

Resident Involvement Strategy Appendix Two

Appendix Two: Glossary of Resident Involvement Opportunities, their functions and interrelationships.

Options for Formal Involvement

Tenant & Leaseholder Panel (TLP)

The most strategic involvement group made up of representation from Tenants and Leaseholders, the Panel ensures that residents have a role in advising on housing related issues and trending topics. It will look at the overall performance of the Property & Housing Service, how well the Service is complying with the Regulators Consumer Standards and other key statutory obligations, complaints, expenditure from the Housing Revenue Account, as well as outcomes from resident involvement activities undertaken during the quarter. Further, it may make recommendation for further scrutiny. Additional 'special' meetings may be held if there is an issue which requires attention before the next scheduled meeting.

The group meets virtually four times a year (following the publication of key performance indicators) and is chaired jointly by a Lead Tenant / Leaseholder and Service Director (Property & Housing). The Lead Tenant / Leaseholder chair will be democratically appointed annually and will be co-opted onto the Council's Stronger Communities Select Committee *, which meets every two to three month to represent the views of Tenants and Leaseholders.

We will make sim-enabled tablets available to representatives who wish to participate in meetings on request and our digital champions will support those who may require it.

Recommendations from the TLP will be fed back by the Service Director (Property & Housing), at monthly performance meetings, where next steps will be agreed with the service areas. The TLP will be updated on outcomes.

The Panel comprises a fixed body of members, who will benefit from training and attendance at housing sector conferences, to build knowledge and enable its members to feel supported in their role. This panel will suit residents who have a passion for housing and who are committed to providing a long-term strategic representation. To keep the panel fresh and to ensure inclusivity, we will encourage new members to join the Panel by way of an annual recruitment campaign and will use intelligence to seek representation from underrepresented groups.

* The Select Committee is part of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny framework that helps to ensure that local public services are delivered effectively, efficiently and in the best interests of residents and people that live and work in the Epping Forest District. Overview and Scrutiny is an important mechanism through which public accountability can be exercised and it's attended by Councillors (except members of the Cabinet). Its primary role is to hold local decision-makers to account and to help improve local services by:

- (a) reviewing and challenging decisions taken by the Council and its partners;
- (b) undertaking investigations into services or policy areas which are of interest or concern to people in the District; and
- (c) making evidence-based recommendations to improve services provided by the Council and partner organisations.

Scrutiny Panel (NEW)

Following recommendations from the TLP, the Scrutiny Panel focuses in greater detail on a particular aspect of our Housing & Property service. Scrutiny Panel meetings may be held face to face, virtually or a hybrid, depending on the preference of the attendees and at a frequency directed by the TLP.

The Scrutiny Panel is made up of fixed body of volunteer residents who work with support from the Resident Involvement Team and relevant expert Council Officers but who remain independent. The Panel gathers information and evidence from many areas and interviews staff and residents. The Panel then compiles reports with suggestions for service improvements. These are presented to the TLP who make final recommendations, which are brought before Managers at monthly performance meetings and fed back to the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

To keep the panel fresh and to ensure inclusivity, we will encourage new members to join the Panel by way of an annual recruitment campaign and will use intelligence to seek representation from underrepresented groups. In addition, the core body of volunteer residents can be supplemented from time to time as needed, by additional member (s) with particular knowledge or experience, to act as critical friends.

Core Scrutiny Panel members will benefit from training and attendance at housing sector conferences, to build knowledge and enable them to feel supported in their role. Suiting residents who have a passion for housing and who are committed to providing a long-term strategic representation, as well as providing opportunity for wider residents to be involved at a strategic level from time to time.

Complaints Scrutiny Panel (New)

We always want to provide the best possible service, however we appreciate that sometimes things can go wrong. If there is a problem, we will ask our tenants and leaseholders to tell us so that we can investigate, put things right and learn from lessons. This approach helps us to continuously improve.

The Tenant and Leaseholder Panel will maintain oversight of all complaints relating to the Service, however the Complaints Panel will monitor the quality and timeliness of responses and will form a view on whether complaints are being dealt with fairly and in line with the Council's Complaints policy and Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. A key function of the Complaints Panel will be to lead on completing the annual self-assessment in relation to the Complaint Handling Code.

The Complaints Scrutiny Panel will look for trends in complaints, which will drive areas for further scrutiny. The Complaints Panel may invoke a Scrutiny Panel, mystery shopping exercise or other resident involvement activity as deemed appropriate, to gather intelligence and greater insight that will feed into an overall review, with outcomes reported back to the Complaints Scrutiny Panel, TLP and at performance management meetings. Where areas for improvement are identified, we will work with the TLP to decide how to do this.

In pursuit of continuous improvement, the Panel will work with Officers to review the Council's complaints policy, ensuring that it is accessible to all, that communications are of the right tone and that outcomes and learnings are fed back more widely to residents.

Sheltered Housing Forum

The Sheltered Housing Forum is made up of tenant representatives from each of the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes, who act as spokespersons for their fellow residents. Its purpose is to discuss matters / topics raised by residents living in sheltered housing, to bring about improvements to older people related services. Matters raised at the forum are fed back at monthly performance meetings, as well as to service areas, thereafter, directly contributing to and shaping the services provided.

The group meets virtually four times a year and is chaired by a Tenant member who is democratically appointed annually. Tenant representatives will be supported to attend online meetings with Officers on a quarterly basis, using sim-enabled tablets purchased specifically to facilitate resident involvement activity at each scheme.

Continuous Improvement Groups (Special Groups) (NEW)

It is important that we reflect on what we do as a Service and actively seek ways to improve and evolve. In contrast to the Scrutiny Panel (directed by the TLP), continuous improvement groups are set up at the direction of Officers. Advertised to all residents, meetings may be held face to face, virtually or a hybrid, depending upon the preference of the attendees. Membership to these groups are likely to require a longer term commitment, requiring participation over a number of meetings.

Chaired by a relevant expert Council Officer, observations and recommendations from this group will be fed back to service areas, providing intelligence upon which to secure continuous improvement. Subsequent outcomes from the Service areas will be fed back at monthly performance meetings and to the TLP.

Resident Involvement Co-Creation and Continuous Improvement Group (NEW)

The Resident Involvement Co-Creation Group is a group of residents and staff, passionate about resident involvement, who share a desire to improve the way our tenants and leaseholders are involved, and whose work has contributed to the direction of this strategy. Building on the excellent initial work of this group, following implementation of the new Strategy, the focus of the group will be continually review and help improve the resident involvement offer. The intention will be to retain a core group of consistent members, but is open to all residents. We will arrange for core members to attend at least one national resident involvement conference each year, to help members stay abreast of changes and learn from best practice within the sector.

Meetings may be held face to face, virtually or a hybrid, depending upon attendee preference. Subsequent outcomes will be fed back at monthly performance meetings and to the TLP.

Fire and Building Safety Panel (NEW)

The Fire and Building Safety Panel will work closely with the Council on all aspects of fire and building safety and compliance. They will consider the impact of building safety issues on residents, will review policies, procedures and resident communications, as well as looking at ways that residents and Property & Housing Services can work together to support residents to feel safe in their homes.

We will actively seek membership from residents living in different property types, from different geographical areas and housing tenures. We will encourage residents with a background in building or fire safety to take part (not a prerequisite for membership); however recognising that such expertise may not be immediately available amongst our residents, we will provide where necessary external experts to support the Panel with independent professional advice to assist with technical detail. Members will also benefit from training and attendance at housing sector conferences, to build knowledge and enable them to feel supported in their role.

The Panel will meet at least four times a year, which may be face to face, virtual or a hybrid, depending on the preference of attendees. Chaired jointly by a Lead Tenant / Leaseholder and the Head of Property Assets. The Lead Tenant / Leaseholder chair will be democratically appointed annually and will represent the views of Tenants and Leaseholders at the Council's Stronger Communities Select Committee *, which meets every two to three months.

To keep the panel fresh and to ensure inclusivity, we will encourage new members to join the Panel by way of an annual recruitment campaign and will use intelligence to seek representation from underrepresented groups.

The Panel will suit residents who have a special interest in building and fire safety, who are willing to offer a long-term commitment.

Focus Groups (Strategic/Operational) (NEW)

Our focus groups will bring together small groups of tenants, leaseholders and wider residents (where required), to act as critical friends and contribute to open discussion on a particular subject matter. Participants will offer influence over the decisions that are made in designing and delivering a range of services.

Each focus group will be advertised, offering residents opportunity to get involved without long-term commitment. Whilst a deep knowledge of the subject matter under consideration is not essential, some direct experience of the service or issue under scrutiny would be beneficial.

Focus groups will be arranged on an ad hoc basis, which may be face to face, virtual or a hybrid, depending on the preference of attendees and chaired by a relevant Team Manager or Officer delegated by them.

Outcomes from each focus group will be fed back at monthly performance meetings.

Membership to these groups requires no long-term commitment. They are likely to involve one meeting, enabling Officers to obtain a snapshot of residents views and probe more deeply under the subject matter.

Recruitment Champions (NEW)

As part of our commitment to creating a Service wide resident involved culture, we will seek to recruit and train a pool of "*Recruitment Champions*", who can be invited to participate in the recruitment process, as panel members, for customer facing roles. Applications will be welcomed from all tenants and leaseholders who are already participating in other formal involvement activities.

Procurement Champions (NEW)

Putting resident involvement at the centre of our procurement process, is key to ensuring and giving confidence that value for money is being achieved and the right contractors are being employed. The specific approach will be determined as part of the procurement planning process but could include contributing to the development of the procurement brief and contract specifications, involvement in the contractor selection process, and also ongoing participation in contract performance management. Open to all tenants and leaseholders on application, our Procurement Champions will be supported by Officers and given training to help them play an effective part in the procurement process.

Active Involvement (Estate Focused)

Residents' Associations

A Residents' Association is a formal group of people who live in a neighbourhood and decide that they want to get together to deal with concerns that affect their local community. These groups adopt a model constitution to gain recognition by EFDC which entitles them to access funding and other support to help set up and maintain their group. In order to gain recognition, the group must include Council tenants and / or leaseholders as members.

At the time of writing, we have 5 active, constituted Residents' Associations which include:

- Limes Farm Community Group;
- People of Roydon;
- Chapel Road Residents Association
- Romeland Residents Group; and
- Roundhills Residents Group.

The Council provides financial support to its Residents Groups as follows:

- Initial 'Start-up' funding of £125
- Annual Support Grant of up to £312
- Annual 'Minor Estate Enhancement Grant of up to £500
- Annual video conferencing licence up to £150

Certain reasonable costs are met for the hire of halls and the printing of literature.

Recognised residents' groups will be offered a programme of training opportunities through a combination of external and in-house training sessions.

Block / Street / Estate Champions (NEW)

Block / Street / Estate Champions are tenant or leaseholder volunteers who take pride in their homes and area they live. Our Champions are the eyes and ears of their local communities. They may be a good neighbour, looking out for those in need or they may report concerns to us like repairs or anti-social behaviour. Their main role is to provide a direct link between the community and Council, passing on important information to their neighbours and similarly allowing communications and observations about their block / street / estate to be passed back to the Council.

Block and Street Champions will play a key role where redevelopment or major works are being undertaken.

Supported by the Resident Involvement team, no experience is necessary, just a willingness to be a good neighbour and an appetite to work with the Council.

Community Champions

Community Champions are volunteers of like-minded people who can share ideas and experiences from their communities to improve the health and wellbeing of local people. Community Champions may help other residents to get to know what's going on in the local area, learn more about how to stay healthy and active, help other residents' access local services and organise community events.

Our Community Champions are supported by the Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team, whose vision is to build on the skills and knowledge of local people to create, happy, friendly and healthy communities across the Epping Forest District.

Growing Champions (NEW)

Growing Champions are volunteers who have a particular interest in gardening. They take a lead role in the long-term maintenance of new 'growing projects' and actively promote engagement in gardening projects throughout their community.

New locations for growing projects may be driven by resident aspirations or may be estate enhancements driven by the Council. In both instances, these projects promote health and wellbeing, contribute to the neighbourhood and provide informal opportunities for residents to engage with the Council either in person or through their Growing Champion.

Estate Walkabouts

An estate walkabout is a planned and publicised walk around a neighbourhood or street. It is a great way for residents to highlight what could be improved. These are undertaken with staff from a variety of teams, who ensure that issues are recorded and actioned. Actions arising from these walkabouts are communicated back to participants and local resident groups where in operation.

Community events

Community events play a key role in bringing communities together and provide opportunity to listen to residents and promote community.

Community events are typically run by Residents Groups or Community Champions, with support from the Council. However, the Council may also run community events from time to time. By way of example, past events arranged by the Council include Anti-Social Behaviour awareness days and opening ceremonies for new build developments, with residents running their own holiday seasonal events and Jubilee celebrations.

Consultations

Consultations target a specific area/issue, allowing residents to make their views known. Consultations take various forms including electronic and paper surveys,

public meetings, telephone consultations and door knocking. At a local level, the results of these consultations inform estate decisions.

Meet your neighbour events ~ New Developments (NEW)

When we take handover of a new housing scheme, we will invite everybody who is moving into their homes to attend a welcome event, this way residents get to know their neighbours but also help to form sustainable communities. We will use these events to promote resident involvement and recruit new members who wish to be involved.

Chatterbox (NEW)

Online or “*in person*”, these are local meetings for residents, to discuss shared interests, raise concerns and bring people together in an informal setting. Organised by the Resident Involvement Team, these meetings are attended by various Council staff as required.

Chatterbox is an effective way of involving residents who do not benefit from a Residents Association in their area and would prefer a more relaxed approach to resident involvement, with no ongoing commitment. These sessions are good for meeting neighbours and building relationships between each other and Council staff. Listening to residents allows the Council to deliver services that residents want and provides an open communication channel.

At the present time, Chatterbox is advertised locally through flyers, posters and letters, as well as through social media, however as new technology is introduced, the intention is to use a new customer portal to target local residents.

Pop Up Drop Ins (NEW)

Council led informal pop up events on an estate, typically centred around our eye-catching branded marquee and / or communications trailer, with the aim of reaching a wider demographic of residents, who may not otherwise be engaged. Whilst “pop up drop ins” will be advertised in advance, our aim is also to attract passing footfall. These are not meetings, they are a means of communication, allowing the Council to update residents on matters which affect them and similarly for residents to ask questions and express views on any housing related matter. We will use these events to promote and encourage residents to get involved in future involvement activities.

Active Involvement (Non Estate Focused)

Mystery Shoppers (NEW)

Mystery Shoppers are a group of trained residents who test the quality of our services to make sure that they are being delivered in line with agreed service standards and report on their findings. Our Mystery Shoppers will play an important role in giving us a true picture of how we interact with residents. Outcomes from Mystery Shopping exercises will be fed back to the TLP and at monthly performance meetings. If a particular service needs improvement, we will work with the TLP to decide how to do this.

Surveys, Consultations and Polls

Surveys, consultations and polls will be used to obtain feedback from residents. These will be used (not exclusively), to better understand the wishes of residents affected by a particular project, gain feedback from service users, and assess the impact of a proposed

project, policy or decision before and after its implementation. Following implementation of the Council's new Housing Management System, Officers will be able to run specific campaigns to gather intelligent feedback from our residents.

STAR Survey & Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Using the nationally recognised industry standard Survey of Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction (STAR), we will conduct a full STAR survey every two years, to help us to better understand how satisfied our tenants and leaseholders are with our services and how our services could be improved. Outcomes from these STAR surveys will be shared with residents on our website and summarised in the Annual Report to Tenants. A full report will be presented to the TLP for consideration. Where areas for improvement are identified, we will work with the TLP to decide how to do this.

The Regulator for Social Housing published its new Tenant Satisfaction Measures standard on 21st September 2022, which means that from 1st April 2023 all social housing providers must collect and publish a wide range of performance information. There are 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures, covering complaints, neighbourhood, anti-social behaviour, repairs and safety. Ten of these will be measured by landlords directly, and 12 will be measured by landlords carrying out tenant perception surveys. Although landlords are already required to give tenants timely and relevant performance information, including the publication of an annual report, the format and content of this information can vary significantly. These measures will be reported annually from April 2023 and will give tenants transparent and meaningful information about their landlord, and will also help the RSH ensure that landlords meet the new consumer standards.

We will carry out annual tenant perception surveys to gather the data required, but will also use this information along with relevant performance data and feedback from other resident involvement activities to inform service improvement. If a particular service needs improvement, we will work with the TLP to decide how to do this.

Outcomes from a STAR / TSM survey will be shared with the TLP. The TLP will consider the results in conjunction with any other performance data which may be available, such as Key Performance Indicators. Where areas of weakness are identified, the TLP may request that the Scrutiny Panel take a deeper look and make recommendation for change. They may also request that further insight be obtained through focus groups, mystery shopping, or another resident involvement activity dependent upon the nature of the issue. All feedback will be reported to the Scrutiny Panel who will advise the TLP on their recommendations for change. The TLP would report final outcomes to the Select Committee and will monitor to ensure that the change has worked.

Armchair Reviewers (NEW)

A pool of Armchair Reviewers will be sought to act as a sounding board and critical friends, to review and comment on draft policies and strategies before they go to Committee or Cabinet. They will also have a key role in improving resident communications including (but not limited to), Housing News, leaflets, web content (and other online information) and the Tenants Handbook. They will review the content of standard letters, forms and other publications, paying special regard to tone and content of our standard communications, ensuring that they are clear to the wider audience.

Open to all tenants and leaseholders, this role will suit residents who wish to play a part in shaping services and communications, without the formality of attending meetings. Documentation will be sent to participants electronically by default, although paper copies will be sent to participants on request, with resident feedback being used to inform the final

strategy or policy. With appropriate guidance, our Armchair Reviewers will be able to perform this function independently, from the comfort of their homes.

Resident Writers (NEW)

Our Resident Writers will be encouraged to write content for Housing News and the Council's website, or in the alternative suggest articles that the Council should include in future editions.

We will regularly advertise opportunities for residents to write their own content on subjects that may be of wider interest to local communities and to share their first-hand experience of Council related services. With guidance, our Resident Writers will be able to perform this function independently from their home.

Conferences (NEW)

We will hold an annual tenant and leaseholder conference. Open to all tenants and leaseholders, these events will focus on specific housing related themes and will feature Q&A sessions, workshops and information stalls. Representatives from a range of Council services and partners will offer advice on a variety of issues. These events will provide opportunity for residents to have their say on important issues that affect them and the future direction of the Service. We will celebrate the work of our engaged residents and will reflect on how this work has helped to shape decisions over the preceding 12 months.

Resident members of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel, Scrutiny Panel, The Fire & Building Safety Panel and Resident Involvement Continuous Improvement Group will be invited to attend at least one external Social Housing Conference annually, to broaden their knowledge and keep up to date with what is happening elsewhere in the Sector.

Keeping Residents Informed:

Webinars (NEW)

Open to everyone, our live webinars provide a platform to show case projects and keep residents informed about projects and other housing matters which affect them. Throughout the webinar, residents are encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback which is captured in a Q&A format.

Following the event, all webinars and Q&As are published on social media and to the Council's website, giving residents the opportunity to watch them at their own convenience.

Our webinars are held biannually, however from time to time we may hold additional webinars around specific topics such as Fire Safety.

Housing News

This twice-yearly publication informs tenants and leaseholders of news and changes to policy or matters that may affect the landlord services provided to them. The format of the publication will be updated to include articles written by our Resident Writers and will adopt a "You Said, We Did" approach (where appropriate) to demonstrate how contributions from residents are helping to shape decisions, projects and services. The newsletter is available digitally as well as in a paper format on request.

Social Media/Website (NEW)

We will build a new engaging website with our tenants and leaseholders, that will serve as a one stop shop for resident involvement in relation to our landlord services. We will use social media and the website to help residents understand how their contribution shapes the services we deliver and to celebrate success. The Council will seek to engage with through a variety of online platforms, following social media trends in order to reach a broader demographic of customers.

We will promote the new ways tenants and leaseholders can “*Get Involved*” and will advertise forthcoming events and involvement opportunities as they arise.

We will use our website to showcase projects and keep residents informed about matters which affect them.

Newsletters

We will use newsletters where appropriate to share relevant information with residents, reinforce how residents can get involved. Newsletters are a key means of communication on estates undergoing large regeneration or redevelopment work.

Whilst our newsletters are predominately paper based at the time of writing, following implementation of the Council’s new Housing Management system, we will look to digitalise these where possible in line with individual customer preferences.

Annual Report

To promote transparency and accountability, we provide an annual report to our tenants and leaseholders, explaining how the Service has performed over the previous 12 months.

The Annual Report will be designed to inform and engage the reader, with opportunities for the audience to participate via surveys, links to further information and publicity for engagement opportunities. The Report will be published on the Council’s website and on social media, with paper copies made available on request.

Tenants Handbook

A Tenants handbook is provided to all tenants at sign-up, explaining their rights and responsibilities, and the services and assistance that the Council will provide throughout their tenure, including a dedicated section on how to “*Get Involved*”.

Leaseholder Handbook

A Leaseholder handbook is provided to all leaseholders on completion, explaining their rights and responsibilities, and the services and assistance that the Council will provide throughout their tenure, including a dedicated section on how to “*Get Involved*”.

Leaflets & Posters

Leaflets and posters are a useful way to keep residents informed, and a good way to advertise involvement activities and events. Notice boards are erected in all our internal flat blocks. We will use these and any estate notice boards at our disposal as a means to communicate with

our residents. Digital copies of posters and leaflets are also published to the website / social media as appropriate.