

## Post review monitoring - Engagement with Tenants and Leaseholders - Improving participation and feedback to improve service and satisfaction

<b>Committee name</b>	Residents' Services Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Marion Finney, Community Engagement Manager
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendices 1-5
<b>Ward</b>	All

### HEADLINES

Following on from a previous select committee review, to enable Select Committee to review progress the development of the draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy, (Appendix 1) and draft Higher Risk and Complex Buildings Engagement Strategy, (Appendix 2) prior to adoption by Cabinet Members.

This report also outlines an Action Plan for delivery, (Appendix 3) to support regulatory compliance, improve participation, feedback, services and overall satisfaction.

Feedback on these is sought from the Select Committee for improving overall tenant and leaseholder (resident) participation.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**That the Select Committee notes the development of these key strategies along with the Action Plan and timescales for delivery set out and ask questions of officers.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### 1. Background

The previous Environment, Housing and Regeneration Select Committee undertook an in-depth review into tenant and leaseholder engagement. Cabinet in February 2022 received the Committees reports and agreed its recommendations as set out below:

**That Cabinet agree that officers develop, for approval by the Cabinet Member, an Engagement Strategy and associated 3-year Delivery Plan, that in particular sets out:**

- a. The engagement options to promote resident feedback and involvement at a pace and level which suits residents, and that which supports service improvement and the resolution of matters which are important to residents;**
- b. The opportunities for residents to engage via the use of digital tools as well as ‘in-person’ contact, understanding that engagement should be non-exclusionary, and not be limited to only digital means but should instead provide a breadth of options to give a voice to all tenants and leaseholders. In-person contact could include the reformation of regular Senate or Assembly meetings, alongside special interest groups, or ‘Community Engagement Days’ held at estates or public spaces, alongside partners and other Council services (such as the Community Safety Team, Green Spaces and Anti-Social Behaviour & Environment Team), to ensure a coordinated approach to engagement, resolution of neighbourhood issues, and collation of resident feedback;**
- c. A schedule of further consultation to be carried out, to obtain feedback from a large and diverse subset of the Borough’s tenants and leaseholders, with a view to adding to or revising the strategy in line with this feedback.**

**3. That Cabinet request that officers work with the Corporate Communications team to raise awareness of the engagement options available to tenants and leaseholders, including through the use of the Council’s social media platforms, to maximise the opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to provide feedback.**

**4. That Cabinet agree that, in order to demonstrate a continued commitment to overview and scrutiny, the Environment, Housing & Regeneration Select Committee receive a yearly report for the duration of the service’s 3-year plan for engagement, providing an update on the implementation of these recommendations, further actions, and continued direction of travel, supported by the latest data on tenant and leaseholder engagement and feedback.**

The Residents’ Services Select Committee now covers this remit. As part of post review monitoring, in particular recommendation 4 above, this provides an update to the Committee on the development of key strategies in relation to tenant and leaseholder engagement.

## **2. Introduction**

Both draft strategies have been developed in partnership with residents and staff and set out a new approach to resident engagement in the Borough. This includes feedback and recommendations from:

- the recent Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR),
- virtual focus groups,
- consultation on the draft engagement strategies – (Appendix 4)
- Environment, Housing & Regeneration Select Committee
- engagement with staff across various housing services.

The strategies underpin our commitment to use resident engagement to improve our services by placing the ‘resident voice’ at the heart of what we do and enabling staff to ‘hear’ those voices by working in partnership with residents to share power and influence change.

The Action Plan has not only been developed to ensure delivery and implementation of the strategies but to also demonstrate continued commitment and support the work of the Council’s landlord function.

Consultation on both draft strategies were carried out in a variety of ways to ensure a wide range of residents and their views were captured. The overall response has been very positive and supports the hierarchy of involvement model shown below. This approach supports the five levels of engagement and will be delivered alongside our options for engagement, set out in Appendix 5.



A high percentage of responders think the Council are on the right track in terms of engaging with them. This should help combat some of the challenges usually faced when carrying out various engagement activities.

## **3. Summary of Strategy**

The draft Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy and Higher Risk and Complex Buildings (tower blocks) Strategy, covers the period 2022 to 2025. The Higher Risk and Complex Buildings Engagement Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy. It details how the

Council will engage with residents in the Borough using the six standards of our Hillingdon Engagement Charter (HEC). These standards underpin the Borough wide approach to engagement and provide the foundation from which to build engagement with residents in tower blocks.

The key aims of the strategy is to make sure that residents:

- know the different ways they can become involved
- can take part and influence decisions
- have the support and resources they need to take part
- can help to improve and deliver quality services

For residents living in high risk and complex building, the Council will provide accessible copy of the strategy document and ensure that residents understand the safety of their building and comply with the obligations under the Building Safety Act 2022.

The key aims of the tower block engagement strategy is to ensure:

- residents are empowered to play an effective role in ensuring the safety of their buildings
- residents know how to easily report problems that may be of safety concerns within their home or tower block environment
- the Council remains fully compliant with the relevant legislation and the Regulator of Social Housing expectations.
- residents know what decisions they will be consulted on
- residents know how their views will be taken into account.

Residents with a language barrier are being supported by providing translation where needed.

Hillingdon is responsible for managing and maintaining 11 tower blocks of flats as listed in table 1 below. These blocks are made up of mix tenures, including one Independent Living Scheme. All blocks are situated in Hillingdon, predominately in Hayes, except for one located in Margate.

Table 1: Locations of Tower Block Estates.

<b>Block name</b>	<b>Number of flats</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Number of leasehold properties in block</b>
Fairlie House	78	Uxbridge	9
Fitzgerald House	48	Hayes	6
Glenister House	48	Hayes	8
Gouldings	72	Uxbridge	10
Harding House	48	Hayes	7
Melbourne House	96	Hayes	30
Queens Lodge	30	Margate	21

Rabbs Mill	78	Uxbridge	32
Skeffington Court	75	Hayes	7
Sutcliffe House	48	Hayes	8
Wellings House	48	Hayes	0

Alongside the High Risk and Complex Building Strategy, an action plan will be developed for each block focussing on issues that are specific to the block and its residents. This action plan will also be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis or in line with any changes to legislation.

The success of this strategy also depends on how well we know our residents living within our tower blocks. We are currently working to ensure our records relating to customer insight is of good quality.

#### **4. Activities carried out to date**

- a. As part of increasing participation and digital offer, the CET is working with the Corporate Communications Team to create a resident engagement webpage that will:
  - highlight the various ways of getting involved,
  - list calendar of events and activities
  - enable residents to register their interest in events and activities
  - provide online interactive forms that will collate feedback on various engagement activities
  - provide advice and guidance to residents on various engagement and involvement activities
- b. Exploring joined up working with Learn Hillingdon and the Libraries to deliver basic IT training to residents.
- c. Delivered Older People's Assembly in December 2022
- d. Delivered Assembly for People with Disability in December 2022
- e. Working in partnership with the council's regeneration contracting partner to deliver various workshop as part of a wider social value engagement plan. Energy Efficiency workshop delivered to provide residents with tips of keeping your home warm, reducing energy bills and signpost to relevant support available.
- f. Support for Residents Associations; attending meetings and support with funding application for community activities.
- g. High Risk and Complex Building (tower block) engagement – Customer Engagement Team is taking proactive steps to engage with residents making sure that they keep update to date with relevant information relating to compliance and raise awareness of fire safety and other emergency precautions within the home and tower block environment. So far:

- all residents living in the tower blocks have been invited to attend one of the 'Stay Safe at Home' sessions. These sessions are being delivered in partnership with the London Fire Brigade, Caretaking Team, Tenancy Management Team, Met Police and Repairs Team.
- 6 sessions have been delivered (understanding that engagement should be non-exclusionary sessions will be delivered, virtually, in-person and on estates here setup is applicable).
- carrying out noticeboard audit in tower blocks to increase engagement and ensure that relevant information is displayed
- identifying and recruiting tower block champions for each block.

## **5. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Tenant and Leaseholder Strategy 2022-25

Appendix 2 – High Risk and Complex Building Strategy 2022-25

Appendix 3 – Action Plan for delivery of Strategies

Appendix 4 - Consultation Report on the Draft Engagement Strategies

Appendix 5 –Options for Engagement