



Resident Involvement Strategy 2021-2024



Foreward for Resident Engagement Strategy

I am proud to introduce this Resident Involvement Strategy, a plan which sets out all the great work the Council is doing to include our residents in decision-making, and our plans to improve on this going forward. Since stepping into my current Cabinet role I have been passionate about working with our residents to improve housing and providing residents with a platform to be involved, informed, engaged and empowered to help shape Housing services. – I really believe that no-one knows more about what is working and what could be done better than the local residents.

One of the main things I want to emphasise and build on are our Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) along with our Local Area Forums and initiatives such as Working Groups and Performance Review and Improvement Panel. These can play an important role

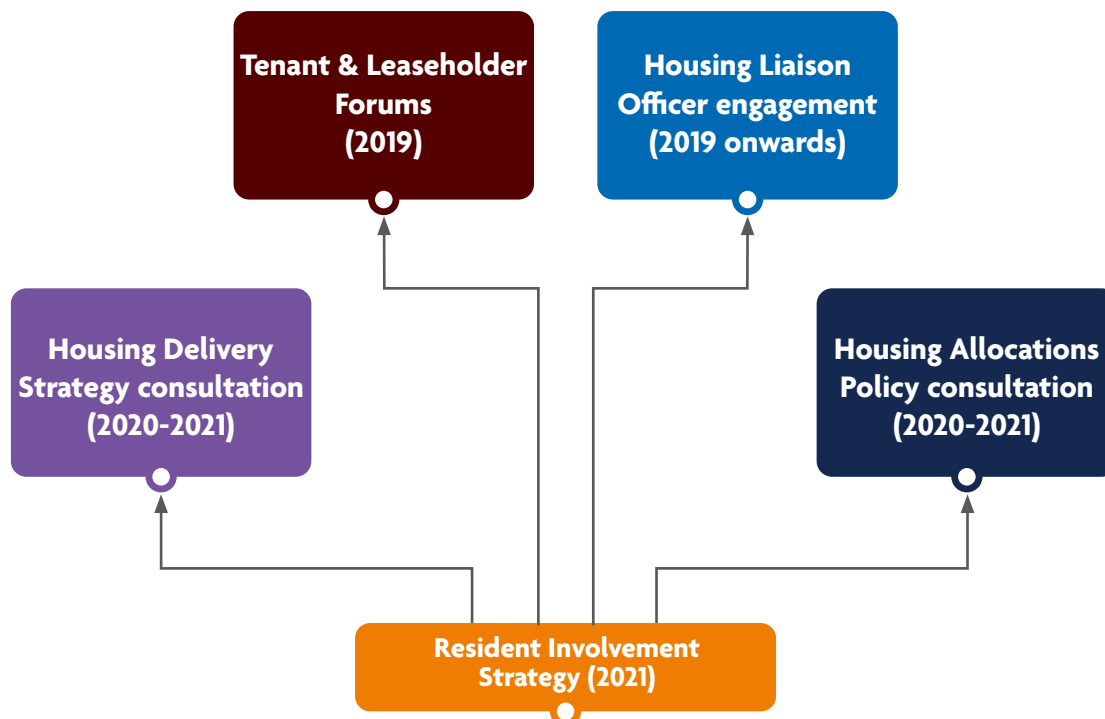
in driving service change and service performance, I hope that as many residents as possible will get involved in forming TRAs, as well as the working groups and continuing to come to the Local Area Forums and Fun Days to share your views. I am looking forward to even more collaboration and co-production with residents in the coming months and years.



Councillor Shaban Mohammed

Cabinet Member Member for Housing Management and Modernisation; Housing Needs, Homelessness and Private Rented Sector

Background



In 2019, further to setting up a Housing Liaison Team, we delivered a series of Tenant & Leaseholder Forums to obtain feedback from residents about the services we provide, their expectations, and what's important to them in terms of their home and neighbourhood. We also asked residents what types of engagement opportunities they were interested in and how they believe they could become more involved. Over 450 residents attended our forums. We used the information captured to establish residents' priorities:

1. Events/Community
2. Contact/Availability
3. Repairs
4. Communication
5. Customer Service

Since the forums, Housing Liaison Officers have continued to proactively engage with our residents by:

- Carrying out estate walkabouts with residents, Councillors and other service areas
- Completing block inspections
- Auditing properties to engage with residents on an individual basis
- Holding surgeries

Qualitative feedback provided to our Housing Liaison Officers over the course of the last two years aligns with the priorities above.

In 2020 we carried out consultations relating to our Housing Allocations Policy and our Housing Delivery Strategy. Both consultations were live between October 2020 and January 2021, and residents were able to provide their views via online public meetings, focus groups, workshops, interviews and surveys. Some key findings relevant to resident involvement were:

- Residents are grateful for having opportunities to listen to changes to policy and to having their opinions heard
- The Housing service should use past feedback to understand what our residents want
- The Housing service should use modern engagement techniques
- Residents should have training opportunities made available to them, which would equip them with the skills and knowledge required for meaningful engagement
- Measures of success should reflect resident experiences
- Ensure that services are accessible

This strategy considers and takes into account the valuable and insightful feedback that we have been able to obtain over the last two years. Addressing and incorporating this feedback ensures that this strategy will have a positive impact and meet the needs of our tenants, leaseholders and temporary accommodation residents.

Context

The development of this strategy could not be more timely as this area of work is currently the focus of a number of strategic changes and national challenges, and is at the centre of ongoing debate and dialogue.

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, after a period of intense review, the Government published the Social Housing White Paper in November 2020. A clear focus of this paper is resident voice and influence. We want to quickly and proactively respond to this insight and ensure that we develop a service where the voice of our residents is at the centre of everything we do.

At a local level, our Towards a Better Newham strategy, Newham Outcomes Framework and Corporate Delivery Plan, set out Newham's vision. Some of the key priorities and commitments that relate to Housing include:

- Pillar 7 - The Council will deliver genuinely high-quality and affordable homes for Newham;
 - o To make sure housing in Newham works for residents we will work to develop greater involvement from local people to help them shape services relevant to their locality
 - o We will develop new housing hubs and better systems for resident involvement in housing
 - o We will continually look to innovate in the delivery and provision of housing
 - o Residents will be given a greater say over housing services in their area
- Pillar 1 - Our measures of success will be the health, happiness and wellbeing of our residents, rather than growth, productivity and land value
- Pillar 5 - The Council will create accessible and inclusive neighbourhoods which will provide residents all of their social, civic and economic essentials

Working with our residents successfully will ensure that the Housing service contributes to the delivery of these priorities and commitments.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out our commitment and approach to providing opportunities for residents to participate in meaningful engagement with us, their landlord. This engagement will ensure that residents' voices and views are heard, considered and acted upon, and will provide residents with the ability to truly influence and shape the services that they receive.

This strategy introduces a new framework that caters for all residents. Our framework offers a wide range of opportunities for involvement and makes use of a wide variety of engagement channels.

Implementing this strategy will:

- ✓ Ensure that residents are informed and empowered
- ✓ Make it easier for residents to access relevant information
- ✓ Give residents greater control and influence over the housing services that they pay for
- ✓ Improve services
- ✓ Allow us to meet, and strive to exceed, residents' expectations
- ✓ Create a partnership between us and our residents
- ✓ Promote a sense of community and foster new relationships between neighbours

Our vision:

Residents who live in our homes are effectively involved, informed, engaged and empowered.

Our objective:

Residents actively help design and implement local housing priorities and policies, evaluate our housing services, and inform decision making on housing services to positively impact on their lives.

I

Innovate

To take an innovative yet evidence based approach to service improvement.

N

Neighbourhood

To ensure that our homes and estates are well maintained, clean and safe, with a sense of community.

V

Value

To provide services to our residents that are good quality but also value for money.

O

Ownership

To provide a resolution focused service that strives to get things right the first time and takes a cross departmental approach to fixing problems quickly and with limited disruption.

L

Landlord

To rebuild trust with our residents, instill confidence in our ability to be a good landlord, and become a reliable service provider.

V

Variety

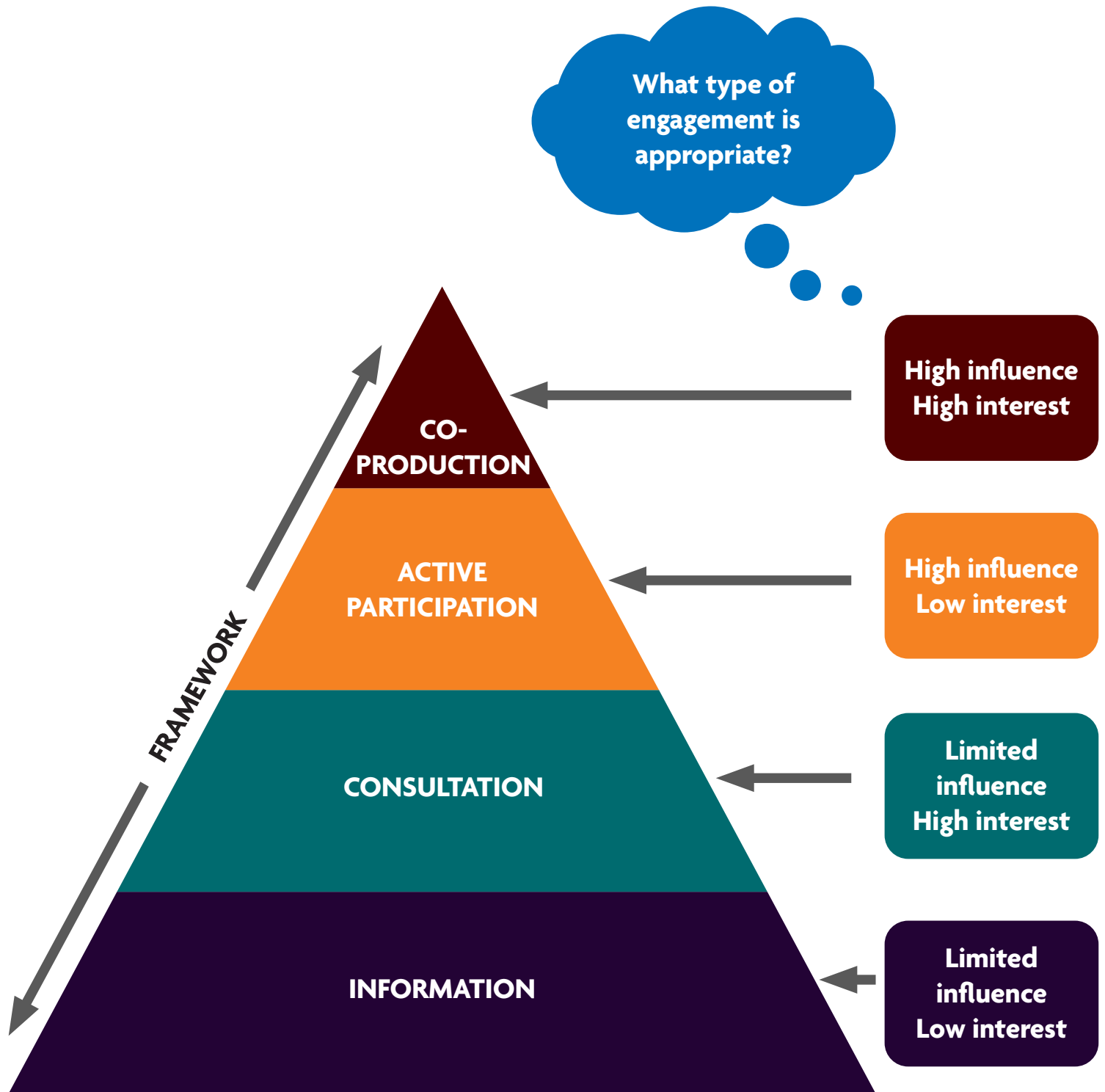
To communicate clearly and effectively with our residents, using a wide variety of methods and channels, to ensure transparency and understanding.

E

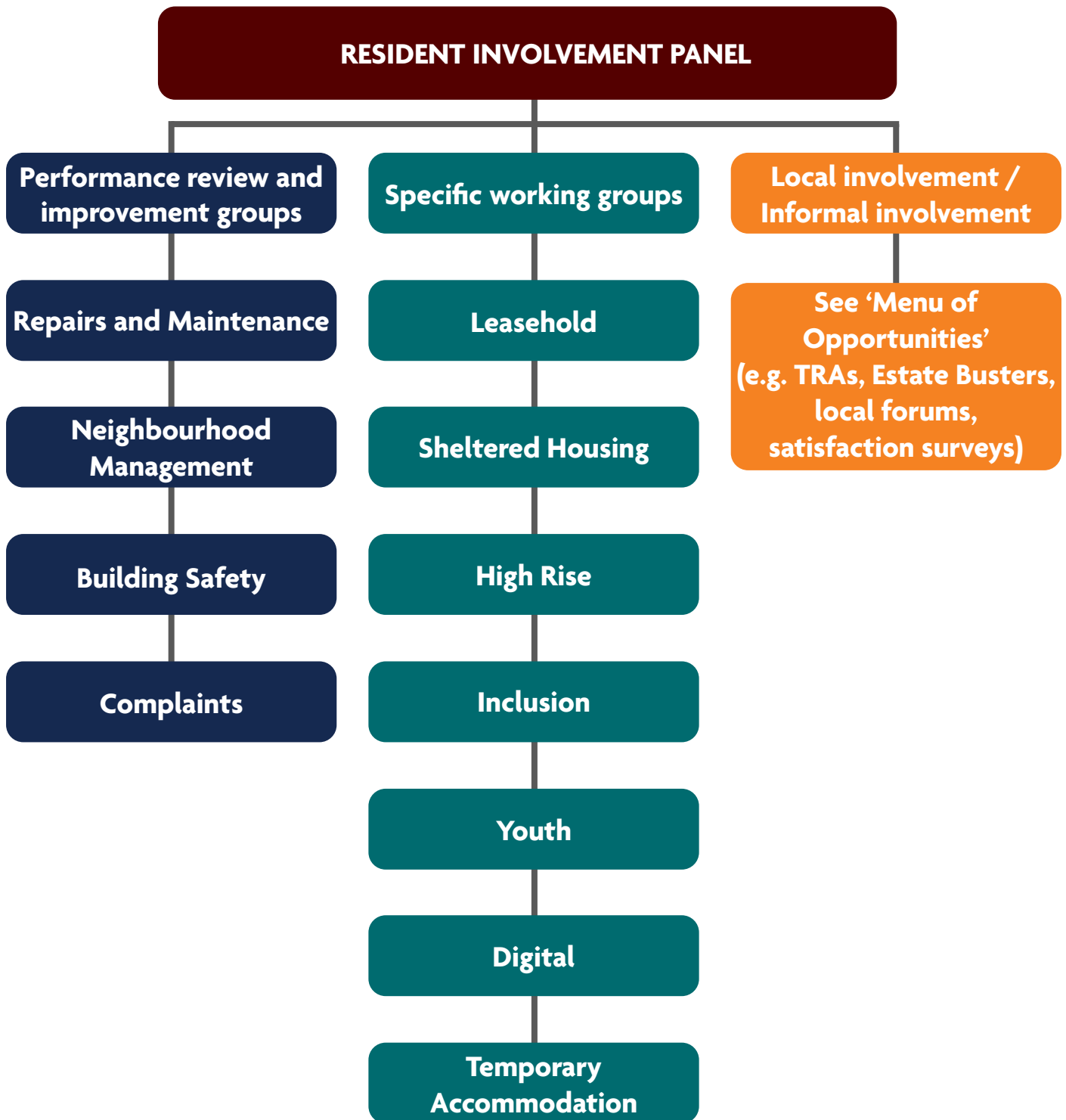
Empower

To actively involve residents in decision making and provide a range of accessible opportunities to empower residents, enabling them to make a difference.

Our approach to resident involvement



Resident Involvement Framework



Our Approach

Our approach:

- Puts residents at the heart of our Housing Service
- Seeks to fully embed resident involvement into our service
- Demonstrates that we are committed to working in partnership with our residents, offering the highest level of involvement
- Allows us to work together as one team to improve services and strive to exceed expectations
- Enables residents' views to be heard at every level of our service and organisation
- Provides opportunities for all residents by offering different levels of involvement, using many different channels, covering several different themes/services
- Allows us to efficiently select and allocate the most appropriate form of engagement when new resident involvement projects arise

Resident Involvement Panel:

What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic • Service planning • Policy • Continuous improvement • Decision making • Themes/topics can be escalated from a performance review and improvement group or a specific working group • Meetings and reports • Support provided by the Resident Involvement Team • Training
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work in partnership and collaborate with residents • To channel our residents' views into policy, strategy and business planning • To design and implement solutions to improve our service • To ensure that residents are represented and have their views considered in decision making • To hold the executive to account
Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 elected tenant reps (2 per quadrant) • 4 elected leaseholder reps (1 per quadrant) • Lead Member for Housing • Director of Housing • Assistant Directors
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly
Where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face, Online
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-production

Performance review and improvement groups:

What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor operational performance • Scrutiny • Data • Reports • Escalate recommendations to the Resident Involvement Panel • Make recommendations for change • Themes/topics can be escalated from a specific working group or from local/ongoing involvement initiatives • Support provided by the Resident Involvement Team • Training
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hold the Housing service to account • To drive service improvement • To ensure value for money and quality
Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed membership – residents will need to apply • Limited to 8 residents per group • Representation from all tenures • Senior managers from within the service area • Assistant Directors (selected meetings)
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly
Where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face, Online
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation

Specific working groups:

What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational • Specific topics/service areas • High-level data • Feedback • Discussions • Process reviews • Support provided by the Resident Involvement Team
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that residents are informed and empowered • To provide residents with access to relevant information • To ensure that residents are represented and their views and voices heard • To drive service improvement
Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open membership • Residents who have received or will receive a particular service • Residents who are interested in a particular service area/topic/theme • Managers and staff from within the service area
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly
Where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face, Online
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation • Consultation • Information

Local involvement / Informal involvement:

What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local• Informal• Low commitment• Feedback• Discussions• Support provided by the Resident Involvement Team
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure that residents are informed• To ensure that residents are represented and their views and voices heard• To drive service improvement
Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All residents• Housing staff
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Various
Where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Face to face, Online, Phone, Social media, Text
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation• Information

Menu of opportunities:

Opportunity	Method/Channel	Regularity	Level of involvement
Resident Involvement Panel	Face to face/online meetings	Quarterly	High
Repairs and Maintenance PR&I group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Monthly	High
Neighbourhood Management PR&I group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Monthly	High
Building Safety PR&I group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Monthly	High
Complaints PR&I group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Monthly	High
Leasehold working group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Bi-monthly	Medium
Sheltered Housing working group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Bi-monthly	Medium
High Rise working group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Bi-monthly	Medium
Inclusion working group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Bi-monthly	Medium
Youth working group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Bi-monthly	Medium
Digital working group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Bi-monthly	Medium
Temporary Accommodation working group	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Bi-monthly	Medium
Neighbourhood Champions	Face to face Social media Phone	Ongoing	High
Digital Champions	Face to face Social media Phone	Ongoing	High
Tenants & Residents Associations	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	At least quarterly	Medium
Estate Busters	Face to face Online	Ongoing	Medium
Block/estate inspections and walkabouts	Face to face Online	Varies (Block/estate specific)	Low
Estate/ward days	Face to face	Ad hoc	Low
Satisfaction surveys	Text Phone Online	Ad hoc	Low
Mystery shopping	Face to face Phone Online	Ad hoc	Low
Local area forums	Face to face/online meetings and workshops	Quarterly	Low

Digital engagement

The pandemic has taught us that most residents can access digital and remote services very well and that this type of service can provide an improved customer experience, as well as increased flexibility and efficiency for residents. Recent implementation of digital projects in Housing has proven that our residents embrace the benefits of this type of service, and the trend to greater use of digital services by our residents is expected to continue. Therefore, digital engagement is key to successful delivery of this strategy and we will seek to maximise the use of digital channels and tools.

Using digital channels and tools for resident involvement can bring about many benefits, including:

- Ensures that residents have access to information quickly and easily
- Ensures that residents have the ability to provide feedback that reaches us quickly
- Increases overall levels of resident involvement
- Increases diversity in terms of residents involved
- Helps to reduce barriers to involvement, due to involvement opportunities being more flexible and less restrictive (for example, in terms of location, time, the potential need for childcare arrangements, and the potential of incurring travel costs)
- Provides an opportunity for the voices to be heard of those residents who are unable to attend face to face events, or who are uncomfortable or uninterested in doing so
- Allows participation in resident involvement initiatives on a 24/7 basis
- Removes the limitations of physical venues (for example, maximum capacities)

We recognise that a face to face service is currently preferable and/or necessary for some residents. To ensure that our service is inclusive and encourages involvement from all residents, we will deliver a framework that includes both digital and face to face opportunities for involvement. However, we are committed to giving our residents the opportunity to do things online and we encourage residents to reap the benefits that this brings. Therefore, we will take a digital inclusion approach and work to remove digital barriers for residents who are currently unable to, or who are uncomfortable with, using digital channel and tools. To improve digital inclusion we will:

- ✓ Provide training opportunities for residents so that they can improve their digital skills and increase their confidence in this area
- ✓ Seek to improve and increase accessibility and connectivity for residents
- ✓ Recruit and train Digital Champions who will raise awareness about digital channels and tools being used for resident involvement, as well as support individual residents in their neighbourhood to use these digital channels and tools
- ✓ Collaborate with residents who attend the Digital Working Group to ensure that our digital channels and tools are used in an effective and appropriate way

Support and resources

To enable residents to be fully involved and engaged with us, we recognise that there must be adequate resources available and that we must ensure that our strategy is inclusive.

We are aware that there are sometimes barriers to involvement. It is important that we work together to try to overcome these barriers so that our residents truly have the opportunity to make a difference and participate. We are therefore committed to:

- ✓ providing training opportunities for our residents
- ✓ offering opportunities that require varying levels of involvement and commitment
- ✓ offering a wide range of involvement methods/ channels
- ✓ arranging opportunities/involvement activities at times most suitable to residents
- ✓ arranging opportunities/involvement activities that allow residents to participate from the comfort of their own home or a location of their choice
- ✓ ensuring that any venues used are comfortable, accessible and appropriate
- ✓ developing a clear expenses, incentives and rewards policy for involvement
- ✓ providing expert advice and appropriate levels of support to our residents to support them in their involvement activities
- ✓ providing opportunities for recognised resident groups to secure funding (e.g. via the Neighbourhood Led Scheme fund)

Committed to putting residents at the heart of our service, we have recently created a Resident Involvement Team who will focus solely on the implementation, delivery and development of this strategy. The team consists of a Head of Service, a Housing Hubs Manager, and 4 Resident Involvement Co-ordinators. The Resident Involvement Team will co-ordinate implementation of this strategy, with operational delivery supported by colleagues from across our Housing service.

Monitoring and review

A Resident Involvement Action Plan sits alongside this strategy to support the implementation and delivery of this strategy. This plan sets out action to be taken to deliver this strategy successfully, and for each action there is:

- confirmation of the associated aim
- a measure of success
- a deadline
- a desired outcome

The broad measures that we will use to assess the impact of this strategy and our performance in terms of resident involvement are:

- ✓ Increased satisfaction that residents' voices and views are heard and taken into account
- ✓ Demonstrable learning from complaints and service issues leading to improvements to services
- ✓ Progress towards achieving external accreditation for involvement
- ✓ An increased number of residents involved
- ✓ Having a diverse range of involved residents
- ✓ Providing a variety of engagement opportunities

Updates and information about resident involvement performance will be provided to residents regularly.

This strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis, with an annual impact assessment report being submitted to the Resident Involvement Panel for review. A full, detailed evaluation of this strategy will be carried out in March 2024.

This strategy will run from June 2021 to March 2024 and will require review (with possible amendments) if there are any further changes to legislation that are relevant.



