

Approval of TLS, Resident Involvement Strategy 2022-2025

Cabinet:	16 June 2022.
Report Author:	Sally O'Sullivan, Tenant and Leaseholder Services Manager.
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Jill Bayford, Cabinet Member for Housing.
Status:	For Decision.
Classification:	Unrestricted.
Key Decision:	Yes.
Reasons for Key:	An Executive Decision that involves the approval of the Resident Involvement Strategy 2022-2025 to be adopted and published by the Council's Tenant and Leaseholder Services (TLS).
Ward:	N/A.

Executive Summary:

This report seeks authority for the Council to adopt the Resident Involvement Strategy.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Approve the adoption of the new Resident Involvement Strategy.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

This strategy is deliverable from the existing budget provision for the TLS Resident Involvement service.

Legal

As a registered social landlord, the council has a regulatory responsibility to ensure there are a wide range of opportunities for residents to influence services and that we understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants. As set out in the Regulator of Social Housing's [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#).

Corporate

Our Housing and Planning Service plan describes how we contribute to the council's priorities, it tells us that our key focus is 'to ensure the provision of a high quality, cost effective service to residents'.

We know that involving residents in the design and delivery of services is a key part of achieving good services that meet the needs of our residents.

Risk Management

As a social landlord, the council is regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH). The RSH have published a Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. Without an adopted and implemented Resident Involvement Strategy the council risks failing to meet the requirements of the regulatory requirements. Effective resident involvement also supports the council's aim to provide a high quality and improving tenant and leaseholder service.

The tenant and leaseholder service include a dedicated resident involvement team, focused on the delivery of this strategy. The strategy has been shared and discussed with the Thanet Tenants and Leaseholders Group, who will also have a role in monitoring its implementation.

These arrangements ensure that the risk of not implementing the strategy is low.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

- *To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.*

The council's tenants and leaseholders include residents that have protected characteristics as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty. The strategy is subject to a completed Equalities Impact Assessment, attached to this report.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- *Communities*

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council's new Tenant and Leaseholder Service was launched on 1 October 2020.
- 1.2 As part of the pledged service improvement, the council must provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to influence and scrutinise housing services. As set out in the Regulator of Social Housing, Consumer Standard, Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.
- 1.3 The Strategy we are looking for approval by cabinet today sets out our provision of involvement opportunities for residents which we want to adopt and publish on the Council's website.

2.0 The Resident Involvement Strategy

- 2.1 Our Housing and Planning Service plan describes how we contribute to the council's priorities, it tells us that our key focus is 'to ensure the provision of a high quality, cost effective service to residents'.
- 2.2 We know that involving residents in the design and delivery of services is a key part of achieving good services that meet the needs of our residents.
- 2.3 This Strategy sets its own aspiration to:
'Bringing voices together - collaboration of residents and officers'
- 2.4 We want this strategy to foster a culture of transparency and respect between landlord and residents. Making sure residents have a wide range of opportunities to have their voices listened to and ensure those voices are valued.
- 2.5 It sets out how we will ensure a broad range of residents are supported to influence and scrutinise services; through a formal, informal and informed resident involvement structure.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 This strategy was co-developed with a resident focus group in March 2022. The group was supported by the Resident Involvement Manager and used information from two consultations carried out in 2021 with wider residents.
- 3.2 The resident focus group reflected on the existing and future requirements for landlords, as well as considering best practices.

- 3.3 The Thanet Tenants and Leaseholders Group (TTLG) were consulted on the draft Strategy at their meeting on 30 March 2022. The group welcomed the strategy and made no recommendations on further revisions.
- 3.4 TLS officers have had the opportunity to review and feed into this strategy, and the final draft was reviewed by the TLS senior managers.
- 3.5 This strategy was also presented to the council's Housing Cabinet Advisory Group on 21 April 2022, and received an observation that promoted an addition to section 5. This confirms our commitment to working with residents who would not usually get involved for a variety of reasons and tailoring solutions to break down barriers they may face. This could include young residents or residents with unseen disabilities. 'Unseen disabilities' was also added to the 'advancing equality' part of section 4.

4.0 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 4.1 This Strategy has been subject to an EIA completed by a panel of 3 officers from the Tenant and Leaseholder Services and the Resident Involvement Manager.

5.0 Options

- 5.1 Cabinet is asked to review the Strategy annexed to this report and has the following options:
1. Agree the strategy as recommended.
 2. Not agree with the adoption of the Strategy. This option is not recommended as the Strategy delivers on the requirements that satisfy the Regulator for Social Housing for registered landlords; to provide wide opportunities to influence housing services and understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants.
 3. Amend the Strategy. This option is not recommended as the Strategy has been co-developed with staff and residents and has been the subject of consultation with the TTLG.

5.2

Contact Officer: Sally O'Sullivan, Tenant and Leaseholder Services Manager
Reporting to: Bob Porter, Director of Housing and Planning

Annex List

- Appendix 1 [Resident Involvement Strategy 2022-2025](#)
Appendix 2 [Equality Impact Assessment](#)

Background Papers

N/A

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell (Director of Finance)

Legal: Estelle Culligan (Director of Law and Democracy)