



## **COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Tuesday 27th June 2023**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Communities Scrutiny Committee**, which will be held at:

**Council Chamber - Civic Offices**  
on **Tuesday 27th June 2023** at **7.00 pm**

**Georgina Blakemore**  
**Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services Officer:** Vivienne Messenger  
Email: [DemocraticServices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

**Members:** Councillors A Patel (Chairman), J Lucas (Vice-Chairman),  
R Brookes, J Jogia, J Lea, M Markham, , C McCann, S Murray,  
Caroline Pond, R Sharif and S Yerrell.

**Co-opted Member:** W Marshall

### **SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE: 6.00PM**

**This meeting will be broadcast live and recorded for repeated viewing.**

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#### **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

Therefore, by entering the Council Chamber and using the seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.”

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To be announced at the meeting.

To report non-attendance before the meeting, please use the [Members Portal webpage](#) to ensure your query is properly logged.

Alternatively, you can access the Members portal from the front page of the [Council's website](#), at the bottom under 'Contact Us'.

**3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on this agenda.

**5. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 8)**

The Council approved a new scrutiny committee structure on 4 April 2023. The Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to agree the notes of the last meeting of the Stronger Communities Select Committee held on 21 March 2023.

**6. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 9 - 12)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer) To consider, comment and propose any amendments to the draft Terms of Reference and Work Programme, for consideration and approval by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**7. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY (Pages 13 - 80)**

To consider comment and recommend the draft Property & Housing Services Resident Involvement Strategy, to Cabinet for approval.

**8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To note that the next meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee will be held at 7.00pm on 26 September 2023.

**9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Exclusion:** To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
10	HOUSING REPAIRS VALUE FOR MONEY	3

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came

into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

**Background Papers:** Article 17 - Access to Information, Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

**10. HOUSING REPAIRS VALUE FOR MONEY (Pages 81 - 128)**

To consider the attached housing repairs value for money report.

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**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 21 MARCH 2023  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES  
AT 7.00 PM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	J Lea (Chairman), J Lucas (Vice-Chairman), C Amos, R Balcombe, S Murray, C Nweke, D Stocker, D Wixley, S Yerrell and H Kane
<b>Co-opted Member:</b>	W Marshall
<b>Other members present:</b>	S Kane, C Whitbread and H Whitbread
<b>Other members virtually:</b>	R Pugsley and J H Whitehouse
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	I Hadley
<b>Officers Present:</b>	J Gould (Interim Strategic Director), P Maginnis (Service Director (Corporate Services)), S Lewis (Customer Services Manager), P Wharfe (Interim Service Director (Housing Revenue Account)), G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services), L Halmshaw (Higher Level Apprentice), R Moreton (Corporate Communications Officer) and R Perrin (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)
<b>Officers present virtually:</b>	V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer)

***THIS MEETING WAS RECORDED LIVE AND CAN BE VIEWED [HERE](#)***

#### **42. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman reminded everyone present that this meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

#### **43. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The Committee noted that Councillor H Kane had been appointed as substitute for Councillor I Hadley.

#### **44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

#### **45. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference and Work Programme.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Resident Involvement Strategy would be considered in the new municipal year.

**46. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Team Manager, Customer Services, S Lewis presented a Customer Services Strategy update report and what residents had been telling the council.

Members asked several questions on the report and answers were provided by the Officers and Portfolio Holder in attendance.

**Resolved:**

1. That further information would be provided via the Members Bulletin following the success of the Warm Places initiative and the continued work with community groups.
2. That the Committee puts on record its thanks to the front-line staff and waste officers for the service they had provided to ensure residents were kept informed.

**47. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE**

The Interim Housing & Property Director, P Wharfe presented an interim update on the HRA Business Plan. It was noted that the stock condition survey was underway, and an Asset Management Strategy would be produced alongside the HRA Business Plan. It would be presented to the Committee in October 2023 and annually onwards.

Members asked a number of questions on the report and answers were provided by the officer in attendance.

**Resolved:**

That the Committee reviewed the interim HRA Business Plan update.

**Actions:**

1. That HRA Business Plan is presented to the Committee in October 2023.
2. That the Asset Management Strategy is presented to the Committee before adoption.

**48. DISCUSSION PAPER - OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE 2023/24**

The Team Manager for Democratic Services and Elections, G Woodhall advised the Committee that the Constitutional Working Group had considered a report on the proposed Overview and Scrutiny Committee Structure for 2023/24 at their meeting on Thursday 16 March 2023.

It was proposed that they would recommend option 1 to Council, but requested that the next available scrutiny committee should consider the report before it was presented to Council on 4 April 2023 for adoption.

Members asked several questions on the report and answers were provided by Officers, the Leader of Council and Portfolio Holder in attendance.

**Resolved:**

That the Committee supported the Constitutional Working Group's recommendation.

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## COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023/24

#### Core Areas of Responsibility

The Community Scrutiny Committee core areas of responsibility align directly with the [Corporate Plan 2023-2027](#) and the key objectives for Stronger Communities, which are:

- To safeguard vulnerable people and support residents in need, providing support and equality of opportunity in a district that is safe for everyone.
- To work with our partners to achieve wellbeing and health equity for all our residents.
- To listen to our communities and work with them when making decisions, developing policies, and designing services.

The Communities Select Committee will be responsible for the scrutiny of the Housing & Strategic Health Partnerships, Community Health & Wellbeing, and Customer & Corporate Support Services Portfolios, as detailed below.

#### Key Areas covered by the Communities Scrutiny Committee

Housing, Community, Customer Services, Wellbeing and Community Partnerships.

#### Key Objectives

1. To develop an annual work programme that effectively scrutinises the areas of responsibility outlined above.
2. To provide scrutiny of services and areas of concern that are identified by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its review of Corporate Key Performance Indicators.
3. To engage in policy review and development, with a focus on improvement and how this can be best achieved.
4. To consider any matter referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or Portfolio Holder and to make recommendations as appropriate.
5. To establish working groups and task and finish panels to undertake any activity within the terms of reference.
6. To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers to help develop policy.
7. To engage with the community and encourage community engagement.
8. To monitor and review relevant projects and associated closure and benefits reports.
9. To consider the impact on customers, residents, businesses and visitors to our District, and to respond to consultation activities.

## **(DRAFT) Proposed Portfolio Responsibilities**

### **Housing & Strategic Health Partnerships**

Matters relating to those services within the Housing & Property Service as follows:

Housing Management, Housing Options, Older Peoples Housing, Home Ownership, Housing Repairs, Housing Assets, Housing Development, Facilities Management, Depot Management.

Recognising the importance of Housing in the Health agenda across Greater Essex and Hertfordshire.

### **Community Health & Wellbeing**

Safer Communities, Neighbourhood Services, Safeguarding, Community Development, Arts & Museum Services, Grant Aid, Youth Council, Young People.

Voluntary Sector Champion.

### **Customer & Corporate Support Services**

Matters relating to those services within the Corporate Support and Customer Services as follows:

Customer Services, Compliments and Complaints, Internal & External Communications, Website, Public Consultation, Debt Recovery, Cashiers, Democratic Services, Elections, Civic & Member Services, Data Protection, Freedom of Information, People Team, Business Support (including Land Charges, Legal Services and Reprographics), ICT.

Car Parking.

Digital Delivery.

Objective to improve the customer experience.

**DRAFT**  
**Communities Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24**  
**Chairman: Councillor A Patel**

	Item	Progress/Comments	Lead Officer
<b>27 June 2023</b>			
1	Resident Involvement Strategy	Introduction and approval to progress to Cabinet C/F from Stronger Communities Select Committee Work Programme	Surjit Balu
2	Housing Repairs Value for Money	Value for money -Exempt Report (restricted papers)	Andrew Small
<b>26 September 2023</b>			
3	Housing Allocation Scheme	12-month review of the Housing Allocation Scheme	Surjit Balu
4	Annual Lettings Report	To scrutinise allocations and lettings performance for 22/23 <i>C/F from Stronger Communities Select Committee Work Programme</i>	Surjit Balu
5	Safer Streets	<i>C/F from Stronger Communities Select Committee Work Programme</i>	Caroline Wiggins
<b>16 January 2024</b>			
6	HRA Business Plan	Yearly Performance update	Surjit Balu
7	Qualis Property Solutions Performance Reporting	Presentation on Housing Repair Performance (Qualis)	Surjit Balu / Ben Johnson (Qualis)
8	Customer Services (Overall satisfaction)	To receive an update on improvements to this Key Performance Indicator	Susan Lewis
<b>5 March 2024</b>			
9	Annual Housing performance report	Report on annual housing KPI's including compliance around the Building Safety Act <i>C/F from Stronger Communities Select Committee Work Programme</i>	Surjit Balu
10	Tenant Satisfaction Measures	<i>C/F from Stronger Communities Select Committee Work Programme</i>	Surjit Balu

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Progress/Comments</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
<b>Items for Scrutiny date to be confirmed</b>			
11	Presentation from the District Commander for Epping Forest and Brentwood	Annual Report	Caroline Wiggins
12	Community Safety Partnership	Annual report and review of the district Strategic Intelligence Assessment	Caroline Wiggins

## Report to Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**Portfolio:** Property & Housing (Cllr Holly Whitbread)

**Subject:** Housing Resident Involvement Strategy

**Officer contact for further information:** Chris Walsh Service Manager



**Democratic Services Officer:**

L Kirman: email: [DemocraticServices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) tel:01992 564243)

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**Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**The Committee considers and recommends that the draft Property & Housing Services Resident Involvement Strategy be agreed at Cabinet, as set out at Appendix Three of this report.**

**Report:**

**Background**

1. The Council offers a variety of involvement opportunities for residents across the breadth of its business; however the overall aim of the draft resident involvement strategy (draft RI strategy), is to set out the approach of the Property & Housing Service toward resident involvement and how it will be delivered, supported and resourced. Whilst developed to ensure compliance with the current and future regulatory requirements of social housing providers, its primary focus is to recognise the positive role that our residents play in the design and improvement of our Property & Housing service, whilst supporting our wider commitment toward the empowerment of residents and communities.

2. The draft RI strategy provides a new framework for resident involvement, which recognises that there is no *'one size fits all'*. It sets out a wide range of engagement opportunities for residents to 'Get Involved' as much or as little as they may wish, based on their interests, time available and preferred method of communication. It provides mechanisms to encourage resident scrutiny (particularly around decision making, finances and performance), thereby ensuring the Service remains accountable to its residents. The success of the strategy depends on the Property & Housing Service developing a culture where resident involvement is viewed as a valued activity, that is embedded across all functions of the Property & Housing Service.

3. Meaningful resident involvement is viewed as a key part of delivering sustainable communities and helping to improve the quality of life of our residents. As well as giving residents a voice to shape future decisions and improve services, on an individual level such involvement provides opportunity for people to make social connections and lasting friendships, reduce loneliness, boost confidence and generate a sense of wellbeing. By working in partnership with residents we are stronger together and more able to achieve our vision to "create great places where people want to live".

4. The social housing landscape has been, and continues to be, shaped dramatically by a number of shifting elements, including central government policy, availability of new technology, pressure on finances and the need to service a changing population, all of which has been accelerated by societal turning points, such as the Grenfell Fire and the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, the resident involvement arena looks very different now to how it did under the previous Tenant Participation strategy.

### **The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England:**

5. The **Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)** regulates registered providers of social housing to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector, which is able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. The regulatory framework for social housing in England is based on three economic standards and four consumer standards that all registered social housing providers must adhere to. This includes the **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment (Consumer) Standard 2017**, which sets expectations for registered social housing providers to provide choice, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants, to have a clear approach to complaints, and to provide a wide range of opportunities for tenants to have influence and be involved. The RSH's role is to intervene where there has been a failure to meet the standards, which has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants.

6. In 2020, Government published its **White Paper "The Charter for Social Housing Residents"**, setting out to raise the standard of social housing and meet the aspirations of residents throughout the country, both today and into the future. The Charter covers seven key themes as follows:

1. To be safe in your home,
2. To know how your landlord is performing,
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,
4. To be treated with respect,
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord,
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership.

7. Whilst resident involvement runs throughout the White Paper, of particular relevance to the draft RI strategy is Chapter Five, "*To have your voice heard by your landlord*", which requires landlords to ensure that residents are a key part of their governance and that consumer-led assurance arrangements are in place. Tenants who do not wish to attend formal meetings or join a formal group must have ways to feed back to their landlord, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their needs identified, with landlords tailoring their engagement opportunities.

8. The paper places an expectation on the RSH to require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually encourage, improve and support engagement with their social housing tenants.

9. Furthermore, information will be published annually by the RSH and made available to tenants on how their landlord is performing in key areas of service delivery, in accordance with a new suite of 22 tenant satisfaction measures (paragraph 10, refers). In addition, there will be a stronger role for the RSH, particularly in relation to the consumer standards which will include a new periodic inspection programme.

10. The Regulator for Social Housing published its new Tenant Satisfaction Measures standard on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022, which means that from 1<sup>st</sup> 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 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.

11. **The Building Safety Act 2022** received royal assent on 28 April 2022 and is a hugely significant piece of legislation which overhauls the way residential buildings are constructed and maintained in the UK following the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017, while protecting the rights of leaseholders.

12. Of particular relevance to the draft RI strategy are the provisions which relate to engagement with residents. Whilst not yet in force, providers of social housing will be required to have in place, resident engagement strategies that allow residents to obtain information and be consulted on matters and decisions affecting the safety of their building, thereby ensuring that residents are empowered to play an effective role in ensuring their building is, and continues to be safe. Whilst this requirement, currently, applies only to landlords managing or owning higher-risk buildings, the Council views it as good practice to engage, thereby future proofing across its entire housing stock.

13. Whilst the draft RI strategy pays regard to the Building Safety Act, it is our intention to adopt a separate resident engagement strategy in respect of building safety, which will set out the Council's approach to resident engagement generally in this area. Further, for each high-risk building, there will be a tailored resident engagement strategy which may be reviewed and approved by the Building Safety Regulator as part of its statutory role as may be required.

14. On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Government published its **Social Housing (Regulation) Bill**, putting into law a host of reforms to the regulation of the social housing sector. The aim of the Bill is to have "*more people living in decent, well looked-after homes enjoying the quality of life they deserve*". In summary the bill proposes to:

- levy unlimited fines on failing social housing providers
- drive up standards and bolster the regulator's powers to act
- give tenants the right to obtain information from landlords
- give tenants the right to rate the services provided by landlords
- tackle damp and cold living conditions
- subject social landlords to Ofsted-style inspections.

15. Other relevant statutory requirements are found at appendix one.

## **The Local Context**

16. The Council's mission for the District is to work together to serve our community, putting our customers at the heart of everything we do and focusing on the things that matter most to local people (EFDC Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023, refers). The Council's key corporate objectives are that:

- People live longer, healthier and independent lives
- Adults and children are supported in times of need
- People and communities achieve their full potential

- Delivering effective core services that people want
- Improving the district housing offer

17. The Council produces a Housing Strategy which is kept under review, and sets out priorities and objectives for Housing Services, including tenant and leaseholder involvement. The vision for the overarching Housing Strategy (2022-2027) is that “Epping Forest will be a place that has safe, decent and good quality housing, of an appropriate mix of sizes, types and tenure, that meet the local needs of those who want to live in the District”. Its key priorities are:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Promoting health wellbeing and independence
- Economic growth and regeneration
- Quality and standards
- Protecting and enhancing the environment

The draft RI Strategy supports the Council’s corporate and service wide ambitions.

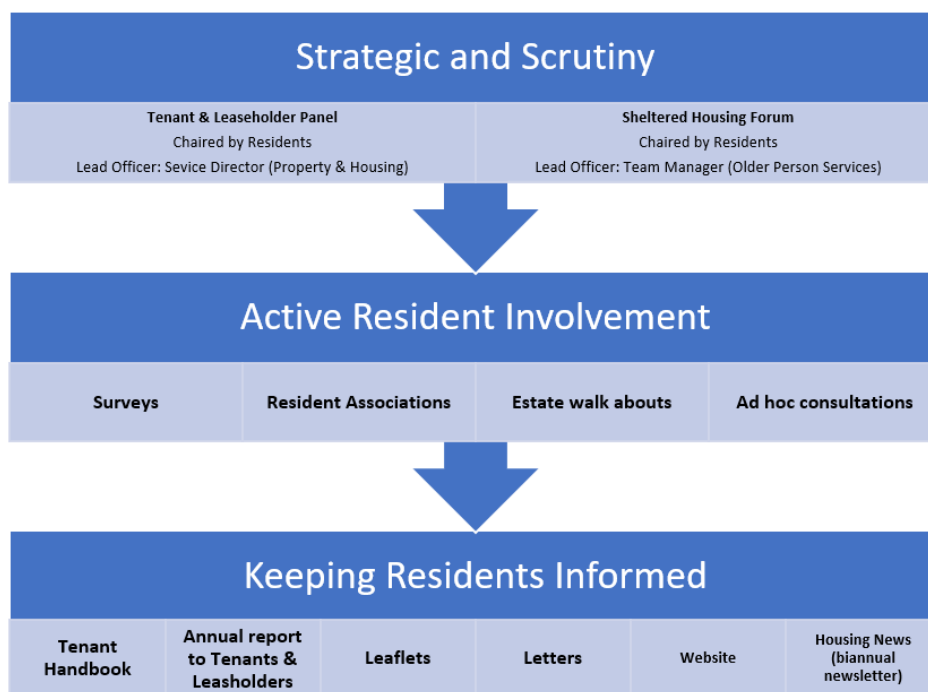
18. Historically, the Council’s housing management service has been delivered by geographical teams, however more recently these services have been delivered through specialist workstreams, removing conflicting priorities and allowing staff to focus on critical functions such as resident involvement. Following the Council’s restructure in 2019, the Resident Involvement function (Property & Housing Services) was transferred to the Tenancy & Estate Management team 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2023.

19. A Peer Review, commission by the Council in March 2019, undertaken by the East of England Local Government Association (LGA), found the Council’s existing resident involvement framework to be limited and recommended that it be reviewed, and additional resources considered.

20. The resident involvement framework under the outgoing ‘Tenant Participation Strategy’, is described in figure one. It was recognised that only a small number of our 6,500 tenants and 1,050 leaseholders are actively involved in formal / active resident involvement activities and the framework should be refreshed to provide a modern, inclusive, tailored suite of engagement opportunities to better meet the needs of our customers, the business and in order to satisfy our statutory obligations.



21. Figure One: Framework for Resident Involvement under outgoing the Tenant Participation Strategy:



22. Under the existing strategy, Tenants and Leaseholders views are represented by the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel, which formed in 2019 when the former Tenants’ Panel and the Leaseholder Association amalgamated to become one group following waning attendance. Its role is to take an independent detailed look at how the Property & Housing Service is performing, and to carry out in-depth reviews of various aspects of the service. Residents of the District’s sheltered housing schemes are represented by a Sheltered Housing Forum.

23. At a more local level, there are currently five active, recognised resident-led Associations operating within the District, namely: Limes Farm Community Group (Chigwell), Chapel Road Residents Association (Epping), Romeland Residents Association (Waltham Abbey), People of Roydon and Roundhills Residents Association (Waltham Abbey). Each group has a signed constitution which is approved by the Council, and which sets out its function, membership and how it will operate.

24. Tenants and Leaseholders are kept informed through the Council’s website, housing information leaflets and publicity documents.

25. The Council undertakes independent tenant satisfaction survey (STAR survey, paragraph 28 refers) every three years. This will change in the financial year as the government has moved to tenant satisfaction measures (TSM), the Council are currently in engagement with several companies to provide these measures and the intend to publish findings in accordance to legislation.

## **Creating a new model of Resident Involvement for Property & Housing Services**

26. During the period October 2020 – September 2021, Officers worked with colleagues across the Service and with residents to understand what ‘good’ involvement looks like, to identify opportunities for involvement and to further our understanding of how EFDC residents prefer to be involved. Officers joined a best practice networking group and attended relevant conferences, taking time to understand best practice within the sector. Interested residents volunteered to join a Resident Involvement Co-Creation group to help shape a new model of resident involvement which better meets the needs and wants of customers and the business, as well as fulfilling current and future regulatory requirements. Alongside this, a combination of digital and ‘*in person*’ involvement opportunities were piloted to help inform our future approach.

27. The draft RI strategy has been created collaboratively with the Resident Involvement Co-creation Group, who are a group of residents and staff, passionate about resident involvement, sharing a desire to continuously improve the way our residents are involved. The draft RI strategy is endorsed by the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel.

28. To better understand what our residents think, the Property & Housing Service undertook a customer satisfaction survey between January 2020 – April 2020 using the industry Star methodology. This survey focused specially on our Tenants and Leaseholders. The results from the 2020 STAR survey were positive, with the survey finding high levels of satisfaction with a number of aspects of the Service including the value for money of the rent (90%), and that EFDC Housing Service provides homes that are safe and secure (91%) – all of which are reflected in the finding that 87% of tenants are satisfied with the overall services provided by EFDC Housing Service.

29. Slightly lower levels of satisfaction were found particularly relating to communication issues, with opportunities to make views known, listening to views and acting upon them among the lower ratings. Eight out of ten tenants (81%) were satisfied that the Housing Service kept them informed about things which might affect them. However, fewer tenants were satisfied with opportunities to make views known (68%) or that the Council listens to their views and acts upon them (57%).

30. Tenants were also asked how they wanted to be involved with the EFDC Housing Service. Whilst 82% said they did not want to be involved, a number of tenants did express an interest in the following options (table one, refers).

31. Table One: Summary of responses from residents expressing desire to be involved:

Method or Involvement	% of Resident respondents
Not interested in getting involved	82
Armchair Reviewer	10
Mystery shopper	9
Tenant & Leaseholder Panel	9
Tenant Working Party	7
Website	6
Social Media	6
Other	5

32. The survey found that half of the tenants surveyed used the internet on a daily, or almost daily basis (52%) with a further 11% using it weekly. Whilst some use it less frequently, in all, 72% of tenants use it at some time. However, there was a marked difference between the tenures. 74% of general needs tenants said they used the internet (54% daily), whilst just 47% of sheltered tenants use the internet (30% daily). When asked why tenants didn't use the internet, 259 tenants gave an answer, and of those, 107 told us they did not want to use it. A similar number gave 'other' reasons such as old age, and 22 said they lacked the skills, but very few cited cost of equipment or connection as the reason.

33. Overall, insight from the Star Survey highlighted a need to rethink our approach to involvement to ensure that it is fit for the future and designed with residents and their voice at its heart.

## **A New Strategy for Resident Involvement (Property & Housing Services)**

### **The Vision:**

34. Our vision for the Property and Housing Service is to “*Create Great Places Where People Want to Live*”. In order to do this, we must listen to what our residents want. We asked our Co-Creation Group of involved residents to tell us what good resident involvement looked like to them and adopted these principles in the development of the draft RI strategy.

### **What does good resident involvement look like to our residents?:**

35. The Resident Involvement Co-creation Group agreed that effective resident engagement promotes a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants and their landlord. It exists when these interests work together towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services. The group agreed seven key principles of what “*good*” resident involvement looks like to them, summarised below:

1. That tenants and leaseholders are placed at the heart of everything the landlord does;
2. Information is provided to residents in a timely manner about services and decisions which may affect them;
3. That the views of residents are actively sought and respected by the Council;
4. That sufficient opportunity is offered for residents to be involved in ways that suit

- them, at all different levels;
5. That residents are able to influence decision-making, shape future services and hold their landlord to account;
  6. That residents are helped to understand the impact of their involvement, how their contribution informs decision making and helps to shape services;
  7. That outcomes following a resident involvement activity are always communicated back to residents and any positive news or achievements are celebrated.

36. These principles translate into a new definition for resident involvement, as created by the Co-Creation group in January 2022:

***“Resident Involvement means the opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to influence decision-making and help shape the Property & Housing services that are provided to them. It encourages two-way communication, leading to agreed actions, providing opportunity for tenants, leaseholders and other residents to hold the Council’s landlord function to account. It improves social connections and contributes to the overall health and wellbeing of participants, as well as neighbours who benefit from improvements to their neighbourhood”.***

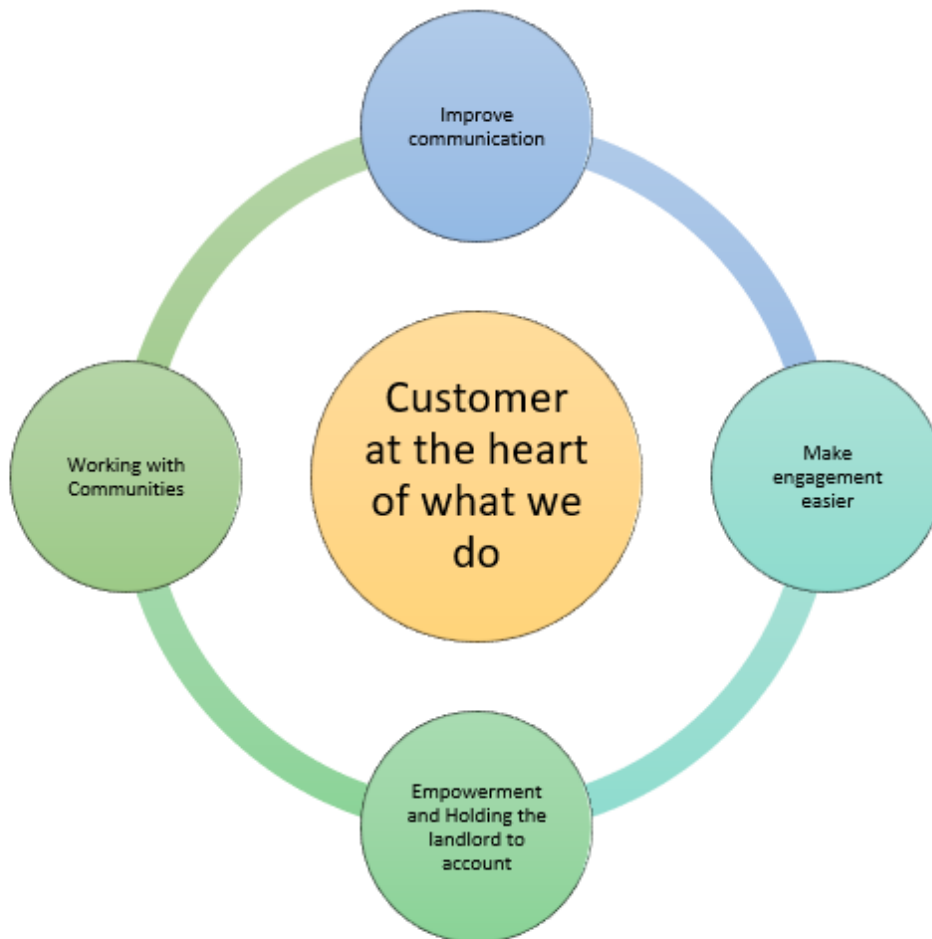
37. The Co-Create Group and Tenant & Leaseholder Panel were clear that the draft RI strategy should be referred to as the *Resident* Involvement Strategy (Property & Housing Services), as it was felt that naming it the ‘Tenant and Leaseholder’ Involvement Strategy was less inclusive and did not align with the intentions of the Charter for Social Housing Residents in reducing stigma, nor would it properly describe the relationship the Council has with wider residents who receive or are impacted by Property & Housing services but who do not have a contractual relationship with the Council.

With the Housing Service funded by tenants and leaseholders, it is only right that these same residents should have the final say over decisions that affect them - with regard also paid to the views of wider residents, where they too will be affected.

## **Aims**

38. The overall aims of the draft RI strategy are divided into five key areas (figure two, refers).

39. Figure Two: Five Aims of Draft RI Strategy:



**Aim One: Residents at the heart of what we do.**

40. This aim underlines our view of our residents as partners in delivering the Strategy outcomes. We want to ensure that our plans, decisions and actions are made with *your* hopes and ambitions first and foremost in mind.

41. Leading from the very top of our organisation, we will work hard to create a resident involvement culture which values the positive contribution, that involved residents play, in the provision of our Property & Housing Services.

**How will we achieve this?**

42. In 2014, the Council adopted a set of agreed values and behaviours, which underpin our organisational culture. Our five values set the expectations on how we will work with each other and our residents to achieve our vision and includes Trust; One Team; Performance; Innovation; Customer.

43. With special regard to Customer, we agreed to *“put the customer at the heart of everything we do and to provide services that are tailored to the different needs of our communities”*. We will expand this core value as follows, we will *“put the customer at the heart of everything we do, provide services that are tailored to the different needs of our*

*communities and to value the positive contribution that involved residents play in the provision of Property & Housing Services”.*

44. Embedding resident involvement as a standard practice and expectation of all members of the Property & Housing Service, will require a change of culture, which will be led from the top of the organisation.

45. Existing staff and elected Members will be equipped with the training and appropriate resources to support resident involvement activities. We will build resident involvement into future staff induction programmes and will develop appropriate mandatory online training tools to raise the profile of resident involvement and ensure everyone is aware of the benefits and outcomes it brings.

46. Residents will be consulted right from the start of each new project or key decision and their views will be heard and acted upon, right up until a service is delivered. We will continue to listen and respond to the resident’s voice for as long as our service continues.

47. The Housing Sector is constantly changing, with a range of new legislation, best practice and guidance being published. We will aim to provide residents with regular updates to help them understand any changes which may affect them; to explain the Council’s responsibilities and where required any response to these changes and promote how residents can take part in national conversations. We will have a separate strategy for ensuring that residents are driving the response to plans in relation to building regulations and fire safety. Outcomes, following a resident involvement activity, will be communicated back to residents and any positive news or achievements celebrated.

## **Aim Two: Making engagement easier**

48. We want to make it as easy as possible for resident’s voices to be heard and for residents to have a say on housing matters which affect them.

### **How will we achieve this?**

49. We will refresh our Tenant and Leaseholder Census, to better understand who our residents are and how they wish to be involved. This will enable us to tailor our engagement opportunities and make it easier for residents to be involved.

50. Provision of a wide-ranging suite of options for involvement that make use of successful traditional methods and embracing more innovative and/or digital engagement opportunities will enable residents to pick and choose the activities that suit them, giving them options as to how and when they wish to participate.

51. Residents will be encouraged to take part in as many involvement opportunities as they wish. Whilst many of the activities require no specialist knowledge, there are some opportunities that we know residents may appreciate some training or additional support. Where this is the case and to boost participants’ confidence, we will provide training, create support networks, and hold special events.

52 The introduction of a new housing management computer system, which features an interactive customer portal, will make it easier for us to engage with residents and for residents to provide us feedback. Feedback will be used to identify trends, which will help us to continuously improve the services we provide.

53. Where barriers to using digital technology exist, we will aim to ensure that activities are

varied, accessible and inclusive. Wherever possible, we will look to use a mixture of engagement tools to capture a broad range of views, in turn making it easier for residents to be involved whatever their circumstances. In addition, our team of trained Digital Champions will be on hand to support residents to become involved digitally. For some specific resident involvement activities, where available we will loan smart tablets to enable participation.

### **Aim three: Resident empowerment & holding the landlord to account**

54. We value the role that our empowered residents play in service delivery. We believe that our tenants and leaseholders should be kept informed about how we are performing, what decisions we are making, how we spend our income and should have opportunity to challenge us and tell us where they feel improvements are needed.

#### **How will we achieve this?**

55. By working with residents to understand what performance measures are important to them and by reporting back to them against our performance of those measures.

56. Providing residents with a clear breakdown of how our income is being spent, so that they can challenge us if they think our expenditure is not providing value for money, or if our income is not being spent on matters which matter most to them.

57. Ensuring that feedback from all resident involvement activities flows through local and strategic groups, making certain that resident voices are integrated in service planning, monitoring and improvement.

58. By publishing information on complaints, including lessons learnt, trends and how these have been used to improve our services. We will also publish findings from any consultations, tenant satisfaction surveys and mystery shopping exercises and will work with residents to raise standards where necessary.

59. We will refresh our existing Housing Service Standards, considering what matters most to residents and will report back to residents annually on those standards.

60. We aim to provide opportunities for residents to become empowered to have input into and responsibility for decision making. Our resident-led strategic Panels will consider how well we are complying with the Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards and other key statutory obligations. They will look at overall performance and will make recommendations for further scrutiny and how our services may be improved.

61. We will increase the number of resident representatives on the Select Committee for Communities, ensuring that our Member Councillors make key policy decisions with the tenant's voice in mind.

62. We will develop resident involvement opportunities in new areas such as scrutiny, complaints, procurement and recruitment.

63. At a local level, we will consult residents on the scope and delivery of local projects and will seek feedback, which will be published widely for residents to view. We will keep residents informed against progress made and will provide opportunities for resident scrutiny.

### **Aim Four: Improving communication**

64. We are seeking to create open and clear communication channels between the Property & Housing Service and our residents. Whether residents are looking to provide feedback, make a complaint, or simply want to report a repair we are aiming to make communication as easy as possible for our residents.

#### **How will we achieve this?**

65. We will make it as easy as possible for residents to communicate with us by whatever means they choose.

66. Also, by producing a range of communications to keep residents informed. We will work with residents to understand what information residents want to know and ensure that our communications are easy to understand, respectful and strike the right tone.

Our new computer system will enable us to interact with residents more effectively, allowing us to tailor resident involvement opportunities to individuals or groups of residents, take quick polls and run surveys.

67. We intend to provide a range of opportunities, including in-person events and online meetings, where residents can speak directly to staff and Managers and make their views known.

68. We will deliver interactive online webinars and engaging communications such as magazines, leaflets and social media, which will include contributions from residents themselves.

69. We are going to build a new engaging website which will promote the new ways that residents can “*Get Involved*” and will advertise forthcoming events and involvement opportunities, as they arise. The website will showcase projects, keep residents informed about matters which affect them and celebrate good news stories and successes among other things.

70. We will develop a “*you said, we did*” approach to feedback. To show you how residents contributions shape the services we deliver, we will share this regularly with you through our newsletter, social media and website.

#### **Aim Five: Working with our communities**

71. We want to work with our residents to “*Create Great Places Where People Want to Live*”, where our Council housing and estates are viewed as privileged parts of the District and that residents are proud to call home.

#### **How will we achieve this?**

72. We will work with community representatives to bring about the changes that residents want most, by working closely with existing Residents’ Associations and by empowering Champions to represent their communities. We will promote and facilitate the development of new empowered Residents’ Groups across the District.

73. We aim to get to know our communities well, by regularly seeking feedback about their neighbourhoods. Feedback will be used to shape future priorities.

74. Activities such as Estate Inspections and Growing Projects will position residents as central participants and resident engagement opportunities will be introduced throughout a tenancy, starting with ‘Meet Your Neighbour’ events in new-build properties and through the



whole range of “Ways to Get Involved”.

75. By continuing to build strong links with our partners and local voluntary groups to deliver projects to the benefit of our residents and the wider community.

76. It is our hope that taking part in resident involvement activities will provide a range of benefits to participants that are separate and fall outside of the direct influence on services. It is anticipated that these benefits may lead to increased confidence, social connections and even new skills to add to a CV. The benefits to residents can be even greater than to the Property & Housing Service itself.

77. We will expand on the collaborative work already being undertaken between the Property & Housing Services and Communities, Culture & Wellbeing teams, to support the health and wellbeing of our residents. Further, recognising the synergy between the Services regarding resident involvement, we will work collaboratively to support each other in the provision of resident involvement opportunities across the District.

79. Final outcomes from resident involvement activities will be reported to residents via the Annual Resident Involvement Impact Report. The report will detail which involvement activities represented the greatest impact and best value.

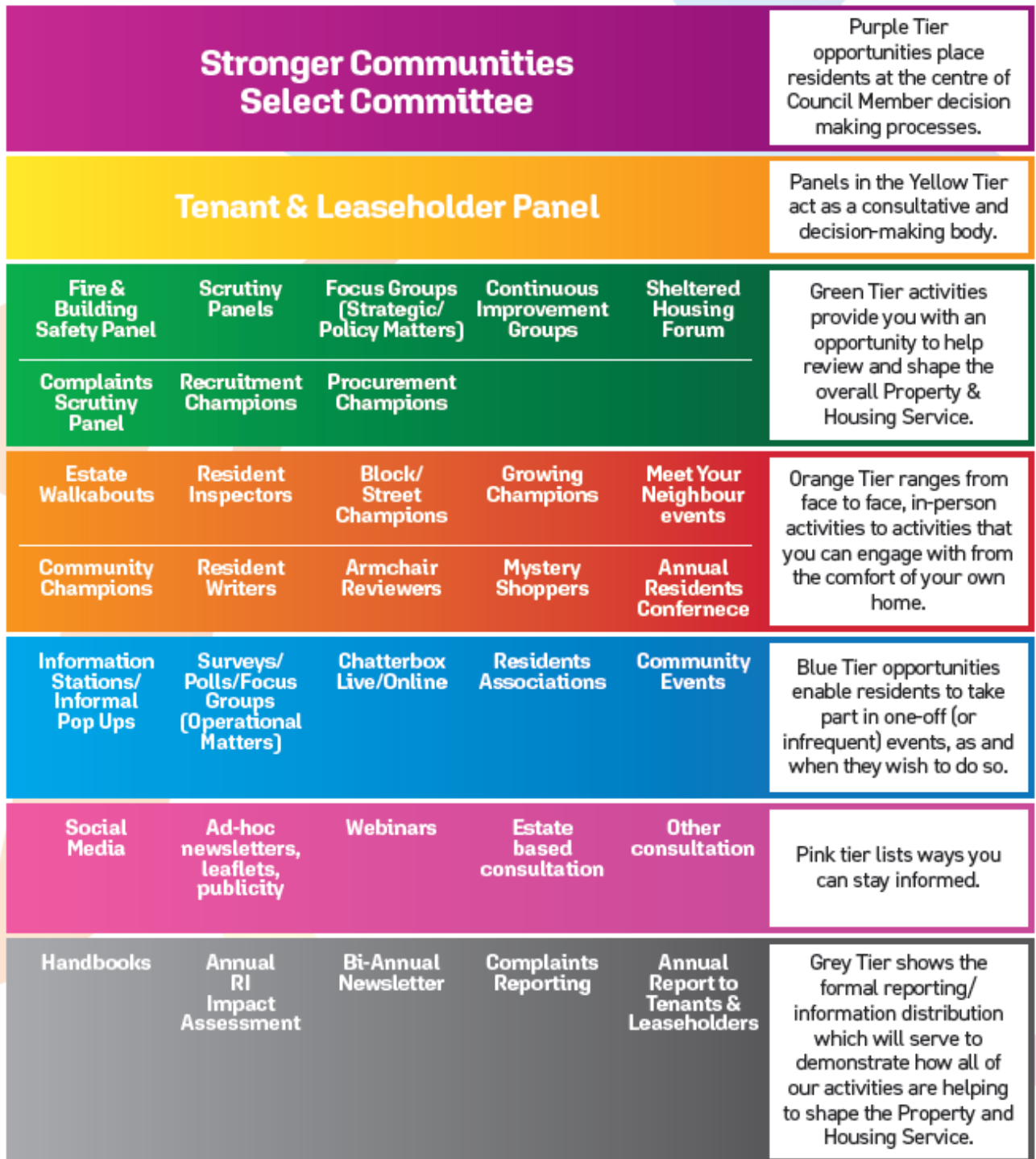
### **New Framework for Resident Involvement**

80. Our new framework for resident involvement recognises that there is no ‘*one size fits all*’ for involvement and provides a suite of opportunities for residents to ‘*Get Involved*’ as little or as much as they wish, and at all levels, based on personal interests, expertise, time available and preferred communication channels. In many cases, involvement will be specifically tailored to meet the needs and wishes of our residents.

81. The resultant suite of options (figure three, refers) shows the wide range of ways we will work with, listen to and act upon residents’ views and how residents can directly influence decision making. This will not be an exhaustive list and is likely to expand and evolve through continuous improvement and innovation. Feedback from all resident involvement activities will flow through local and strategic groups to ensure that resident voices are integrated in service planning, monitoring and improvement.

82. **Appendix two**, provides a glossary of the proposed resident involvement opportunities under the new framework, together with an explanation of function, who can be involved, training available, as well as detailing the inter-relationships between the forums / activities.

83. Figure Three: New Framework for Resident Involvement:



84. When preparing the draft RI strategy and at the specific request of both the Resident Involvement Co-Create Group and Tenant & Leaseholder Panel, Officers have deviated from the Council’s standard strategy template format, in favour of a shorter, more engaging, easy to read document. The draft RI strategy is presented at **Appendix Three**.

85. In view of the importance of this strategy, an external consultant was appointed to act as a critical friend throughout its development, to ensure that the draft RI strategy meets current and future regulatory requirements and industry best practice.

## **Measuring Impact**

86. We will record the outcomes from every resident involvement activity and using an assessment tool called an "Impact Assessment", we will evaluate the effect of resident involvement and the difference it makes to services provided by the Property & Housing Service. These assessments will allow us to demonstrate to our residents the changes that have been made as a direct consequence of their involvement and will allow us to identify which involvement activities represent greatest impact and best value.

### ***Resident Involvement Impact Assessments***

87. Team Managers will record all resident involvement activities undertaken by their Teams on a monthly basis using a standard proforma, recording the following:

- Type of involvement: This explains the purpose of the activity and who was involved.
- Outcomes: The changes that have been made / taken place following the activity (if any); survey findings from participants.
- Value for Money: A record of staff time and cost in relation to the activity.

These reports will be presented to the Resident Involvement Continuous Improvement Group on a quarterly basis, who will make an assessment against each activity in terms of i) Impact and ii) Value for Money. Findings from the Continuous Improvement Group will be presented at Service Performance Management Meetings and used to determine which activities add value / improve services and therefore should be continued or discontinued.

88. We will use this intelligence as a platform to understand who our involved residents are and to identify under-representation. We will work with our residents to remove barriers to engagement and encourage future engagement from the diverse communities that we serve.

89. An annual resident involvement activity impact assessment report will be published and made available to all residents on the Council's website / social media. A paper copy of the report will be available on request.

90. We will continue to seek out best practice so that we can continuously improve how we involve our tenants, leaseholders and residents living on Council-owned housing estates. This will enable us to be more flexible and become adaptable to a changing environment if we need to.

## **Consultation, Information, and Involvement – Statutory Requirement**

91. The way in which tenants will be consulted, informed, and involved will be set out in:

- a) The Epping Forest District-Wide Tenant Participation Agreement\*
- b) The Resident Involvement section of the Council's website; and
- c) The Annual Report to Tenants.

\*Participation agreements are also made between the Council and the Epping Forest Sheltered Housing Forum, and all Council recognised Resident Association groups in the District.

## **Review and monitoring**

92. In view of its strategic importance, the resident involvement strategy is to be adopted by the Council's Cabinet, following pre-scrutiny by the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel and the Council's Communities Select Committee. However, responsibility for the delivery of the strategy rests with the elected Housing Portfolio Holder and the Director of Property & Housing.

93. An important part of the strategy is its Key Action Plan. The strategy's first Key Action Plan is set out at Appendix Three. Subsequent Key Action Plans will be produced on an annual basis and will be approved by the elected Housing Portfolio Holder, on the recommendation of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel and Communities Select Committee, who will consider the draft Key Action Plan in detail.

94. The Tenant and Leaseholder Panel and Resident Involvement Co-Create group will regularly review the progress made towards this strategy. The Strategy itself will be reviewed during 2027, or earlier if the need for significant revisions is identified.

### **Resource implications:**

95. To make sure that support and resources are available for effective involvement, we will provide grants to recognised Residents Associations to help with their set up, running costs and subscriptions for video conferencing platforms, as well as making available an annual budget allocation to fund minor estate enhancements.

96. We will develop a clear expenses, incentives and rewards policy for involvement and will provide/arrange transport to and from venues for formal involvement where residents are unable to do so themselves.

97. We will provide appropriate staff to support involvement activities. The Property & Housing Resident Involvement team will consist of:

- 1 FTE Team Manager (Tenancy & Estate Management)
- 1 FTE Resident Involvement Officer (Tenancy & Estate Management Team)
- 1 FTE Resident Involvement Officer (Regeneration and Development)

98. The Property & Housing Resident Involvement team will have oversight of all work being undertaken under the framework for Property & Housing resident involvement, ensuring that support is provided to residents and service areas on effective and meaningful engagement through providing:

- Information, advice and guidance,
- Training,
- Practical and administrative support to all strategic resident involvement panels and forums,
- Management of funding applications pursuant to recognised resident associations,
- Managing the content of the resident involvement micro-site and social media pages

99. The Property & Housing Resident Involvement team will support work relating to performance, scrutiny and service improvement, ensuring that the voices of our residents

are heard and are shaping the improvement efforts of the Service. However, the following specific lead officer roles will be held by the following posts:

- Lead Officer to the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel - Service Director (Property & Housing),
- Lead Officer to the Fire and Building Safety Panel - Head of Asset Strategy
- Lead Officer to the Sheltered Housing Forum – Team Manager for Older Person Services

100. In addition to the core Resident Involvement team, there will be an expectation on Team Managers to ensure customer-centric services within their own work area and demonstrate how tenants and leaseholders are given a voice. How each team will achieve this will be set out in their annual Team Plans. Team Managers will act as Lead Officers for any Focus Group or similar within their own area of expertise.

Ultimately, supporting residents and actively seeking opportunity to involve residents will be the responsibility of all Officers and will be reflected in the role profiles of all customer-facing posts and evidenced at individual one to one performance meetings.

101. Property & Housing Services will work in partnership with Communities, Culture & Wellbeing Teams whose staff will independently and collaboratively support resident involvement opportunities, as well as promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion across the District.

102. Further, we will provide dedicated financial resources and equipment to support those resident involvement activities referred to in this Strategy. The budget allocated will cover activities such as (not an exclusive list); resident training, hire of venues, resident travel expenses, new equipment, conferences, grants and hospitality for events. This budget will be kept under review as the new Strategy is implemented.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

103. In summary, there is a statutory requirement to involve residents in the services that the Property & Housing Service provides and its governance (paragraphs 5 – 15 and **Appendix one** of this report, refers).

#### **Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

104. The draft RI Strategy ensures that residents are placed at the heart of decision making, thereby supporting the Council's wider objectives around the safer, cleaner, greener agenda. In key areas such as Building and Fire Safety, the strategy will serve to support the Council in fulfilling its statutory obligations, whilst at the same time helping residents to feel safe in their homes.

#### **Reason for decision:**

To agree a new strategy and framework for involving residents, which recognises the positive role that our residents play in the design and improvement of our Property & Housing Service, which supports our wider commitment toward the empowerment of residents and communities, ensures compliance with the current and future regulatory requirements of social housing providers and supports the Council's ambition to create great places where people want to live.

**Options considered and rejected:**

- (1) To continue to operate the existing strategy and framework for resident involvement as agreed under the previous tenant participation strategy.
- (2) To agree a different approach to resident involvement.

**Consultation undertaken:**

105. The Portfolio Holder – Housing and Communities, the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel and Resident Involvement Co-Create Group, Officers and Members have been consulted and have responded positively to the draft RI Strategy.

A wider public consultation was undertaken between 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023, the findings of which are attached as Appendix Five and are noted to be, on the whole, a positive response to the proposed strategy.

**Resource implications:**

106. Given the new resident involvement strategy will use the current resources within Housing namely, Tenancy & Estate Management we do not expect there to any further financial strain on budgets beyond those budgets already allocated.

**Legal and Governance Implications, Relevant Statutory Powers:**

107. In summary, there is a statutory requirement to involve residents in the services that the Property & Housing Service provides and its governance (paragraphs 5 – 15 and **Appendix one** of this report, refers).

**Corporate Plan Implications:**

108. This strategy is integral to the corporate plan and ensuring we put residents at the heart of everything we do, as well as creating places people want to live.

**Background Papers:**

**Appendix Five:** Results of Staff, Members and Public Consultation.

**Risk Management:**

110. The key risk associated with the non-delivery of this strategy is:

Name of Risk:	Risk:
Standards of Tenant Involvement and Empowerment	<p>Failure to deliver, leading to non-delivery of this strategy and/or breaches of regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Failure to consult, involve and empower residents to participate in service delivery could lead to mistrust, poor services and lower sustainability of communities.</p> <p>Reputational risk of not engaging residents.</p>
Risk Consequences:	Management and Mitigation
<p>Regulator Scrutiny and Intervention where there has been a failure to meet the Consumer Standards or could have caused, serious harm to tenants. In cases of serious detriment, this could result in a regulatory notice being published against the Council.</p> <p>Decisions are made without having full sight of resident opinion.</p> <p>Opportunities lost through poor reputation</p>	<p>Training and empowerment of staff and Members to deliver this strategy</p> <p>A commitment to reviewing the resources required to adequately resource the Strategy year on year</p> <p>Local teams delivering local activities and engaging residents</p> <p>A wide range of formal and informal involvement opportunities at all different levels</p> <p>A commitment to embedding resident involvement in everything we do</p> <p>Regular resident communications in a variety of formats</p> <p>By regularly monitoring the delivery of the strategy with our residents and the outcomes and impact of resident involvement activities</p> <p>By understanding who our customers are and their preferences</p> <p>Using technology and insights to reach as many residents as we can.</p>

**Equality:**

111. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out and there was no significant impact. Please see **appendix four** for full detail.

**Key Decision:** (if required): Agree framework for the new Strategy and accompanying documents.



## Resident Involvement Strategy Appendix One

### **Appendix One ~ Other relevant statutory requirements:**

#### **The Housing Act 1985:**

- Provision of information about tenancies (*Section 104*)
- Consultation on matters of housing management (*Section 105*)
- Information about housing allocation (*Section 106*)
- Consultation before disposal to a private landlord (*Section 106A*)

#### **The Housing Act 1996 (as amended):**

- Primary homelessness legislation under Part 7
- Primary allocations legislation under Part 6

#### **The Equality Act 2010:**

The Council has a duty to ensure the following:

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (i.e. their age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; gender, and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, and those who do not share it;
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low; and,
- Ensure people from all sections of our community are given equal opportunity to participate.

#### **Data Protection:**

The Privacy Notice (Property & Housing Services – Resident Involvement), may be found at <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Privacy-notice-Property-housing-services-Resident-involvement.pdf>

#### **Localism Act 2011:**

The 2011 Localism Act gave people more power over what happens in their neighbourhood, including:

- The Community Right to Bid giving community groups the right to bid to buy community buildings and facilities that are important to them;
- The Community Right to Challenge allowing voluntary and community groups to run a local authority service where they believe they can do so differently and better. This may be the whole service or part of a service;
- Neighbourhood planning measures allowing communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans;
- The Community Right to Build allowing local communities to propose small-scale,

- site-specific, community-led developments;
- The Community Right to Reclaim Land giving communities the right to under-used or unused land owned by public bodies is brought back into public use;



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## 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 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022, which means that from 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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## Resident Involvement Strategy Appendix Three

### Appendix Three: Draft Resident Involvement Strategy (including Action Plan 2023-24)

Progress on the Resident Involvement Strategy Key Action Plan will be formally monitored by the Stronger Place Select Committee every quarter.

The Resident Involvement Strategy itself will be reviewed annually until its expiry in 2027, however it is a dynamic document which will be continually developed and updated.

# EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL



## PROPERTY & HOUSING SERVICE

# **RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2022 – 2027**

**Epping Forest District Council –  
working in partnership with  
residents**

# Introduction

Epping Forest District Council wants to ensure our residents – tenants, leaseholders or anyone living in an area where there is Council-owned social housing – have every opportunity to tell us what they want from the Property & Housing Service. By keeping you informed and actively listening to your views, we can improve and tailor our services to meet your needs.

Our new five-year Resident Involvement strategy is centred around five key aims, which will enable us to deliver meaningful resident involvement. The below summarises how residents can become involved and details the benefits that this will bring to our residents.

## Why are we doing this?

We are proud of the services we provide to our residents. However, we are always seeking new ways to improve those services and ensure that they are tailored to our residents' needs and aspirations.

Customers are at the heart of everything we do, so we have refreshed our Resident Involvement strategy to extend the ways in which you can be involved, providing ways which are more attractive, easier to take part in, and will result in real changes and improvements to services.

Through our new Strategy, you will have the opportunity to influence and be involved in the formulation of housing policies; the setting of standards; have scrutiny of the landlord's performance; make recommendations for improvement and be able to influence the management of our Council housing and related services.

By providing a wide range of opportunities for your voice to be heard, we will ensure that more informed decisions are made. As a social housing landlord, we will also work to meet the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator, measures set out in the Charter for Social Housing Residents, and other related legislation (see Appendix 1).

# Our Vision

Our vision for the Property and Housing Service is to “Create Great Places Where People Want to Live”.

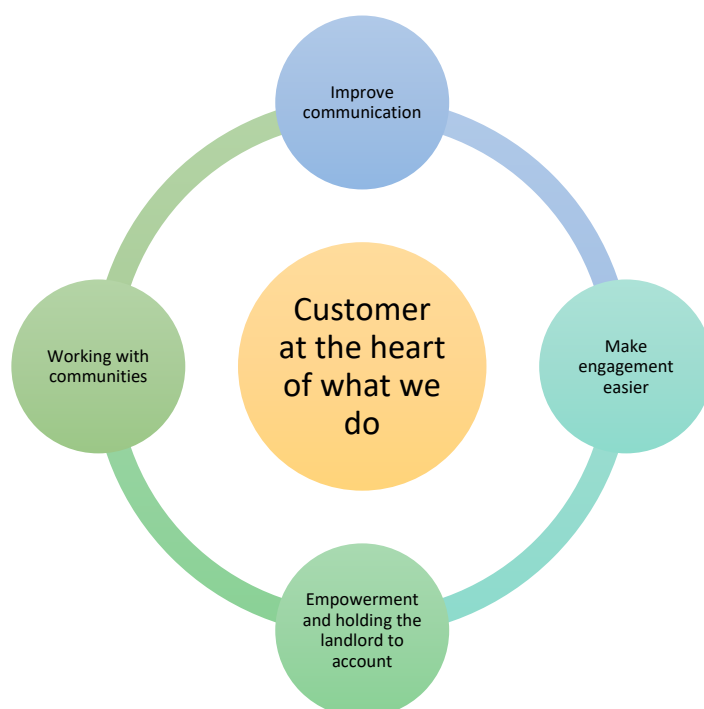
In order to do this, we must listen to what our residents want. We asked our Co-Creat e Group of involved residents to tell us what good resident involvement looked like to them and adopted these principles in the development of this strategy.

The principles that our Co-Creat e Group conceived are as follows:

1. Tenants and leaseholders are placed at the heart of everything the landlord does;
2. Information is provided to residents in a timely manner about services and decisions which may affect them;
3. The views of residents are actively sought and respected by the Council;
4. Sufficient opportunity is offered for residents to be involved in ways that suit them, at all different levels;
5. Residents are able to influence decision-making, shape future services and hold their landlord to account;
6. Residents are helped to understand the impact of their involvement, how their contribution informs decision making and helps to shape services;
7. Outcomes following a resident involvement activity are always communicated back to residents and any positive news or achievements are celebrated.

# Our Aims

Our five key aims as shown below.



# 1. Residents at the heart of what we do

This aim underlines our view of our residents as partners in delivering the Strategy outcomes. We want to ensure that our plans, decisions and actions are made with *your* hopes and ambitions first and foremost in mind.

Leading from the very top of our organisation, we will work hard to create a resident involvement culture which values the positive contribution, that involved residents play, in the provision of our Property & Housing Services.

## How we will achieve this

We will expand our core values and behaviours, placing a responsibility for resident involvement on all members of the Property & Housing Service. Existing staff and elected Members will be equipped with the training and appropriate resources to support resident involvement activities. We aim to develop an induction programme with residents and implement it for all new staff members, raising the profile of resident involvement and ensuring everyone is aware of the benefits and outcomes it brings.

You will be consulted right from the start of each new project or key decision and your views will be heard and acted upon, right up until a service is delivered. We will continue to listen and respond to your voice for as long as our service continues.

The Housing Sector is constantly changing, with a range of new legislation, best practice and guidance being published. We will aim to provide you with regular updates to help you understand any changes which may affect you; to explain the Council's responsibilities and where required any response to these changes and promote how you can take part in national conversations. We will have a separate strategy for ensuring that residents are driving the response to plans in relation to building regulations and fire safety.

Following a resident involvement activity, outcomes will be communicated back to residents and any positive news or achievements celebrated.

# 2. Making engagement easier

We want to make it as easy as possible for your voices to be heard and for you to have a say on housing matters which affect you.

## How we will achieve this

We will refresh our Tenant and Leaseholder Census, to better understand who you are and how you wish to be involved. This will enable us to tailor our engagement opportunities for you and make it easier for you to be involved.

Provision of a wide-ranging suite of options for involvement that make use of successful traditional methods, embrace more innovative and/or digital engagement opportunities and will enable you to pick and choose the activities that suit you, giving you options as to how and when you wish to participate.

Residents will be encouraged to take part in as many involvement opportunities as they wish. Whilst many of the activities require no specialist knowledge, there are some opportunities that we know residents may appreciate some training or additional support. Where this is the case and to boost participants' confidence, we will provide training, create support networks and hold special events.

We are implementing a new computer system, which features an interactive customer portal, making it easier for us to engage with you and for you to provide us feedback. Feedback will be used to identify trends, which will help us to continuously improve the services we provide to you.

Where barriers to using digital technology exist, we will aim to ensure that activities are varied, accessible and inclusive. Wherever possible, we will look to use a mixture of engagement tools to capture a broad range of views, in turn making it easier for you to be involved, whatever your circumstances. In addition, our team of trained Digital Champions will be on hand to support you to become involved digitally. For some specific resident involvement activities, where available we will loan smart tablets to enable participation.

### **3. Resident empowerment and holding the landlord to account**

We value the role that our empowered residents play in service delivery. We believe that our tenants and leaseholders should be kept informed about how we are performing, what decisions we are making, how we spend our income (rent received from Council tenants) and should have opportunity to challenge us and tell us where they feel improvements are needed.

#### **How we will achieve this**

By working with you to understand what performance measures are important to you and by reporting back to you against our performance of those measures.

By providing you with a clear breakdown of how our income is being spent, so that you can challenge us if you think our expenditure is not providing value for money, or if our income is not being spent on matters which matter most to you.

By ensuring that feedback from all resident involvement activities flows through local and strategic groups, making certain that your voices are integrated in service planning, monitoring and improvement.

By publishing information on complaints, including lessons learnt, trends and how these have been used to improve our services. We will also publish findings from any

consultations, tenant satisfaction surveys and mystery shopping exercises and will work with you to raise standards where necessary.

We will look to refresh our existing Housing Service Standards, taking into account what matters most to you and will report back to you annually on those standards.

We aim to provide opportunities for residents to become empowered to have input into and responsibility for decision making. Our resident-led strategic Panels will consider how well we are complying with the Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards and other key statutory obligations. They will look at overall performance and will make recommendations for further scrutiny and how our services may be improved.

We will increase the number of resident representatives on the Select Committee for Communities, ensuring that our Member Councillors make key policy decisions with the tenant's voice in mind.

We will develop resident involvement opportunities in new areas such as scrutiny, complaints, procurement and recruitment.

At a local level, we will consult residents on the scope and delivery of local projects and will seek feedback, which will be published widely for residents to view. We will keep residents informed against progress made and will provide opportunities for resident scrutiny.

## 4. Improving communication

We are seeking to create open and clear communication channels between the Property & Housing Service and you. Whether you are looking to provide feedback, make a complaint about any aspect of the Service, or simply want to report a repair, we are aiming to make communication as easy as possible for our residents.

### How we will achieve this

We will make it as easy as possible for you to communicate with us by whatever means you choose.

Also, by producing a range of communications to keep residents informed. We will work with you to understand what information residents want to know and ensure that our communications are easy to understand, respectful and strike the right tone.

Our new computer system will enable us to interact with you more effectively, allowing us to tailor resident involvement opportunities to individuals or groups of residents, take quick polls and run surveys.

We intend to provide a range of opportunities, including in-person events and online meetings, where residents can speak directly to staff and Managers and make their views known.

We will deliver interactive online webinars and engaging communications such as magazines, leaflets and social media, which will include contributions from residents themselves.

We are going to build a new engaging website which will promote the new ways that you can “*Get Involved*” and will advertise forthcoming events and involvement opportunities, as they arise. The website will showcase projects, keep residents informed about matters which affect them and celebrate good news stories and successes among other things.

We will develop a “*you said, we did*” approach to feedback. To show you how your contribution shapes the services we deliver, we will share this regularly with you through our newsletter, social media and website.

## 5. Working with our communities

We want to work with you to “*Create Great Places Where People Want to Live*”, where our Council housing and estates are viewed as privileged parts of the District and that you are proud to call home.

### How we will achieve this

We will work with community representatives to bring about the changes that you want most, by working closely with existing Residents’ Associations and by empowering Champions to represent you and your neighbours. We will promote and facilitate the development of new empowered Residents’ Groups across the District.

We aim to get to know our communities well, by regularly seeking feedback about your neighbourhoods. Feedback will be used to shape future priorities.

Activities such as Estate Inspections and Growing Projects will position residents as central participants and resident engagement opportunities will be introduced throughout a tenancy, starting with ‘Meet Your Neighbour’ events in new-build properties and through the whole range of “Ways to Get Involved”.

By continuing to build strong links with our partners and local voluntary groups to deliver projects to the benefit of our residents and the wider community.

It is our hope that taking part in resident involvement activities will provide a range of benefits to participants that are separate and fall outside of the direct influence on services. It is anticipated that these benefits may lead to increased confidence, social connections and even new skills to add to a CV. The benefits to you can be even greater than to the Property & Housing Service itself.

Final outcomes from resident involvement activities will be reported to you via the Annual Resident Involvement Impact Report. The report will detail which involvement activities represented the greatest impact and best value.



# Ways to get involved

Through the creation of a new suite of resident involvement activities, we will ensure that a wide range of opportunities exist for you which allow you to be involved as much or as little as you wish.

The table below shows the wide range of ways in which we will work with, listen to and act upon your views and how you can directly influence our decision-making.

<b>Stronger Communities Select Committee</b>					Purple Tier opportunities place residents at the centre of Council Member decision making processes
<b>Tenant &amp; Leaseholder Panel</b>					Panels in the Yellow Tier act as a consultative and decision-making body
<b>Fire &amp; Building Safety Panel</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panels</b>	<b>Focus Groups (Strategic / Policy Matters)</b>	<b>Continuous Improvement Groups</b>	<b>Sheltered Housing Forum</b>	Green Tier activities provide you with an opportunity to help review and shape the overall Property & Housing Service
<b>Complaints Scrutiny Panel</b>	<b>Recruitment Champions</b>	<b>Procurement Champions</b>			
<b>Estate Walkabouts</b>	<b>Resident Inspectors</b>	<b>Block / Street Champions</b>	<b>Growing Champions</b>	<b>Meet Your Neighbour events</b>	Orange Tier ranges from face to face, in-person activities to activities that you can engage with from the comfort of your own home
<b>Community Champions</b>	<b>Resident Writers</b>	<b>Armchair Reviewers</b>	<b>Mystery Shoppers</b>	<b>Annual Residents Conference</b>	
<b>Information Stations / Informal Pop ups</b>	<b>Surveys / Polls / Focus Groups (Operational Matters)</b>	<b>Chatterbox Live / Online</b>	<b>Residents Associations</b>	<b>Community Events</b>	Blue Tier opportunities enable residents to take part in one-off (or infrequent) events, as and when they wish to do so
<b>Social Media</b>	<b>Ad-hoc newsletters, leaflets, publicity</b>	<b>Webinars</b>	<b>Estate based consultation</b>	<b>Other consultation</b>	Purple Tier lists ways you can stay informed
<b>Handbooks</b>	<b>Annual RI Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Bi-Annual Newsletter</b>	<b>Complaints Reporting</b>	<b>Annual Report to</b>	Grey Tier shows the formal reporting/information

				<b>Tenants &amp; Leaseholders</b>	distribution which will serve to demonstrate how all of our activities are helping to shape the Property and Housing Service
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# How will we measure the impact and what will success look like?

As we roll out the strategy, we intend to capture information about each involvement activity delivered, who we are engaging with, the cost of that engagement and what is being achieved.

We will evaluate the effect of resident involvement and the difference it makes to the services provided by the Property & Housing Service through an Impact Assessment. The Impact Assessment will allow us to demonstrate the changes that have been made as a direct consequence of your involvement and identify which involvement activities represent the greatest impact and best value.

When we know who is getting involved, we can work together to target those who are not represented or not as involved, understand the reasons why and try to encourage their engagement.

By 2027 we expect to have:

- a range of engagement and involvement opportunities in place, which are well attended and supported by residents
- embedded a resident involvement culture across the Property & Housing Service
- implemented a framework for resident involvement which delivers greater levels of scrutiny by residents and accountability to residents
- increased levels of tenant satisfaction that a) the Council listens to views and acts upon them and b) with opportunities to make views known
- completed a tenant census to better understand who our tenants and leaseholders are and how they wish to be communicated with and involved
- implemented a new computer system to handle our resident involvement needs and make communicating with our residents easier and more tailored
- developed and implemented a new webpage dedicated to resident involvement

We will regularly review the progress made towards this strategy and will continue to seek out best practice so that we can continuously improve how we involve our tenants, leaseholders and residents living on Council-owned housing estates. This will enable us to be more flexible and become adaptable to a changing environment, if we need to.

# Appendix 1

## Statutory and regulatory requirements

### The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England:

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regulates registered providers of social housing to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector, which is able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. The regulatory framework for social housing in England is based on three economic standards and four consumer standards that all registered social housing providers must adhere to. This includes the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment (Consumer) Standard 2017, which sets expectations for registered social housing providers to provide choice, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants, to have a clear approach to complaints, and to provide a wide range of opportunities for tenants to have influence and be involved. The RSH's role is to intervene where there has been a failure to meet the standards, which has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants.

### The Charter for Social Housing Residents:

In 2020, Government published its White Paper "*The Charter for Social Housing Residents*", setting out to raise the standard of social housing and meet the aspirations of residents throughout the country, both today and into the future.

The Charter covers seven key themes as follows:

1. To be safe in your home
2. To know how your landlord is performing
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
4. To be treated with respect
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
7. To be supported to take your first step to home ownership

Whilst resident involvement runs throughout the White Paper, of particular relevance to this strategy is Chapter Five, "*To have your voice heard by your landlord*", which requires landlords to ensure that residents are a key part of their governance and that consumer-led assurance arrangements are in place. Tenants who do not wish to attend formal meetings or join a formal group must have ways to feed back to their landlord, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their needs identified, with landlords tailoring their engagement opportunities. The paper places an expectation on the RSH to require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually encourage, improve and support engagement with their social housing tenants. Information will be published annually and made available to tenants on how their landlord is performing in key areas of service delivery, in accordance with a new suite of 22 tenant satisfaction measures. Further, there will be a stronger role for the RSH, particularly in relation to the consumer standards which will include a new periodic inspection programme.

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The Regulator for Social Housing published its new Tenant Satisfaction Measures standard on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022, which means that from 1<sup>st</sup> 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. These measures will be reported 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.

## The Building Safety Act 2022:

The Building Safety Act 2022 received royal assent on 28 April 2022 and is a hugely significant piece of legislation which overhauls the way residential buildings are constructed and maintained in the UK following the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017, while protecting the rights of leaseholders.

Of particular relevance to this strategy are the provisions which relate to engagement with residents. Whilst not yet in force, providers of social housing will be required to have in place, resident engagement strategies that allow residents to obtain information and be consulted on matters and decisions affecting the safety of their building, thereby ensuring that residents are empowered to play an effective role in ensuring their building is, and continues to be safe. Whilst this requirement, currently, applies only to landlords managing or owning higher-risk buildings, the Council views this as good practice to engage as future proofing across its entire housing stock.

Whilst this strategy pays regard to the Building Safety Act, it is our intention to adopt a separate resident engagement strategy in respect of building safety, which will set out the Council's approach to resident engagement generally in this area. Further, for each high-risk building, there will be a tailored resident engagement strategy which may be reviewed and approved by the Building Safety Regulator as part of its statutory role as may be required.

## The Social Housing Bill

On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Government published its Social Housing Bill, putting into law a host of reforms to the regulation of the social housing sector. The aim of the Bill is to have *“more people living in decent, well looked-after homes enjoying the quality of life they deserve”*.

In summary the bill proposes to:

- levy unlimited fines on failing social housing providers
- drive up standards and bolster the regulator's powers to act
- give tenants the right to obtain information from landlords
- give tenants the right to rate the services provided by landlords
- tackle damp and cold living conditions

- subject social landlords to Ofsted-style inspections.

### Other relevant statutory requirements are:

#### The Housing Act 1985:

- Provision of information about tenancies (*Section 104*)
- Consultation on matters of housing management (*Section 105*)
- Information about housing allocation (*Section 106*)
- Consultation before disposal to a private landlord (*Section 106A*)

#### The Housing Act 1996 (as amended):

- Primary homelessness legislation under Part 7
- Primary allocations legislation under Part 6

#### The Equality Act 2010:

The Council has a duty to ensure the following:

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (i.e. their age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; gender, and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, and those who do not share it;
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low; and,
- Ensure people from all sections of our community are given equal opportunity to participate.

#### Data Protection:

The Privacy Notice (Resident Involvement), may be found at <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Privacy-notice-Property-housing-services-Resident-involvement.pdf>

#### Localism Act 2011:

The 2011 Localism Act gave people more power over what happens in their neighbourhood, including:

- The Community Right to Bid giving community groups the right to bid to buy community buildings and facilities that are important to them
- The Community Right to Challenge allowing voluntary and community groups to run a local authority service where they believe they can do so

differently and better. This may be the whole service or part of a service

- Neighbourhood planning measures allowing communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans
- The Community Right to Build allowing local communities to propose small-scale, site-specific, community-led developments
- The Community Right to Reclaim Land giving communities the right to under-used or unused land owned by public bodies is brought back into public use

## Resident Involvement Strategy Appendix 4

### Appendix Four: Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
  - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
  - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics

- Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
- Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
- Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
- Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body



	<b>Section 1: Identifying details</b>
	Your function, service area and team:  Function: Housing Management ~ Resident Involvement for Property & Housing Service Service Area: Property & Housing Services
	If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team:  As above
	Title of policy: Property & Housing Services Resident Involvement Strategy Decision: That the Communities Select Committee  (i) considers and recommends that the draft Property & Housing Services Resident Involvement Strategy be agreed at Cabinet, as set out at Appendix Three of this report.  (ii) recommends that a Senior Resident Involvement Officer be appointed to drive delivery of the Strategy
	Officer completing the EqIA: Mrs Rachel Smith Tel: 01992 562701 Email: <a href="mailto:rsmith@eppingforestdc.gov.uk">rsmith@eppingforestdc.gov.uk</a>
	Date of completing the assessment: 23 08 22
	<b>Section 2: Policy to be analysed</b>
2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?  New Strategy
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):  To agree a new strategy and framework for involving residents, which recognises the positive role that our residents play in the design and improvement of our Property & Housing Service, which supports our wider commitment toward the empowerment of residents and communities, ensures compliance with the current and future regulatory requirements of social housing providers and supports the Council's ambition to create great places where people want to live. What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? As above
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: service users, employees, the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? Yes, the strategy will affect all tenants, leaseholders and residents accessing services provided by the Council's Property & Housing Service. It will affect all employees working in the Property & Housing Service, particularly those working in customer facing roles. Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?

	Residents will be central partners when decision making.
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?</p> <p>Yes</p>
2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p>The Council's mission for the District is to work together to serve our community, putting our customers at the heart of everything we do and focusing on the things that matter most to local people (EFDC Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023, refers). The Council's key corporate objectives are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People live longer, healthier and independent lives</li> <li>• Adults and children are supported in times of need</li> <li>• People and communities achieve their full potential</li> <li>• Delivering effective core services that people want</li> <li>• Improving the district housing offer</li> </ul> <p>The Council produces a Housing Strategy which is kept under review, and sets out priorities and objectives for Housing Services, including tenant and leaseholder involvement. The vision for the overarching Housing Strategy (2022-2027) is that "Epping Forest will be a place that has safe, decent and good quality housing, of an appropriate mix of sizes, types and tenure, that meet the local needs of those who want to live in the District". Its key priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the supply of affordable housing:</li> <li>• Promoting health wellbeing and independence</li> <li>• Economic growth and regeneration</li> <li>• Quality and standards</li> <li>• Protecting and enhancing the environment</li> </ul> <p>The draft RI Strategy supports the Council's corporate and service wide ambitions.</p>
	<b>Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup></b>
	As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).
3.1	<p>What does the information tell you about those groups identified?</p> <p>The Property &amp; Housing Service undertook a customer satisfaction survey between January 2020 – April 2020 using the industry Star methodology.</p>

This survey focused specially on our Tenants and Leaseholders.

The results from the 2020 STAR survey were positive, with the survey finding high levels of satisfaction with a number of aspects of the Service including the value for money of the rent (90%), and that EFDC Housing Service provides homes that are safe and secure (91%) – all of which are reflected in the finding that 87% of tenants are satisfied with the overall services provided by EFDC Housing Service.

Slightly lower levels of satisfaction were found particularly relating to communication issues, with opportunities to make views known, listening to views and acting upon them among the lower ratings. Eight out of ten tenants (81%) were satisfied that the Housing Service kept them informed about things which might affect them. However, fewer tenants were satisfied with opportunities to make views known (68%) or that the Council listens to their views and acts upon them (57%).

Tenants were also asked if they wanted to be involved with the EFDC Housing Service. Whilst 82% said they did not want to be involved, a number of tenants did express an interest in the following options:

Method or Involvement	% of Resident respondents
Not interested in getting involved	82
Armchair Reviewer	10
Mystery shopper	9
Tenant & Leaseholder Panel	9
Tenant Working Party	7
Website	6
Social Media	6
Other	5

The survey found that half of the tenants surveyed used the internet on a daily, or almost daily basis (52%) with a further 11% using it weekly. Whilst some use it less frequently, in all, 72% of tenants use it at some time. However, there was a marked difference between the tenures. 74% of general needs tenants said they used the internet (54% daily), whilst just 47% of sheltered tenants use the internet (30% daily). When asked why tenants didn't use the internet, 259 tenants gave an answer, and of those, 107 told us they did not want to use it. A similar number gave 'other' reasons such as old age, and 22 said they lacked the skills, but very few cited cost of equipment or connection as the reason. Overall, insight from the Star Survey highlighted a need to rethink our approach to involvement to ensure that it is fit for the future and designed with residents and their voice at its heart.

3.2

Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?

During the period October 2020 – September 2021, Officers worked with colleagues across the Service and with residents to understand what 'good' involvement looks like, to identify opportunities for involvement and to further our understanding of how EFDC residents prefer to be involved.

	<p>Officers joined a best practice networking group and attended relevant conferences, taking time to understand best practice within the sector. Interested residents volunteered to join a Resident Involvement Co-Creation group to help shape a new model of resident involvement which better meets the needs and wants of customers and the business, as well as fulfilling current and future regulatory requirements. Alongside this, a combination of digital and '<i>in person</i>' involvement opportunities were piloted to help inform our future approach.</p> <p>The draft RI strategy has been created collaboratively with the Resident Involvement Co-creation Group, who are a group of residents and staff, passionate about resident involvement, sharing a desire to continuously improve the way our residents are involved. The draft RI strategy is endorsed by the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel.</p> <p>Managers, staff and Members were consulted on the draft strategy between 7 – 28 November 2022.</p> <p>The wider public was consulted on the draft strategy between 2 December 2022 – 22 January 2023.</p>		
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</p> <p>No</p>		
<b>Section 4: Impact of policy or decision</b>			
Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.			
	<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Nature of impact</b> Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	<b>Extent of impact</b> Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
	Age	Positive	H
	Disability	Positive	H
	Gender	Positive	H
	Gender reassignment	Neutral	
	Marriage/civil partnership	Neutral	
	Pregnancy/maternity	Neutral	
	Race	Positive	H
	Religion/belief	Positive	H
	Sexual orientation	Neutral	
<b>Section 5: Conclusion</b>			
		<b>Tick</b> <b>Yes/No as appropriate</b>	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No	If ' <b>YES</b> ', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.
<b>Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts</b>			

	<b>What are the potential adverse impacts?</b>	<b>What are the mitigating actions?</b>	<b>Date they will be achieved.</b>
	<p><b>Section 7: Sign off</b>  <b>I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.</b>  <b>(A typed signature is sufficient.)</b></p>		
Date	Signature of Director of Property and Housing: S BALU		
Date	Signature of person completing the EqIA: C WALSH		

**Advice**

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, e.g after a consultation has been undertaken.

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## **Proposed Resident Involvement Strategy – survey results, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

The proposed draft Resident Involvement Strategy has now been reviewed by interested parties, and amended accordingly, taking comments received into account.

Internal reviews, comments and amendments were carried out as follows:

20/10/22 – Strategy circulated to Managers to give time to read and consider.

7-8/11/22 – Strategy presented to Senior Leadership Team and Team Managers for comments.

16/11/22 – Strategy presented to Members.

23/11/22 – Tenants & Leaseholders Panel, and members of Co-CreatE Group, agreed to recommend Strategy.

28/11/22 – Deadline for comments received from Managers and Members.

1-2/12/22 – Letters sent to all tenants and leaseholders, inviting them to take part in the consultation below.

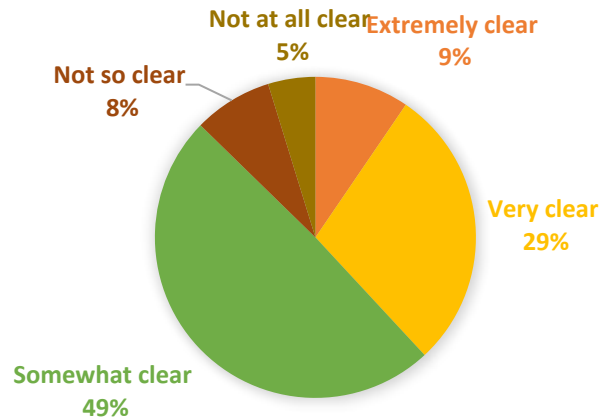
5/12/22 – Consultation open to all residents, online via SurveyMonkey, or by requesting a paper copy.

23/1/23 – Consultation closed.

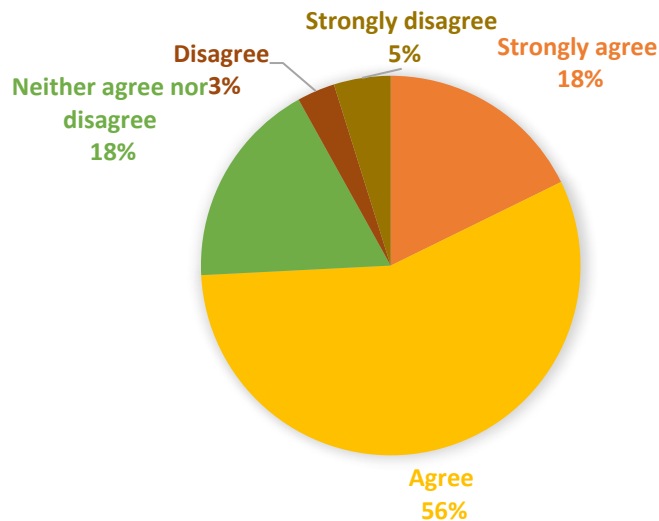
Residents were asked five questions and given the option to make comments alongside their responses.

57 online surveys were completed, with a further 6 returned in the post. The combined percentage responses were as follows:

### 1. AFTER READING THE STRATEGY, DO YOU THINK THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED STRATEGY IS CLEAR?

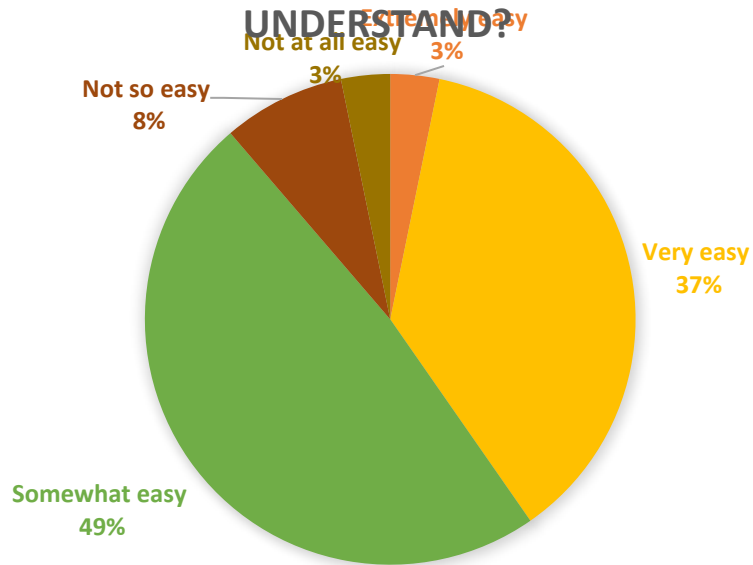


### 2. THE STRATEGY SETS OUT 5 KEY AIMS, DO YOU AGREE WITH THE KEY AIMS?

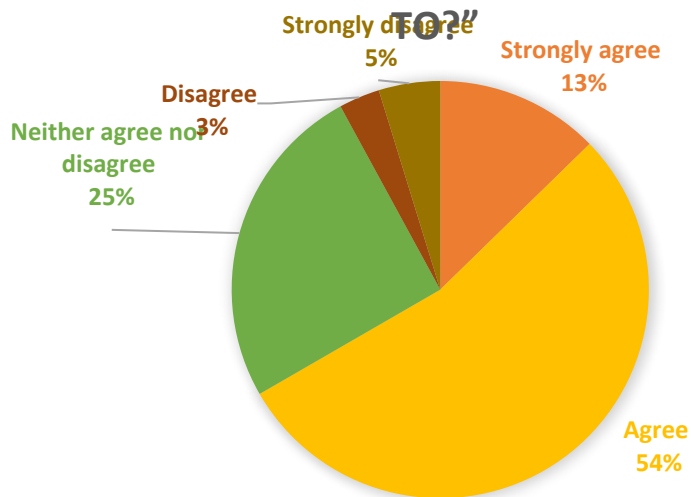




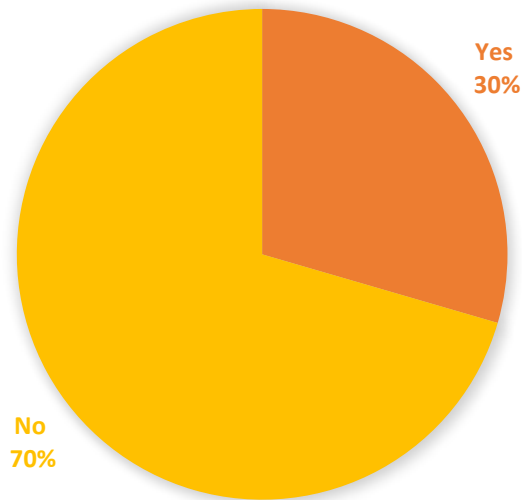
**3. HOW EASY IS THE DRAFT STRATEGY TO UNDERSTAND?**



**4. LOOKING AT THE SUITE OF OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS TO “GET INVOLVED” ON PAGE 8 OF THE STRATEGY, DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: “THERE ARE A WIDE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ME TO BE INVOLVED IF I WANT TO?”**



## 5. AFTER REVIEWING THE DRAFT STRATEGY, DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS OR CONCERNS?



Breaking down responses into positive, neutral/no view and negative, overall our total results show:

1. Is the purpose of the proposed Strategy clear?  
38% very positive (extremely clear or very clear),  
49% quite positive (somewhat clear) and  
13% negative (not so clear, or not clear at all).
2. Do you agree with the key aims?  
74% very positive (strongly agree or agree),  
18% no view (neither agree nor disagree) and  
8% negative (disagree or strongly disagree).
3. How easy is the draft Strategy to understand?  
40% very positive (extremely easy or very easy),  
49% quite positive (somewhat easy) and  
11% negative (not so easy, or not easy at all).
4. Do you agree with the statement “There are a wide range of opportunities for me to be involved if I want to”?  
67% very positive (strongly agree or agree),  
25% no view (neither agree nor disagree) and  
8% negative (disagree or strongly disagree).

Overall, it appears that the majority of respondents felt that the purpose of the Strategy was reasonably clear.

The great majority agreed with the aims of the Strategy (the small percentage that said they disagreed with the aims appeared to already have a strong negative view of the Council overall, with comments about the Council being ‘fundamentally negligent’, ‘Qualis is a joke’ and so on included under Q5).

The majority also agreed that the Strategy was easy to understand, and that it provided a wide range of opportunities to be involved if they wished to do so.

#### Comments received along with survey responses

Comments received were as follows and it is noted that these are, largely, not comments on the Strategy itself, but complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction with actions taken by the Council (for example, installation of a new lighting system) other Council housing services (such as repairs), dissatisfaction with the Council generally (road gritting, bin collections, difficult website etc) or areas which are outside the Council’s responsibility (bus services, pavement repairs and so on).

Those comments of note which relate directly to the Strategy (and actually provide insight into *what residents want from the Strategy*) are highlighted amongst the below.

Complaint to EFDC Jan 16th 23 On a survey and to complaints I am very concerned that estate changes, costing large amounts of money, are brought in without considering the implications on the earth's resources. Namely that a brand-new lighting system was pulled down (it was very young when you consider how long the previous one was working), there were no issues with its functionality. What was put in is an abomination. Now all I see when it is the middle of night is light glaring from the windows, I changed to black out curtains yet still I see light through these, when we are aware of light pollution, EFDC chooses to instigate a system which lights up the estate in ways it has never had to cope with before, at a time when street lights are being removed from service during the early hours to save electricity, I feel alienated by EFDC Housing, their aims and ability to budget. I want to be able to sleep in the dark. At a time when there are ore sufferers of sleep deprivation than ever before, EFDC has made the situation worse, our well-being is affected.

16/01/2023 10:37

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)

Obviously a tremobviously a trendous amount of work has been put into producing the proposed strategy. **What's missing I think is a clear, concise and jargon free summery.** I would like to see s commitment on behalf of EFDC to have A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT so that any complaints or comments about council housing services can be logged and action taken. When you go onto the council website, you feel that you are trying to complete some sort of electronic survival negotiation course.

11/01/2023 05:12

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You have made no allowance for people without tech and age related issues ,it's too long and on the end of the stick the proposal s look good on paper but in reality don't materialise  
05/01/2023 11:50

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Very fancy little programme. But current concerns (road not gritted during cold snaps and erratic rubbish collections) are not being addressed.  
04/01/2023 12:33

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)

We require regular updates that show how you are tracking against your plans, and honest transparency of any of the ideas/goals do not work in practise  
30/12/2022 18:39

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)

Good  
18/12/2022 11:00

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[Add tags](#)

The council fundamentally are negligent in what they do and all they care about is making money. They do not care about the health and wellbeing of residents in the slightest. Shame on you and Merry Christmas indeed  
16/12/2022 19:15

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In the past it has been nearly impossible to involve anybody or departments in any and all concerns  
16/12/2022 14:24

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Lots of the proposals should reach out to neighbours who are private owners. Like here in Debden, i have a council neighbour, we share downpipes, gutters etc. but its so hard to get through to the council if your not the tenant  
16/12/2022 13:30

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[Add tags](#)



Quailis is a joke  
16/12/2022 11:22

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)



How many other initiatives have been successful? Results and real change are what residents want.  
16/12/2022 11:06

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[Add tags](#)

The timeline offered for full implementation of the strategy is realistic, but there are urgent issues that are currently not being dealt with satisfactorily. Do you intend to focus on the short term issues or will this be less of a concern while attempting to future proof anything?  
12/12/2022 10:48

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)



I have concerns that certain bad individuals such as the council tenants on my road will continue to slip under the radar and still use the council property to sell and store class A drugs. I have contacted both the council and the police and yet it is never resolved.  
10/12/2022 16:11

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)

Not everyone that matters speaks up or gets involved. will these people be considered  
10/12/2022 14:07

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)



Any change has to be an improvement  
10/12/2022 11:30

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)

Concerns being that yet again qualis refuse to come and inspect the maintenance issues instead have told me to call British Gas to pressurise my boiler. How will grounds maintenance be any different. They are pocketing money and not doing work needed. Despicable company  
07/12/2022 21:47

[View respondent's answers](#)

[Add tags](#)

AS REGARDS THE SOCIAL HOUSING BILL  
TACKLING DAMP AND COLD LIVING CONDITIONS  
WHICH WE AT [REDACTED] HAVE  
COMPLAINED ABOUT FOR YEARS.  
THESE OLD HOUSES NEED PROPER  
INSULATION AND NOT JUST COSMETIC  
COVER UPS.

AS  
COUNCIL HOUSING PEOPLE WE HAVE LIVED IN OUR BUGLOW  
FOR 17 YEARS IN OUR ROAD, COUCL PEOPLE FOR 55 YEARS  
SOME TIMES WE ARE SAFE, BUT PEOPLE WALK IN OUR  
ROAD WHICH WE DO NOT NO WE WOULD LIKE SOME  
MORE UP DATE WITH OUR BUGLOW, OR GET PEOPLE TO CHECK  
THEM MORE OUT  
ALSO HAVE MORE WORK ON OUR ROAD IN OUR ROAD  
WE WALK ON. NOT TO GOOD.  
AND PLEASE KEEP OUR 31 BUS RUNNING WE BORTH  
USE IT VERY WEEK. SOMETIMES LAST YEAR IT DID NOT  
RUN SO TAXI SOMETIME WALK HOME 1 MILE FROM EPPING TOWN  
WE HAVE NO CAR OR FAMILY TO HELP USE. AGE 82 + AGE 77  
ALSO WE DO NOT HAVE FACEBOOK. ONLY TELEPHONE THANK YOU  
P.S WE ONLY GOT YOUR LETTER FROM COUCL ON 10 JANUARY 2023  
YOU POSTED TO USE ON 16 DEC 2022.  
SO I HAVE PUT YOUR LETTER BACK TO YOU IN  
COUNCIL OFFICE BY ME. IN LETTER BOX YOURS  
  
PS I HAVE ONLY DONE WHAT WE BORTH  
UNDER SAND WITH THE PAPER WORK.  
OUR PHONE NO [REDACTED]

The "get involved" is a good idea  
and helps to bring neighbours together

#### Final update to Tenants & Leaseholders Panel

This report will be circulated to the TLP and Co-Create Group members ahead of the TLP meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Feedback on the consultation responses will be then be taken from the Panel, and any further comments/amendments noted, prior to the report being presented to the Select Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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