

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING PANEL – 31 JANUARY 2024
REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, RESIDENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

COUNCIL HOUSING RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2024-2027

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Resident Involvement Strategy sets out how we intend to engage with and involve our tenants and leaseholders in council housing with influencing and scrutinising our housing related policies, services and performance.
- 1.2 Resident involvement in our services (providing information, listening, engaging and acting on feedback and supporting residents) is a key theme in the Regulator of Social Housing's 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard', which providers of social housing must comply with.
- 1.3 The draft Resident Involvement Strategy has been shared with the Resident's Panel for their comments and feedback.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To consider and note the strategy.
- 2.2 That Cabinet Housing Panel recommend approval of the Resident Involvement Strategy to Cabinet.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 This strategy sets out how the council in its capacity as a provider of social housing intends to engage and involve our tenants and leaseholders in influencing and scrutinising our housing policies, services and performance.
- 3.2 The Regulator of Social Housing has set out Consumer Standards which providers of social housing, such as local authorities, are required to comply with. One such consumer standard is the 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard' and is likely to be replaced by similar requirements regarding tenancy involvement and engagement outlined in the proposed 'Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard'.
- 3.3 The overall aim of the strategy is to widen involvement, using what tenants and leaseholders tell us to shape our housing services and so increase confidence and satisfaction around our performance.
- 3.4 The strategy sets out:
 - Our vision for tenant and leaseholder engagement

- Survey feedback from residents on their priorities (repairs, estate management, customer service and communication)
- Sets out our commitments, as follows:
 - More effective communication
 - Partnership working to influence and improve services
 - To widen participation
 - Celebrate our thriving communities
 - Ensure our engagement meets professional and statutory standards
 - Measuring our performance
 - Keeping residents updated

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard published by the Regulator of Social Housing sets out a number of requirements regarding provision of information to tenants, complaints processes, understanding the diverse needs of tenants, and giving tenants a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in their landlord's housing-related policies and strategic priorities, scrutinising and influencing services and performance.
- 4.2 In particular, social housing providers are required to support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for involvement and empowerment, including by:
- supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them
 - providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.
- 4.3 The Regulator of Social Housing recently consulted on proposed changes to the Consumer Standards and the 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard' is likely to be replaced by the 'Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard'. The relevant requirements of this proposed standard in relation to tenant engagement are similar and specify that:
- Social housing providers must give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.
 - Social housing providers must assist tenants who wish to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications. The strategy will be delivered within the exiting budget and staff resources.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 There are no risks related to this proposal.

6 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)

6.1 None

7 Procurement Implication(s)

7.1 None.

8 Climate Change Implication(s)

8.1 None

9 Human Resources Implication(s)

9.1 None

10 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

10.1 Working with, and involvement of, residents in reviewing our housing policies, services and performance contributes positively towards supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of our residents.

11 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

11.1 This report recommends that we introduce a Resident Involvement Strategy policy. If approved, the strategy will be communicated to our tenants and leaseholders via our Community Edit newsletter and on our website.

12 Link to Corporate Priorities

12.1 This strategy strongly contributes to one of our five our corporate priorities of 'Homes to be proud of' in WHBC's Community Plan for 2024-27: "Putting Communities at our Heart."

12.2 We recognise that this can be better achieved by working in collaboration with our tenants and leaseholders as they are well placed to tell us what works well in our housing services and what could work better.

13 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was completed (Appendix B) and found no negative impact was identified on any of the protected groups under Equalities legislation. Resident involvement through the strategy should help to positively support all residents including those with protected characteristics and those with diverse needs.

Name of author

Alison Wildey

Title

Resident Involvement Manager

Date

8 January 2024

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft WHBC Council Housing Resident Involvement Strategy 2024-2027

Appendix B - EqIA