

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	15 NOVEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	6
TITLE:	TENANT PARTICIPATION IN COUNCIL HOUSING		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the approach that the Housing Service takes to involve tenants in improving and shaping the service.
- 1.2 The aim of tenant involvement is to work in partnership with tenants to develop and influence how services are delivered in order to continuously improve and drive up standards and thereby increase tenant satisfaction.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 Housing Neighbourhoods & Leisure Committee to note the Housing Service's approach to Tenant Involvement.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Co-regulation is an approach that was first put in place by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) in 2010 and despite changes to the regulatory framework since the TSA was abolished, the approach of co-regulation has remained in place.
- 3.2 This approach includes robust 'self-regulation' including checking the quality of the service and performance through self-assessment, external challenge and regular reporting and accountability to tenants.
- 3.3 Engagement with tenants should be transparent and meaningful and provide tenants with the opportunity to shape and influence service delivery.

#### 4. TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

4.1 The Housing Service has a flexible approach to tenant involvement providing a range of both formal and informal opportunities for tenants to participate. Tenants are able to opt in or opt out of opportunities as they arise.

4.2 After a review of tenant participation earlier this year involving the Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TACT) our refreshed strategy for tenant involvement involves the following:

- Offering tenant participation opportunities that range from one off or short-term limited involvement such as focus groups or task and finish groups to ongoing commitments such as the Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- Holding an annual tenant consultation day
- Using impact assessments techniques and reality checking such as mystery shopping
- Evaluating the connection between what tenants said and what we did to assess the overall outcomes of service improvement and reporting back through a variety of methods including newsletters, website and the annual report
- Exploring the use of social media and electronic forms of engagement

4.3 In addition to methods of direct tenant involvement, we also seek to identify the needs and aspirations of tenants through the use of customer intelligence:

- A comprehensive survey of tenants and residents (STAR) which identifies trends in satisfaction.
- Gathering equality and diversity statistics through our customer contact points such as tenancy sign up, verification, exit surveys and logging a complaint to help determine whether our processes create unintended barriers to service for key groups.
- Tenant complaints analysis to identify trends in dissatisfaction and help to solve the systemic problems for all tenants as well as addressing individual tenant complaints.
- Carrying out a tenant census, enabling us to better understand the profile of tenants.

#### 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Consultation with tenants enables the Housing Service to ensure that its services promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

#### 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 The Housing Service uses tenant involvement to develop and improve services. An annual report to tenants is published on the Council's website, the link to our 2016 report is here: [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/7001/Housing-Report2016final170317/pdf/Housing\\_Report2016final170317.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/7001/Housing-Report2016final170317/pdf/Housing_Report2016final170317.pdf)

6.2 In addition the Council publishes and posts out a 6 monthly Housing News publication to all tenants and 'patch' or estate area newsletters are also produced 6 monthly providing updates on local issues to our tenants.

6.3 Data from our 15/16 survey shows that 68% of tenants are satisfied that their views are being listened to and acted on and this compares with a comparator group average of 59% and top quartile (best) performance of 71% - so is well above the average for similar providers.

## 7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Housing Service funds tenant participation through the Housing Revenue Account (the ring-fenced account which deals with Council housing and rental income). This includes staff dedicated to supporting tenant involvement, the cost of regular surveys and other incidental costs. This equates to a cost of circa £68 per tenant per year.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None