued communication and consultation with all tenants & leaseholders;
- Your Committee looking at some of the 260+ TMO's in practice;
- Increasing the size and representativeness of the Committee;
- A Competence Assessment of the Committee; and
- An independently organised ballot.



Tenant Management – Some Questions & Answers.

What is a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)?

A TMO is a non profit making company which is set up and managed BY tenants & leaseholders FOR tenants & leaseholders. The TMO takes responsibility for some or all of the housing management functions - e.g. employment of repair contractors, anti-social behaviour, allocating properties, grounds maintenance, caretaking & cleaning, the concierge service etc. Tenants & leaseholders do not actually do the work, they oversee paid housing professionals to do the work. The money comes from the Council who must give an annual Allowance to the TMO proportional to the number of properties managed by the TMO.

Does the Committee of tenants & leaseholders get paid?

No, never.

How many TMO's are there?

Currently there are over 260 fully up & running TMO's throughout the country, and 4 being developed in Bristol. A useful website would be the National Federation of TMO's website which is www.nftmo.com

Will a TMO mean that Bedminster will be a better place to live?

Yes - independent research shows that TMO managed estates get a quicker and better repairs service and have a better community spirit and higher tenant satisfaction.

Is this like privatisation?

No. The 'company' that will manage the housing service will be not-for-profit and owned and managed by Bedminster tenants & leaseholders only.

Is this like Stock Transfer?

No. There is no stock transfer involved and Bristol City Council will always remain the landlord.

is this the DCLG logo?
I downloaded it from the
website