

Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

20 July 2022

Subject:	Tenant Engagement and Participation Update
Director:	Director of Housing Gillian Douglas
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1 Recommendations

That the Board considers and comments on the update on the development of Tenant Engagement and Participation.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The update of Tenant Engagement and Participation will reflect changes in Legislation and Regulatory Standards.
- 2.2 A approach to Tenant Engagement and Participation reflects good practice, but in addition there is an increase in expectations due to changes in the following:-

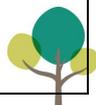


- Regulator of Social Housing
- Housing Ombudsman
- National Housing Federation’s Code of Governance
- Build & Fire Safety Bill
- Regulatory Standards (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>)

2.3 The Regulatory Standards outline specific expectations and outcomes that providers are expected to achieve. Providers’ boards and local authorities are responsible for meeting the relevant standards and determining how this is done. The Regulatory Framework encompasses a tenant involvement standard

3. How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities Through strengthening tenant engagement and participation, it will enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stronger relationship between the council and tenants ○ Enhanced information and communication ○ An opportunity for tenants to develop ○ Develop a greater sense of place within the community
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods Through involving tenants in housing services through a more coproduced approach will enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improvement to services for tenants ○ Better value for money ○ Improved customer experience and satisfaction ○ Better customer loyalty
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell



4. Background

- 4.1 The Charter for Social Housing Residents Social Housing White Paper 2020, where 'Government is re-booting consumer regulation to ensure landlords adopt the right behaviours and can be held to account for their actions by tenants. 'This is the Heart of the White Paper' –*Jane Everton, MHCLG*
- 4.2 The White Paper highlights the need for transparency, openness and accountability, and outlines 7 key promises to tenants in social housing, these are:
- To be safe in your home
 - To know how your landlord is performing and hold it to account
 - To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
 - To be treated with respect
 - To have your voice heard by your landlord
 - To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
 - To be supported to take a first step to ownership
- 4.3 The Council have developed the Vision 2030 and the Sandwell Plan which impacts on communities and residents of Sandwell and supports the need to engage and empower tenants and residents within their community.
- 4.4 All the above reinforces the need to continue to support and develop tenant involvement and participation and strengthen the tenants voice within the Council and wider neighbourhoods. As well as legal and statutory reasons for the review, as well as the fact that the Regulatory Standards recommend a review is undertaken every 3 years.

5 Update on Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group:

- 5.1 Following a review of the Councils Tenant Review Panel, this has been dissolved since September 2021, and a new group has been established.
- 5.2 A robust recruitment process took place in October 2021 to appointment representatives from across Sandwell, 8 council tenants and 2 council Leaseholders were appointed. The following links provide further information on the group membership:



<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/tenantsgroup>

https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200223/housing/4747/tenants_and_leaseholders_scrutiny_group/2

- 5.3 Following the above recruitment process the Tenant & Leaseholder Group (TLS) was formed in December 2021. The group have a strategic role in influencing Housing Services that affect the lives of 28,000 plus residents living in Sandwell. The group consists of 8 tenants and 2 leaseholders.
- 5.4 In addition the TLS Group have a direct link into the Safer Neighbourhood and Active Communities Scrutiny Group (SNAC) as the Chair of SNAC sits on TLS and the Chair of TLS attends SNAC.
- 5.5 Since appointment, the group have received induction training, agreed their governance structures, terms of reference, standing orders, code of conduct and the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chairs.
- 5.6 The Chair and Vice Chairs have been receiving training and development and continue to receive ongoing support through one to one personal development, shadowing and on the job training. Members of the group are also receiving support in developing confidence and links to Business Managers across Housing Services. They are learning to ask pertinent questions, as well as questioning information received and requesting statistical data in a format that is understandable to the group.
- 5.7 During March 2022, presentations from Housing Managers on housing functions were given to the group to aid understanding of all areas. A prioritisation exercise took place by the group to decide 4 key areas to focus their Work Programme for the municipal year May 22 – July 2023, to coincide with other Scrutiny Groups.
- 5.8 After some discussion, the group came to a consensus to focus on:
- Housing Hub/contact Centre (21 May – 6 August 2022)
 - Home Checks (13 August – 29 October 2022)
 - Building Safety (5 November 2022 – 21 January 2023)
 - Responsive Repairs & Customer Satisfaction (28 January – 15 April 2023)



5.9 The group are working on the current work area and are continuing to grow and learn, probe and build relationships with key managers. Some Services Managers have requested their involvement in service changes and to also assist in recruitment of managers. For example, 2 members were involved in reviewing the Leaseholder handbook, 2 members are supporting the interview process of the new appointment of Assistant Director for Asset Management.

6 Additional Activity to Date

6.1 Following the development and agreement of the Tenant Engagement Framework, see Appendix 1. Other activity is being developed. Which is discussed in the following points.

6.2 Tenant Audit Programme – tenants have been engaged in developing a group of auditors that will audit a range of housing services, providing recommendations and ideas for improvement to relevant managers and teams. The group will work in partnership with TLS to avoid duplication of areas of work, but also will be an opportunity to further upskill tenants to be part of Scrutiny in the future.

6.3 Currently 11 tenants have committed to being part of the Tenant Audit Group and initially will be undertaking a series of training due to start on the 14th July for 6 weeks. Following the training they will identify the areas to be audited and the approach and method will be agreed.

6.4 Following the recruitment discussed above in 5.2, we had received interest from a number of tenants advising they would be interested in being involved in other opportunities to get involved with Housing Services. Therefore, we are maintaining engagement through telephone calls as well as inviting to activities as opportunities arise. For example, we had resident involvement within the development of the Housing Annual report, through involvement with an officer editorial group.

6.5 In addition, 4 tenants took part in the tenant stakeholder session as part of the recruitment for the Assistant Director for Asset Management and Improvement.

6.6 Through the Care Leavers Forum a project has been developed with a voluntary sector partner Krunch, to work with care leavers regarding the stigma and attitude that is experienced due to being a young person in care, and for us to further understand barriers as well as what needs to be improved. A relationship with the Care Leavers Forum and TLS is being developed to enable appropriate services to be influenced.



6.7 Tenants are being engaged in developing a celebration event, this is to acknowledge and celebrate the work of tenants within local communities, such as the work of Tenants & Resident Associations, but also an opportunity to promote the Housing Annual Report.

6.8 There is still a lot of work that needs to be done to implement the Tenant Engagement Framework and to do this a Tenant Engagement Officer is being recruited to enable the wider framework to be embedded and coordinated across the borough.

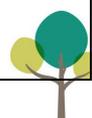
7 Next Steps

7.1 Continue to implement the Tenant Engagement Framework.

7.2 Continue to support and develop the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group

8 Implications

Resources:	Financial, staffing, land/building implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no specific resource implications arising from this report.
Legal and Governance:	Legal implications including regulations/law under which proposals are required/permitted and constitutional provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are set out in The Charter for Social Housing Residents Social Housing White Paper (https://www.tpas.org.uk/the-white-paper) These are set out in the Regulatory Standards (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards).
Risk:	Risk implications, including any mitigating measures planned/taken, health and safety, insurance implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no specific resource implications arising from this report.
Equality:	Implications for equality (all aspects and characteristics) including how meeting Equality Duty, equality impact assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tenant engagement will develop and strengthen methods of tenant involvement, engagement and participation which will help to address inequalities and challenge the stigmatisation of tenants.



Health and Wellbeing:	Implications of the proposals on health and wellbeing of our communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report
Social Value	Implications for social value and how the proposals are meeting this (for e.g. employment of local traders, young people) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific social value implications arising from this report

9. Appendices

Appendix 1. Tenant Engagement Framework



Tenant Engagement Framework

10. Background Papers

- The Charter for Social Housing Residents White Paper – November 2020 <https://www.tpas.org.uk/the-white-paper>
- Regulatory Standards - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>

