

Title: Resident Engagement Strategy
 Lead Officer: Lisa Barker
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Wightman
 Wards of the District directly affected: All

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder		Cllr Paul Wightman
Finance		Victoria Bamber
Legal Services		Sue Mullins
Chief Executive		Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change		Dave Barber
Head of Service(s)	03.07.2023	Lisa Barker
Section 151 Officer		Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer		Andrew Jones
Leadership Co-ordination Group	24/07/23	
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	No Recommendation to: Cabinet	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	Yes	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

A Warwick District Council Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-2027 has been developed to meet the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator and build on the work already being carried out by the housing service. The Resident Engagement Strategy 2023 to 2027 sets out the ambitions of the Council in relation to the involvement and influence residents have in the way the service is delivered. The aim is for the Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-2027 and actions contained to be adopted and be subject to regular review by residents. For clarification, residents for the purposes of this report are tenants and where appropriate, leaseholders of Warwick District Council.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) That Cabinet recommends to Council the adoption of the Resident Engagement Strategy 2023 to 2027.
 - (2) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing to deliver the actions contained within the Resident Engagement Strategy 2023 to 2027.
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1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 Following the sad events of the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017, and the subsequent public enquiry, in November 2020, the Government published their 'Charter for Social Housing Residents' (White Paper). This document sets out priorities for providers of social housing and new powers for the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) and Housing Ombudsman, to hold social landlords to account.
- 1.2 Effective resident engagement is viewed as essential to the delivery of a high-quality housing service. Warwick District Council is committed to engaging with residents and already invests resources into engagement activities. The Government emphasised the importance of resident engagement and outlined the expectation that landlords will improve tenant engagement and that the Regulator of Social Housing will require this from landlords.
- 1.3 The Charter refers to landlords taking a much more tailored approach to engagement which better reflects the needs of different residents, and to a requirement for landlords to demonstrate how they have sought and considered ways in which they can improve resident engagement. The focus is on health and safety, accountability and transparency, and resident empowerment.
- 1.4 The Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-3026 (Appendix 1) sets out how the Council will address engagement and will ensure that actions are set out to ensure the "Resident voice" is heard and is able to influence the service provided. Such a strategy establishes a clear approach and a cohesive 'direction of travel'. It sets out the plans for increasing the breadth and depth of engagement activities, as well as acting as a statement of intent and demonstrating that residents can help to shape the service.

2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 An alternative option would be to continue without a Resident Engagement Strategy which is not recommended. The adoption of the strategy will comply with the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator and outline the actions required to involve Residents fully in the delivery of the service.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 A local housing authority has general powers of management of its housing under section 21 of the Housing Act 1985. Resident (Tenant and leaseholder) engagement, as outlined in the Resident Engagement Strategy facilitates the management of the Council's housing estates and so falls within the general power. The Charter for Social Housing Residents sets out the Government's approach to Resident Engagement. The Charter "sets out the actions the government will take to ensure that residents in social housing are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong."
- 3.2 The Charter sets out what every social housing tenant should be able to expect and lists the following:
1. **To be safe in your home.** We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
 2. **To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
 3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
 4. **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
 5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
 6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,** with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
 7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership,** so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.
- 3.3 The Charter sets out the role the Social Housing Regulator will take if a landlord fails to comply, and it includes the adoption of legislation to address the circumstances of failure to address the above expectations.

4 Financial Services

- 4.1 As the Council already carries out work in this area, there is a budget to cover this area of work.

5 Business Strategy

The Resident Engagement Strategy complies with the Business Strategy in the following way:

- 5.1 Health, Homes, Communities - The adoption of the Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-2027 will support residents living in safe and secure homes and environments.

- 5.2 Green, Clean, Safe – The Strategy will ensure a green, clean and safe environment for Residents.
- 5.3 Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment – There are no direct impacts for this aspect of the strategy.
- 5.4 Effective Staff - There are no direct service impacts by these proposals as resources already exist to deliver the actions contained in the strategy.
- 5.5 Maintain or Improve Services – There are no direct service impacts by these proposals.
- 5.6 Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term. The adoption of the strategy and associated actions will ensure compliance with the Charter for Social Housing.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The adoption of the Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-2027 will support the approach to works required to housing to meet statutory standards and the environmental/climate change agenda.

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 7.1 The application of the actions contained within the Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-2026 will comply with Equality needs.

8 Data Protection

- 8.1 There are no data protection implications with this report.

9 Health and Wellbeing

- 9.1 The adoption of the Strategy will ensure health and wellbeing implications are considered.

10 Risk Assessment

The risks of not adopting a Resident Engagement Strategy with associated action plan are outlined below:

Risk	Mitigation
The Social Housing Regulator intervening over a specific matter, and the Council has not adopted a strategic approach to resident engagement resulting in legislative action going forward.	The adoption of the Resident Engagement Strategy which outlines the Council’s approach to engagement.
Reputational damage if the Resident Engagement Strategy is not adopted.	As above
Additional resource may be required to carry out the actions than estimated.	The need for additional resource will be reviewed and considered as the work develops.

11 Consultation

- 11.1 The Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-2026 was developed following the

advice of the Tenant Participation Advice Service (TPAS) and it was co-designed by tenants invited to contribute to workshops.

Background papers:

Appendix 1 – Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-2027

Supporting documents: None