

THE management of Charnwood Borough Council's housing stock is set to change this summer - with the key aim of delivering an improved service.

We have submitted a £35.8million bid for Government funding to create an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), which will go live in July, if we are successful.

It details Charnwood's commitment to improving Council homes and bringing them up to the national Decent Homes Standards.

But what does this mean for tenants in Charnwood's 5,945 Council houses and 266 leasehold properties?

Eileen Mallon, Charnwood's Director of Housing, says tenants will notice the benefits if the ALMO goes live.

She said: "We have already taken huge steps in improving the housing service and I'm confident our tenants will reap the rewards."

Here, we explain how the creation of the ALMO may affect tenants.

What is an ALMO?

An Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) is a company set up by a local Authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock.

It is owned by the Council and operates under the terms of a management agreement between the authority and the ALMO.

ALMOs achieving a minimum of two stars in inspections are eligible for additional Government funding.

The main aims of an ALMO are to bring the housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard and provide a housing management service that puts tenants at the heart of delivery.

How are ALMOs managed?

ALMOs are managed by a Board of Directors which includes tenants, local authority nominees and independent members. No one group is a majority.

Prior to the ALMO going live, a Shadow Board is formed which will oversee all activity relating to the set up of the ALMO.

The Shadow Board at Charnwood would be made up of five tenants, five Council representatives and five independent people and will take over management as the Board of Directors, if the bid is successful.

What services would Charnwood's ALMO provide?

- Repairs and improvements to bring homes up to the Decent Homes standard
- Day-to-day repairs and maintenance
- Rent collection and dealing with arrears
- Estate management services
- Warden services for sheltered schemes

PLEASED TO MEET YOU: The tenant and Council members of the Shadow ALMO Board are pictured from left to right, David Slater, Maureen Ackroyd, Neville Stork, Yvonne Griffin, Ann Watkinson, John Hipwell, Marie Hannabus and Sandie Gough. Inset: Margaret Allen and Helen Isaac.

- Enforcement of tenancy
- Managing lettings, dealing with empty properties.
- What functions would remain with the Council?**
- Housing strategy
- Housing benefit/rent rebate administration
- Overall policy on rents. (subject

to the rent restructuring regulations)

- Homelessness

How does an ALMO affect Tenants?

The Local Authority would still be the landlord and all rights, such as the Right to Buy, will stay the same.



UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT: The management of Charnwood Borough Council's Housing Stock may change in the summer as the ALMO (inset right) prepares to go live in July.



The key to improved homes



An ALMO dedicated to improving the condition of the stock would be able to deliver higher quality services.

Meanwhile, the ALMO is looking for people interested in being one of the five independent board members, who will be selected by the Shadow Board in March.

No formal qualifications are needed but volunteers will be expected to:

- Be committed to providing excellent services to Council tenants and leaseholders
- Be able to attend monthly board meetings and working groups
- Be prepared to undergo training to boost their knowledge and skills.

To find out more on becoming an independent board member, or obtain further details on the ALMO bid, call (01509) 634 670 or log on to <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/housing/almoupdate.html>