

Open Agenda

Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Tuesday 11 July 2017

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor Tom Flynn (Chair)
Councillor Ben Johnson (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Radha Burgess
Councillor James Coldwell
Councillor Vijay Luthra
Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Cris Claridge
John Nosworthy
Michael Orey

Reserves

Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor David Hubber
Councillor Anne Kirby
Councillor Michael Situ

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Contact Fitzroy Williams on 020 7525 7102 or email: scrutiny@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Eleanor Kelly
Chief Executive
Date: 4 July 2017



Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Tuesday 11 July 2017

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

PART A - OPEN BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.

4. MINUTES

1 - 4

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 27th March 2017.

5. RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

5 - 150

Toby Blume to present the report.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

151

Sub-Committee members to discuss items of business for 2017/18.

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF ANY CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.

DISTRIBUTION LIST 2017-18

Date: 4 July2017

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following motion should be moved, seconded and approved if the sub-committee wishes to exclude the press and public to deal with reports revealing exempt information:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7, Access to Information Procedure rules of the Constitution.”



Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Monday 27 March 2017 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Tom Flynn (Chair)
 Councillor Ben Johnson
 Councillor Samantha Jury-Dada
 Councillor Karl Eastham
 Councillor Damian O'Brien
 Councillor Martin Seaton
 Mr Michael Orey

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Stephanie Cryan

OFFICER SUPPORT: Stephen Douglass - Housing and Modernisation
 Shelley Burke – Head of Overview & Scrutiny
 Fitzroy Williams – Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Vijay Luthra and Cris Claridge.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

2.1 There were no urgent items.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

VIDEO -OPENING OF THE MEETING

<https://bambuser.com/v/6681703>

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING INTERVIEW - COUNCILLOR STEPHANIE CRYAN

5.1 The Chair welcomed the Councillor Stephanie Cryan Cabinet Member for Housing to the meeting and requested that the member give a summary of her portfolio and then take questions from members of the sub-committee.

5.2 Councillor Cryan stated that she was responsible for the housing portfolio, including housing management, community housing services, homelessness and sheltered housing, housing allocations, the housing investment programme and leasehold management.

5.3 The member reported that she worked closely with the cabinet member for adult care and financial inclusion (with regard to the housing needs of vulnerable adults) and to work closely with the leader and cabinet member for regeneration and new homes with regard to delivering the long-term housing stock strategy and 11,000 new council houses.

5.4 The Cabinet member had particular responsibility for:

- relationships with tenants and residents associations;
- housing asset strategy including delivering a quality kitchen and bathroom for every council tenant;
- meeting tenant and leaseholder expectations of major works contracts;
- housing services;
- housing allocations;
- community housing including homelessness and sheltered housing
- housing repairs;
- engaging with council tenants and leaseholders;
- delivering a new leaseholder management company;
- rehousing arrangements as part of major regeneration projects;

- quality of estate environment including communal repairs, cleaning and pest control;
- lettings policy and policy on illegal subletting and estate security;
- response to the government's housing reforms.

VIDEO - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING INTERVIEW

<https://bambuser.com/v/6681706>

<https://bambuser.com/v/6681747>

6. TENANT'S AND RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION - STRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL

6.1 The Chair reported that he had met with Toby Blume, who was project managing this item of business and was impressed with the plan and the fact that they had experience of how the council works and looking outwards at good examples of other councils and housing associations where residents were involved in the process.

6.2 The Chair urged members that if they had any ideas or suggestions with regards to improving the current structure to contact Toby Blume and discuss them with him now at the early stages.

6.3 The Cabinet member thanked the sub-committee for the recommendation regarding reviewing the TRA structure and relationship with the council.

VIDEO - UPDATE TENANT'S AND RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION - STRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL

<https://bambuser.com/v/6681749>

7. PHASING OUT OF 0800 NUMBER REPAIR LINE FOR 0300 NUMBER

7.1 Agenda item was withdrawn due to officer illness.

Meeting ended at 8.50 pm

CHAIR:

DATED:

Item No. 5	Classification: Open	Date: 11 July 2017	Meeting Name: Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Subcommittee
Report title:		Review of resident involvement	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Overview and Scrutiny	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Subcommittee:

1. Consider the findings of the review of resident involvement in Southwark.
2. Make recommendations for next steps following the review.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Southwark is the largest council landlord in London and the sixth largest in the UK. There are 38,000 council tenants and 17,000 council homeowners in the borough and many people also rent from leaseholders on council estates. The council intends to remain a large landlord for many years to come; investing £326 million to improve the standard of existing council homes and pledging to build 11,000 new homes by 2043.
4. The council is committed to engaging with its 55,000 tenants and homeowners and giving them a genuine say in the decision-making process. We have a duty to ensure that we engage with residents in ways that are accessible, representative, effective and represent value to all council tenants, homeowners and other residents. Alongside this duty, the council's values, reflected in the Fairer Future principles, shape our approach to effective, open, honest and productive engagement by treating residents as if they were a valued member of our own family; being open, honest and accountable; spending money as if it were from our own pocket; working for everyone to realise their own potential; and making Southwark a place to be proud of.
5. This commitment also places engaged and empowered communities at the heart of the council's approach to social regeneration across Southwark. This recognises that enabling people's voices to be heard in local regeneration helps to shape better outcomes, strengthens communities and connects individuals to local resources and opportunities.
6. The council's Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Subcommittee is seeking to develop recommendations for improvement in the way the council engages with and involves residents. In December 2016 and February 2017, the subcommittee heard evidence from council officers, the Cabinet Member for Housing and members of the Tenant Council. It was noted that the current structures for engaging with tenants and homeowners were built and formalised in the late 1980s and early 1990s at a time when face to face engagement was

the best way to reach out to people and hear what they had to say. These structures also reflected the corporate and decision making arrangements of the council at the time, which have changed considerably since. Many committed residents dedicate valuable time and service to engaging with the council on housing issues. In addition, TRAs perform important and valued community roles, supporting vulnerable residents and building community networks. However, less than 0.5% of our 55,000 residents in council homes currently engage with the council through the existing formal routes. The evidence showed that while there are many strengths and assets within the tenant and leaseholders movements, there is dissatisfaction on all sides with the current arrangements and a strong desire for change.

7. On 7 February 2017, having heard the evidence presented, the Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Subcommittee recommended that a review into tenant and homeowner engagement be commissioned, to be carried out by an independent, expert body. The review would provide independent evidence to the subcommittee to support recommendations to the council's cabinet on improvements to how the council engages with residents.
8. Following this recommendation, the council invited organisations specialising in housing, public engagement and public service improvement to tender for the contract to lead the review. In March, following a competitive process, Kaizen Partnership and Social Engine were appointed to lead the review. The appointment was supported and advised by a representative of the Tenant Council and Homeowners Council were also invited to send a representative to participate in the process.

Aims and key research questions

9. The review was set up to explore independently and in depth how the council engages with tenants and homeowners as a housing provider and identify areas for improvement.
10. To support this aim, the review was structured to answer five key questions:
 - How aware and satisfied are tenants and homeowners, the council and other stakeholders with the current system and structures?
 - How can tenant and homeowner engagement be improved to reflect the way people live today and that deliver improved outcomes in Southwark?
 - How does the Southwark approach compare to other housing providers? What examples of good practice could Southwark Council learn from?
 - Do the current systems and structures provide good value for money? Can cost savings and efficiencies be made which could save money and not compromise engagement or improve engagement?
 - What might effective engagement look like in 5 years' time – how best to define an active and involved tenant / homeowner?

Methodology

11. The largest source of evidence for the review has been an extensive

engagement and evidence gathering exercise with council tenants, homeowners and other residents carried out between April and June 2017. This exercise was carried out to hear from as many people as possible from across the borough and from all backgrounds. Views were sought from people who do not currently get involved with the formal resident engagement structures and from those with longstanding experience and knowledge of the tenant and leaseholder movements at different levels.

12. Overall, following widespread promotion, well over 1,000 people contributed their views through outreach and street engagement, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and online consultation. A summary of the extensive consultation carried out is set out in paragraphs 32 to 36.
13. As well as holding new conversations with residents, the review also looked at data already held by the council to explore the relationship between engagement and satisfaction with council services and whether there are patterns to this, which could help inform wider service benefits that might be gained from improving resident engagement. To support the assessment of value for money, data relating to efficiency and effectiveness of the current tenant and leaseholder engagement structures was also reviewed, including the costs of supporting and servicing the structures and evidence of impact and outcomes from the tenant fund and homeowners fund.
14. The final element of the review was a process of peer review and benchmarking. A desk-based Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) was carried out looking at the evidence of effective tenant engagement within local government and among other housing providers. Following this REA, a series of interviews were carried out with local authority and social housing providers where good or useful practice had been identified. Finally, to further support the value for money assessment, engagement support costs were also benchmarked against other housing providers.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

15. The full report of the review and a shorter summary version are included as appendices to this report. The report sets out detailed findings and recommendations mapped against the five key questions set out in paragraph 10.
16. The review has identified significant need for change, to be addressed jointly by the council and residents, in order to improve the reach and effectiveness of resident involvement in Southwark. It has also identified opportunities for improvements in outcomes for residents and the borough as a whole that may be realised by transforming the way resident involvement takes place.
17. Some of the key issues highlighted by the review include a widespread lack of awareness of how to get involved among residents across the borough, with a particular sense of exclusion present among young people. It found several challenges with weaknesses identified throughout and across the current structure and culture of resident involvement, with a need to fundamentally refresh the meaning, purpose and approach to engagement. There is also significant scope for improvement in how communication is designed and targeted to encourage engagement. Encouragingly, there is strong evidence that

many more people want to get involved but they want to do so in different ways, which are more flexible and more suited to their lives and priorities.

18. Looking forward, the review makes a number of recommendations under three broad headings:
 - reviewing the overall approach to resident involvement
 - reconfiguring the engagement structures
 - introducing more effective and up to date engagement methods.

19. The report provides a thorough and comprehensive analysis of key issues and opportunities arising from the review. Given the depth and complexity of the report and in response to the evidence presented by the review, there is a significant opportunity to now establish a collaborative co-design process in which the council is a participant alongside residents. Such an approach is recommended to develop a shared plan for change in response to the review, which is owned by all stakeholders and builds on the widespread participation achieved during the review itself.

Policy implications

20. The council's Fairer Future principles underpin this review, shaping its scope and objectives. These are:
 - Treating residents as if they were a valued member of our own family
 - Being open, honest and accountable
 - Spending money as if it were from our own pocket
 - Working for everyone to realise their own potential
 - Making Southwark a place to be proud of

21. The council's Housing Strategy to 2043 includes the key principle: "We will support and encourage all residents to take pride and responsibility in their homes and local area". It goes on to state that "Our approach to resident involvement across all tenures acknowledges one central premise – that one size does not fit all. The council will develop a menu of options, so that everybody has the opportunity to choose their level and method of engagement. These options will prioritise digital methods of communication both for speed and ease of contact for the majority of residents and the council, but also to minimise cost." This review builds on these commitments. It sets out recommendations to widen the scope for engagement to enable people to choose their preferred way of engaging and communicating, according to their needs and priorities.

22. The council's 'Approach to Community Engagement', adopted in December 2012 sets out the principles for actively engaging residents in decision-making. It notes the need to move beyond purely formal processes of consultation to a model that engages people more actively. It also recognises that many residents are not involved in traditional structures, so as well as seeking to improve engagement through our existing structures we must offer more new methods for others to engage, reflecting their interests and the time they can give. The review responds to this need. The review has been conducted according to the council's adopted key principles for community engagement and its recommendations will also be taken forward in line with these principles:
 - Be clear about what the scope of our engagement is, whether we are communicating, consulting, deciding together or acting together.
 - Engage when we know it will

make a difference, when there is a real opportunity for people to have an impact and influence decisions on issues that local people care about.

- Engage at the right time, at an early enough stage for there to be an opportunity to genuinely influence a policy or service.
- Allow sufficient time for good quality engagement to take place.
- Be clear about what we are asking, what opportunities there are to shape services and be honest about what can and can't be achieved.
- We will ensure that our engagement is accessible and targeted to those it needs to reach using a variety of engagement methods to broaden participation and overcome any barriers people may have in engaging with us.
- Aim to engage as widely as possible so that we increase engagement with those who are not already in touch with the council.
- Tell people what has happened as a result of their engagement.

Community impact statement

23. The review has highlighted that overall there is a low level of awareness of how to participate among borough residents. The majority of residents stated that they were not well aware of TRAs, Homeowners and Tenant Councils and Area Housing Forums and that they did not feel well informed about opportunities to have their say. The review therefore recommends changes to the current approach to resident involvement to include a wider group of people by establishing more flexible and quicker methods of participation. It also makes recommendations for improved communication, to encourage better engagement.
24. The review also considered engagement across Southwark residents with different characteristics, including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, employment status, housing status, and length of residency in the borough.
25. The most significant variation identified between different groups related to age, with young people likely to feel and be less represented than older people. People under 25 were twice as likely to say they did not feel informed about opportunities to have their say, compared with older people and the majority of young people felt that their views were not heard and that they did not matter to the council. The review also found that the association between engagement and satisfaction is strongest with younger people, with the 18-34 age group most likely to report satisfaction with council services when they believe the council listens to residents.
26. Other variations were identified, including residents of Asian background feeling less engaged compared to other ethnic groups and leaseholders feeling less engaged than tenants. The detailed data may highlight further areas for consideration in terms of potential impact on different communities and where these are identified they will be fed into the process of taking forward the recommendations.
27. A key driver for implementing the findings of the review is therefore to have a positive impact on how the council involves a diverse range of residents across the equality strands and across the community as a whole.

Resource implications

28. Immediate financial implications arising from taking forward the recommendations will be managed within existing budget commitments.
29. There are no further resource implications at this time.

Legal implications

30. The council is required by Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 to maintain arrangements for consulting tenants on housing management issues which are likely to substantially affect them. The legislation provides discretion for landlord authorities to make the arrangements they consider appropriate to achieve the aims of informing tenants, hearing their views and considering their representations on relevant matters before taking a decision.
31. In addition, the Homes and Communities Agency's 2015 regulatory framework states that tenants should have opportunities to shape service delivery and to hold the responsible board and councillors to account. Providers are expected to engage meaningfully with their tenants and offer them opportunities to shape the tailoring of services to reflect local priorities. Tenants should have the ability to scrutinise their provider's performance, identify areas for improvement and influence future delivery.
32. The recommendations of the review point to methods of improving council engagement with tenants in line with the legal duties set out above.

Consultation

33. The review has been supported by an extensive consultation exercise held across the borough with residents and stakeholder groups that engaged over 1,000 residents. There were three main strands to the consultation.
 - Interviews with council staff and key stakeholders
 - Focus Groups with active residents
 - Outreach and engagement of residents, focussing on reaching those not currently involved, with a particular focus on under-represented groups.
34. Strands 1 and 2 focussed on hearing from key stakeholders as well as engaging with the formal resident structures and most active tenants and leaseholders. Focus groups were held with 5 TRAs, 2 Area Housing Forums, the Youth Council, a Sheltered Housing Unit, the Tenants Council, the Homeowners Council, and Southwark Group of Tenant Organisations (SGTO).
35. Strand 3 was aimed at hearing from residents of the borough who would not be expected to be involved in formal engagement structures. In order to hear from a diverse range of residents, and especially from those not currently involved, targeted outreach and direct engagement took place in estates and areas with a high proportion of council tenants and leaseholders. Within this strand the following variety of methods were used to widen participation and to ensure that less heard voices were included.
 - Targeted outreach in the community with individual street interviews which typically lasted from 15-20 minutes each. Interviews were conducted across the borough, on different days of the week (including weekends) and across a range of times of day and in a wide variety of types of locations.

- Street focus groups. This is a way to have broad discussions with people who are not typically accessible through a traditional focus group approach, such as groups of teenagers on the street, parents at the school gate or women in a hairdressers.
 - Peer to peer engagement and consultation delivered by the Southwark Young Advisors. This element comprised of a focus group with young advisors themselves to gather their ideas as well as street outreach where they engaged and interviewed other young people.
36. Additionally an online consultation was hosted on the Southwark Consultation Hub. The online questionnaire, which followed the same format as the street interviews, was promoted by the council via emails to all TRAs and other tenant and homeowner organisations, posters in public places such as libraries, customer service points and TRA noticeboards and through social media. More than 20,000 people were directly emailed about the consultation.
37. In total, the consultation conducted through the review resulted in well over 1,000 people contributing their views:
- 563 individual street interviews
 - 62 individuals participated in 20 street focus groups
 - 133 young people engaged through peer-research run by Southwark Young Advisors
 - 380 online survey responses
 - 12 focus groups with groups and bodies which are part of the formal engagement structures
 - 12 one-to-one interviews with people who are active in the current structures
 - 8 one-to-one interviews with Council stakeholders (Members and Officers) and all Ward Members were invited to contribute their views to the review
 - 6 in-depth interviews with other housing providers (RSLs and Local Authorities)

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Council's approach to engagement with council tenants and homeowners – report to Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Subcommittee, 5 December 2016	Scrutiny team Hub 4, 5 th Floor 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Scrutiny team 020 7525 7344
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s65436/Resident%20involvement%20paper.pdf		
Minutes of Housing & Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Subcommittee, 7 February 2017	Scrutiny team Hub 4, 5 th Floor 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Scrutiny team 020 7525 7344
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=44138		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Improving tenant and homeowner engagement in Southwark – a review carried out by Kaizen and Social Engine (circulated electronically)



Improving tenant and homeowner engagement in
Southwark – a review
Carried out by Kaizen and Social Engine

June 2017



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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Project aims and methodology

- Southwark Council commissioned Kaizen and Social Engine to carry out a review of tenant and homeowner engagement with the aim of providing evidence to support improvements to the current structures and ways of working.
- The review focused on five key questions:
 1. How aware and satisfied are Tenants and Homeowners and Council/other stakeholders with the current system and structures?
 2. How does the Southwark Council approach compare to other housing providers? What examples of good practice could Southwark Council learn from?
 3. Do the current systems and structures provide good value for money? Can cost savings and efficiencies be made which could save money and not compromise engagement (or even improve engagement)?
 4. How can tenant and homeowner engagement be improved to reflect the way people live today and that deliver improved outcomes in Southwark?
 5. What might effective engagement look like in 5 years' time – how best to define an active and involved tenant/homeowner?
- The review sought to capture the views of a wide range of stakeholders – including groups and individuals actively involved with the current engagement structures, such as TRAs, Area Housing Forums and the Homeowners and Tenants Councils – as well as a cross section of tenants and homeowners who have little current involvement.
- A large scale outreach programme across the Borough, coupled with an online survey, focus groups and stakeholder interviews were used to engage over 1,000 local tenants and homeowners. The review also incorporated the opinions of Council officers and Councillors and gathered evidence and experience from a range of other housing providers – both local authorities and housing associations as well as an assessment of other research on tenant engagement. Secondary analysis of a range of data held by Southwark Council was also undertaken to provide further evidence to inform the review.
- The project was carried out between March and July 2017.

1.2 Key Findings

The review findings have been organised under the project's five research questions.

1. How aware and satisfied are Tenants and Homeowners and Council/other stakeholders with the current system and structures?

- Awareness with the current formal engagement structures is low with the majority of people outside the Council stating they do not feel particularly well informed.
- 1 in 3 respondents to the survey said they know nothing at all about their TRA and over half said they know nothing at all about Area Housing Forums and Tenants and Homeowners Councils. As a result of these low levels of awareness, most people felt they

did not know whether or not these structures were effective, however of those who felt they did know, the majority did not feel they did this very well.

- Respondents aged 65 or over were three times more likely to say they felt very well informed about opportunities to have their say than young people (aged 25 or below).
- The lack of awareness appears to be matched by generally lower levels of satisfaction with the housing service overall. Compared to other London Boroughs, Southwark tenants and homeowners were generally less satisfied with housing service provision.
- Despite many within the Council vociferously advocating the importance of engagement, it is clear that trust has broken down between the Council and many of those involved in formal engagement structures. This distrust has undermined effective collaboration and risks further disengagement if it is not addressed.
- In some situations engagement and consultation was described as merely ‘ticking boxes’ with limited expectations from Council and participants about the ability to influence decisions, and the breadth of opinions considered.
- The review has uncovered the absence of a clear and consistent vision and definition of what engagement means. This is resulting in different approaches and a lack of coherence across the Council at an operational level. As a result expectations of tenants are unmet and council officers feel equally frustrated by the responses of tenants to their engagement processes.
- The Council and the many highly engaged tenants have invested considerably in the current strategic engagement structures, however many expressed the view that the Council are not currently making strategic use of them. The Homeowners and Tenants Councils sit at the pinnacle of the current engagement structure, however we have found that they are being overly used for information sharing, with much more limited strategic input or collaborative working.
- We have observed a lack of accountability within the current formal engagement structures and a specific gap exists in the oversight of the effectiveness of the overall system – beyond the Council’s own scrutiny and oversight mechanisms.
- Meetings have become the default method of strategic engagement with tenants, particularly through formal structures. Whilst well run and effective meetings are an important part of engagement, the current arrangements have become too reliant on them at the expense of other ways of working.
- Despite many examples of good relations between individual Council staff and tenant reps, the approach taken by the Council to communicating with tenants more generally was often found to be of a poor quality, lacking clarity, inaccessible and overly complicated.
- Unsurprisingly, we found that there is no single platform or channel which can effectively communicate with and engage every tenant. Letters and emails were the most popular communication methods and face-to-face and phone were also popular responses. Website, text message, meetings and social media were not favoured; however young

people were significantly more positive about digital communications than older people (particularly over 65s).

- Respondents were clear in their views on what the role of their TRA should be, with two thirds saying they thought it should be to improve the local area and half saying the TRA should be representing tenant views about services to the Council.
- Almost two-thirds of survey respondents said they knew nothing at all about the Tenants Fund and Homeowners Fund.
- Respondents expressed a preference for spending to be allocated to activity which directly and demonstrably benefited their communities: improvements to the area, social and community events and support for local projects. Indeed, increasing the emphasis on local and community benefit may well be a significant motivator for encouraging engagement.
- These preferences appear to be somewhat disconnected with the current allocation of funds, which places considerable emphasis on training and support for residents and TRAs, with much less emphasis on funding local improvements, community events and local projects.
- A review of Tenant and Homeowner Funds monitoring reports suggests an over-emphasis on outputs, internal controls and financial management rather than delivering outcomes and opportunities that benefit local communities.
- A number of people felt that their voices were not heard and that the formal engagement structures were not as inclusive as they might be. Whilst the contribution of those who did participate in these structures was widely acknowledge and appreciated, there was a general feeling that they relied on a representative model at the expense of wider participation. Young people are particularly likely to feel less represented in the current engagement structures. The review found that the majority of young people felt that their views were not heard and that they did not matter to the Council.

2. How does the Southwark Council approach compare to other housing providers? What examples of good practice could Southwark Council learn from?

- Our Rapid Evidence Assessment found that the evidence-base relating to effective tenant engagement is extremely weak with very little high quality studies or research. Although there is a great deal of published information, it is generally very limited - largely consisting of single case studies and anecdotal evidence.
- We identified six design features which underpin strong tenant and homeowner engagement. These are:
 1. They are focused on enabling and capacity building
 2. They place citizens at the centre of their approach
 3. They adopt a tailored approach to different audiences
 4. They are proactive in their approach
 5. They make decisions on the basis of available evidence
 6. They integrate the use of technology where it can improve outcomes

- A number of key learning points emerged from peer research with other housing providers:
 1. Having a clear strategy and values which underpin the engagement approach
 2. A tailored approach to engagement
 3. Strong leadership within the Council and the community

3. Do the current systems and structures provide good value for money? Can cost savings and efficiencies be made which could save money and not compromise engagement (or even improve engagement)?

- Southwark spends a considerable amount of money on supporting tenant engagement and the Tenants Fund and the Homeowners Fund have a combined budget of over £600,000 a year. Although there is considerable scrutiny of this money from a financial management perspective, relatively little attention is given to specifying the impact it is intended to have or measuring the difference it makes.
- A greater emphasis on outcomes – rather than outputs – would improve the ability to determine whether funds were delivering improvements that represented value for money.
- Better coordination of engagement activity across Council departments and services – based on a common vision of engagement – will help to ensure messages and approaches are consistent. Coordinating engagement and communications across the Council will require dedicated resources to manage the process effectively but is likely to produce savings and efficiencies elsewhere in the system.
- Local people do not live their lives within the confines of specific Council Directorates or service delivery silos. Adopting a broader focus on local outcomes – including but not limited to housing – would enhance coordination across services and departments that reflect the lives of residents and enable stronger and more meaningful collaborative working.
- There was some evidence of duplication in the formal engagement structures, which contributes to increased cost and reduced engagement due to the large volume of meetings volunteers need to attend. In particular the separation of tenants and homeowners seemed counter-productive as there was little evidence of significant differences in views between the two groups on most issues and the peer review brought out how other providers combine tenants and homeowners in strategic bodies to good effect.
- Whilst our findings are based on a limited set of data, we found that on key measures – satisfaction with housing service overall and satisfaction that the provider listens and acts on tenant views – Southwark’s tenants are less satisfied than average compared with other housing providers.
- From the limited benchmarking data we have been able to gather we found a very weak negative relationship between the amounts spent on engagement and how satisfied tenants and leaseholders are. Organisations that spend more on engagement actually yield

slightly lower overall satisfaction rates in the limited data we had available to analyse. This suggests it is not purely how much that is spent, but how the investment in tenant engagement is used which is more important. Further exploring these findings with data from all London Boroughs and a consistent methodology would help determine whether the negative correlation the benchmarking identified is consistent across all authorities.

4. How can tenant and homeowner engagement be improved to reflect the way people live today and that deliver improved outcomes in Southwark?

- The review uncovered numerous ideas and suggestions for how tenant and homeowner engagement could be improved. The following are key themes that could be usefully considered:
 - Co-design a Council-wide vision for engagement
 - Managing expectations to be clear and consistent in articulating its aspirations
 - Recognising the strong connection between engagement and satisfaction
 - Understanding motivations and barriers to engagement
 - Rebuild trust and demonstrate a commitment to improvement
 - Respond to the desire for greater transparency
 - Develop more effective use of digital tools
 - Involve Southwark Young Advisors and the Southwark Youth Council in actively engaging and representing the views of young people
 - Review the approach and provision of training and support for tenants and TRAs
 - Develop greater insight into the role the Council has in people's lives and the ways in which Council activities can influence attitudes towards it.

5. What might effective engagement look like in 5 years' time – how best to define an active and involved tenant/homeowner?

- Applying the learning from this review to the design of new structures and approaches to tenant engagement will take time and effort on all sides. It will also require a period of transition with the Council and residents collaborating to co-design a new approach to engagement.
- The Council needs to be a participant in this process – not simply a leader or convenor – which suggests it would be very beneficial to seek independent facilitation to support and facilitate the co-design process.
- The Council should consider how it can build the six characteristics identified through our Rapid Evidence Assessment in to its revised approach. In particular consideration should be given to:
 - Introducing a range of opportunities which enable people to participate in different ways from bite-sized, lighter touch, one-way opportunities through to deeper and more meaningful two-way engagement which relates to not just housing but a range of local public services.

- How the new engagement approach can be used to kick-start and/or further develop the pre-conditions for civic engagement more widely.
- How a map of touchpoints could be developed to identify and act upon all the opportunities to develop a relationship with tenants and leaseholders and respond effectively first time.
- Using technology and social media to have a credible and meaningful, two-way conversation (not just to broadcast official messages).
- How to shape the engagement offer so that it meets the needs of particular groups including leaseholders, younger people, and people for whom English is a second language
- Developing a robust approach to evaluation to ensure the new approach to engagement is delivering the outcomes that are intended.

1.3 Recommendations

- We have organised our recommendations into three distinct, but related, areas: the approach to engagement, the structures for engagement and the methods of engagement.

Approach to engagement

- A co-design process is established which enables a ‘community conversation’ to develop a collaborative approach to engagement. This new collaborative approach should:
 - Include a clear definition of what engagement means for Southwark which can be consistently applied across the Council.
 - Bring a greater focus on outcomes, not just outputs with a robust approach to evaluating engagement.
 - Embed transparency and openness, including sharing data sets with strategic bodies.
 - Ensure consultation allows sufficient time for tenants to contribute to decision-making.
 - Begin the process of rebuilding trust between tenants, homeowners and the Council.
 - Embed accountability more firmly into engagement structures.
 - Adopt an asset based approach that values under-used community assets.
 - Create and values different ways for residents to engage.
 - Actively engage young people by working with Southwark Young Advisors and the Southwark Youth Council
 - Better communicate information about the Tenants and Homeowners Funds and align spending with local priorities.
 - Reflect the importance of strong leadership within the Council and the community to deliver effective engagement.

Formal Engagement Structures

- Taking steps to improve the formal engagement structures by addressing duplication and inefficiency in the current structures by:
 - Merge the Homeowners Council and the Tenants Councils.
 - Merge the Area Housing Forums with the existing Community Councils.
 - Establish a new stakeholder oversight group for housing involving Council (members and officers), tenants, homeowners and other stakeholders.
 - Establishing a new 'Ideas and Innovation group' with a remit to develop new initiatives as a mechanism for collaboration and creative approaches to be developed.
 - Increased use of co-design groups involving council officers, members, tenants and leaseholders to look at specific issues.
 - Using resident groups more strategically.

Engagement Methods

- Develop a broad range of communication and engagement methods that are multi-channel and tailored to different audiences and types of engagement by:
 - Personalising communications and tailoring messages to specific audiences to encourage engagement.
 - Address the over-reliance on meetings by providing quicker and more flexible ways of participating
 - Make more effective use of Digital Tools based on enabling two-way engagement rather than being just another broadcast channel.
 - Identify and address poor engagement and communication practice through staff training and support.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background context

As local authorities and other public bodies strive to meet the dual challenges of rising demand and diminishing resources, no service or policy can be presumed to be the most efficient delivery model. Housing and tenant participation is no different and Southwark, like other councils, are keen to ensure that the structures, processes and systems are fit for purpose. However resident engagement has the potential to do far more than simply meet budgetary constraints. Effective, meaningful engagement with tenants and homeowners can have a profound impact on local outcomes and the lives of residents in Southwark. Meaningful engagement can empower citizens, improve the quality of life and well-being of local people, strengthen communities, reduce demand on other public services and deliver considerable other social value.

Approaches to resident participation have, in tandem with the role of local authorities in meeting local housing need, changed dramatically over recent years with expectations and delivery being transformed by new ways of working. Traditional social housing provided by the council within a single uniform delivery model has been replaced by a range of new approaches, whilst retaining a strong public service delivery ethos. So too the traditional methods of engaging tenants and homeowners have come under scrutiny with the vast majority of residents withdrawing from active participation with their landlords or freeholders. Some have suggested that this is inevitable and that people's apathy means they are unwilling to get involved. However, given appropriate opportunities for meaningful engagement and a genuine reason for participating, local people consistently show themselves to be enthusiastic about having their say and playing an active role in their communities.

Southwark Council explained the background to the review and its purpose in the contract specification¹:

The council's housing and community safety scrutiny subcommittee is considering the current engagement structures and is seeking to develop recommendations for improvement in the way the council engages with and involves residents. To date the subcommittee has heard evidence from council officers, the cabinet member for housing and members of the tenant's council. A background paper² sets out some of the issues. On 7 February 2017, the subcommittee recommended that a review be carried out, which should be supported by an independent, expert body. This will be taken forward with the aim of providing evidence to the subcommittee to support recommendations to the council's cabinet on improvements to the current structure and ways of working.

The council is therefore seeking to commission a qualified and experienced organisation to lead a study into how tenants and homeowners engage with the council and areas where we might improve on the current longstanding structures. The study will take the form of a widespread engagement and evidence gathering exercise... This will be supplemented with a review of good practice, case studies and benchmarking against other housing providers, and an analysis of data relating to the current engagement structures to give quantitative and qualitative measures of outcomes and performance.

¹ Improving tenant and homeowner engagement in Southwark: Invitation to tender (Feb 2017)

² <http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s65436/Resident%20involvement%20paper.pdf>

2.2 Who undertook the review

The review was carried out through a collaboration between organisational transformation and behaviour change agency Social Engine and engagement specialists Kaizen Partnership. Both organisations bring substantial expertise in community and stakeholder engagement, extensive research methods and a detailed knowledge of local government policy and practice.

About Social Engine

Social Engine was founded by Avis Johns and Toby Blume in 2015 to support organisations to adopt an evidenced-based and insight-led approach. Social Engine work with charities, local authorities, social enterprises and other social purpose organisations to overcome organisational challenges through engagement, research and the practical application of evidence into practice.

About Kaizen

Kaizen, founded in 2000, is an award-winning social business that specialises in designing, delivering and facilitating cutting edge projects. Kaizen deliver work across the community sector including the areas of regeneration, education, employment, housing and the social care field. They have worked with organisations ranging from Local Authorities to schools, small charities to Premier League Football clubs, international companies to the London 2012 Olympics.

2.3 Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express our thanks to the many people who willingly and freely gave up their time to participate in the review, whether doing interviews in the street, online, being interviewed, attending a focus group and sharing ideas and thoughts. In particular we would like to thank Nick Wolff, Eva Gomez, Brian O’Neill and Stephen Douglass from Southwark Council for their considerable support with the review. Thanks also to our colleagues, Rebecca Eligon, Professor Peter John and Manu Savani for the production of the REA, peer review and data analysis reports and to Southwark Young Advisors for their peer research and report.

We applaud Southwark’s willingness to open itself up to honest appraisal and independent scrutiny in order to develop and improve its own practice, in the full knowledge that this would generate both positive and negative comment. This commitment to reflection as an important step towards improvement is both valuable and refreshing and we wish to acknowledge and welcome the decision taken by Councillors and officers and the opportunity it has given us to contribute to this important work.

The review generated a large amount of data which we have sought to analyse and synthesise. We have attempted to honestly and accurately reflect the many different opinions and perspectives of those we spoke to, in a balanced and objective way. However any inaccuracies or misrepresentations are ours and ours alone.

Toby Blume, Avis Johns and Jonny Zander

June 2017

3 Approach and Methodology

3.1 Review design

At the outset we developed a clear set of broad research questions based on the Council's brief and then drafted a set of questionnaires, interview questions and topic guides to reflect these.

Five overarching research questions were defined at the outset of the review, to guide the approach to research and engagement. Three of the questions explore how things are now, and the final two look to the future to examine how it could be.

1. How aware and satisfied are Tenants and Homeowners and the Council and other stakeholders with the current system and structures?
2. How does Southwark Council's approach compare to other housing providers? What examples of good practice could Southwark learn from?
3. Do the current systems and structures provide good value for money? Can cost savings and efficiencies be made which could save money and not compromise engagement (or even improve engagement)?
4. How can tenant and homeowner engagement be improved to reflect the way people live today and that deliver improved outcomes in Southwark?
5. What might effective engagement look like in 5 years' time – how best to define an active and involved tenant/homeowner?

The detailed findings from the review are presented under the headings of each of the five research questions.

Beneath the overarching research questions were a list of primary and secondary questions that were developed for the review to explore using the mix of methodologies detailed below. The breakdown of how the methodologies linked to the research questions can be seen in the table on page 9.

The review design sought to capture the views of a wide range of stakeholders – including groups and individuals actively involved with the current engagement structures, such as TRAs, Area Housing Forums and the Homeowners and Tenants Councils – as well as a cross section of tenants and homeowners who have little current involvement ('the *unusual* suspects'). A large scale outreach programme across the Borough was the main mechanism used to engage less traditionally active voices in the review. In addition to tenants and homeowners, the review also incorporated the opinions of Council officers and Councillors, including the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee. Evidence and experience from a range of other housing providers – both local authorities and housing associations – was also incorporated into the review through the peer review and benchmarking work strand.

3.2 Review Methodology

The review involved a wide mix of methods and research across three broad work packages which were specified by Southwark Council:

- Engagement and Outreach
- Peer Review and Benchmarking
- Data Analysis



3.3 Engagement and Outreach Work Package

There were three main strands to the engagement work package and these made up the largest part of the review process and provided a wealth of data and insight:

- Interviews with council staff and key stakeholders
- Focus Groups with active residents (either in TRAs, AHFs or the Homeowners or Tenants Council)
- Outreach and engagement of residents, focussing on reaching those not currently involved, with a particular focus on under-represented groups.

Agreed outputs for engagement and outreach strand: 12 stakeholder interviews (Council and current participants), online survey of 150 tenants/leaseholders, 12 focus groups and interviews with a minimum of 500 tenants and leaseholders.

Strands 1 and 2 focussed on hearing from key stakeholders as well as engaging with the formal resident structures and most active tenants and leaseholders. Focus groups were held with 5 TRAs, 2 Area Housing Forums, the Youth Council, a Sheltered Housing Unit, the Tenants Council, the Homeowners Council³, and Southwark Group of Tenant Organisations (SGTO).

Strand 3 was aimed at hearing from residents of the Borough who would not be expected to be involved in formal engagement structures. In order to hear from a diverse range of residents, and especially from those not currently involved, we used targeted outreach and direct engagement in

³ The Focus Group with the Homeowners Council has had to be rescheduled for late-June and then again to July. Any amendments required to the report following this will need to be made subsequently.

both estates and areas with a high proportion of council tenants and leaseholders. Within this strand the following variety of methods were used to widen participation and to ensure that less heard voices were included.

- Targeted outreach in the community with individual street interviews which typically lasted from 15-20 minutes each. Interviews were conducted across the Borough, on different days of the week (including weekends) and across a range of times of day and in a wide variety of types of locations.
- Street focus groups⁴. This is a methodology, pioneered by Kaizen as a way to have broad discussions with people who are not typically accessible through a traditional focus group approach, such as groups of teenagers on the street, parents at the school gate or women in a hairdressers.
- Peer to peer engagement and consultation delivered by the Southwark Young Advisors⁵. This element comprised of a focus group with young advisors themselves to gather their ideas as well as street outreach where they engaged and interviewed other young people.
- Additionally an online consultation was hosted on the Southwark Council consultation hub. The online questionnaire – which followed the same format as the street interviews - was promoted by the council via emails to all TRAs and other tenant and homeowner organisations, posters in public places such as libraries, customer service points and TRA noticeboards and through social media. More than 20,000 people were directly emailed about the consultation. Further details of how the survey was promoted to tenants and homeowners are included in the appendices.

3.4 Peer Review and Benchmarking Work Package

There were 3 main elements to this work package:

- A Rapid Evidence Assessment of policy and practice
- Interviews with other housing providers
- Benchmarking tenant engagement with other housing providers

Agreed outputs for peer review and benchmarking strand: interviews with 6 housing providers (Council and RSL), Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) of policy and practice, tenant engagement benchmarking exercise.

A Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) was carried out to review policy and practice among other councils and housing providers. An REA is a systematic research method for the robust synthesis of evidence available. Our review focused on three criteria: quality, quantity and context – how much evidence is there; how strong the evidence available is; and how relevant it is to Southwark’s particular circumstances.

⁴ See: <http://wearekaizen.co.uk/blog/2013/08/kaizen-street-focus-group/>

⁵ <http://southwark.youngadvisors.org.uk/>

The 6 interviews with other housing providers included a mixture of other Councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The following housing providers were interviewed as part of the review:

- London Borough of Camden
- London Borough of Lambeth
- Peabody
- Poplar HARCA
- Thames Reach
- Trafford Housing Trust

3.5 Data Analysis Work Package

This work package was intended to review and analyse the wide range of existing data which Southwark Council has. Through our secondary analysis we sought to answer two questions:

- What relationship is there between tenant and homeowner engagement and satisfaction with the council and council services?
- How do local characteristics (such as deprivation, housing tenure and demographic traits) affect engagement and customer satisfaction?

The following data sets were provided by the Council to be analysed as part of this work package:

- Resident Survey data
- STAR survey data
- Contact centre customer feedback data
- Housing repair and maintenance satisfaction data
- Tenant Fund monitoring information
- Homeowner Fund monitoring information

For our analysis we also used the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data (2015) from the London datastore⁶.

Agreed outputs for data analysis strand: quantitative analysis (regression models, scatterplots and covariates), qualitative analysis of support structure costs and a qualitative review of tenants and leaseholders funds.

Further details of the analysis methodology and the full statistical output are included in the appendices.

3.6 How the research questions were explored in the different methodologies

Not all research questions were explored in every methodology, but all questions were looked at across a range of methods allowing for triangulation of data and greater robustness for insights and conclusions. The following table sets out how the research questions were explored in the different methodologies across the 3 work packages.

⁶ <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/indices-of-deprivation-2015> (accessed May 2017)

GENERAL RESEARCH AREAS	CE	SFG	FG	SI	CPI	O		DR	HPI		DA
How aware/satisfied are T&H and Council/other stakeholders with the current system/structures?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
How can tenant and homeowner engagement be improved to reflect the way people live today and that deliver improved outcomes in Southwark?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
How does the Council's approach compare to other housing providers? What examples of good practice could Southwark Council learn from?								✓	✓		
Does the current systems and structures provide good value for money? Can cost savings and efficiencies be made which could save money and not compromise engagement (or even improve engagement)?				✓				✓	✓		✓
What might effective engagement look like in 5 years' time – how best to define an active and involved tenant/homeowner?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		

PRIMARY QUESTIONS	CE	SFG	FG	SI	CPI	O		DR	HPI		DA
To what extent are T&H aware of the current engagement structures and opportunities and the resources put into this?	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					
To what extent do T&H and the Council believe the current engagement structures are fit for purpose?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
What methods of engagement and communication do T&H want? (both how the council should communicate to them and how they want to communicate to the council)?	✓		✓		✓	✓					
What are the barriers to getting involved as an active T&H?	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Do T&H want to be more involved than they are and if they do, what would motivate/incentivise them to do so?	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓
What ideas do T&H and the Council have for how the current engagement structures and approaches could be improved?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
How are other similar housing providers addressing the need to change and evolve their structures to create greater efficiencies/improve services?								✓	✓		
Is there evidence from other housing providers of how changes they have											

made impacted on resident satisfaction, service improvement, finance and the organisation generally? What are the lessons from when things have not gone as well as planned as well as learning from success?								✓	✓	
What relationship is there between T&H engagement and satisfaction with the Council and council services?				✓				✓		✓
How do local characteristics (e.g. deprivation, housing tenure and demography) affect T&H engagement and customer satisfaction?										✓

SECONDARY QUESTIONS	CE	SFG	FG	SI	CPI	O		DR	HPI		DA
How aware are T&H of the tenants fund and homeowner fund?	✓	✓				✓					
What do T&H feel should be the main priorities for the tenants fund and homeowner fund?	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		
How can T&H be involved in monitoring, scrutiny, strategy/policy development and helping to improve the service?			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
What sort of training and support do T&H and TRAs need in order to engage and contribute effectively? How could the council improve the offer of training and support?			✓	✓	✓						
What can be done to strengthen the community role and reach of TRAs?	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
How can greater use of digital communication be made to enhance engagement?	✓		✓		✓	✓					

CE = Community Engagement
SI = Stakeholder Interview
DR = Desk Research

SFG = Street Focus Group
CPI = Current Participant Interview
HPI = Housing Provider Interview

FG = Focus Group
O = Online Consultation
DA = Data Analysis

3.7 Delivery of Review Outputs

All of the intended outputs were delivered with substantially higher numbers of individuals engaged through the outreach work than the 500 originally proposed. In addition to the focus groups and 1-2-1 stakeholder interviews, over 750 individuals were engaged through the outreach programme and in total well over 1,000 people across the Borough consulted as part of the process.

Detailed deliverables:

- 563 x individual street interviews
- 62 x individuals participated in 20 street focus groups
- 133 x young people engaged through peer-research run by Southwark Young Advisors
- 380 x online survey responses
- 12 x focus groups with groups and bodies which are part of the formal engagement structures
- 12 x one-to-one interviews with people who are active in the current structures
- 8 x one-to-one interviews with Council stakeholders (Members and Officers) and all Ward Members were invited to contribute their views to the review (3 responses were received)
- 6 x in-depth interviews with other housing providers (RSLs and Local Authorities)
- A Rapid Evidence Assessment looking at the evidence of effective tenant engagement
- Benchmarking of engagement support costs with other housing providers
- Secondary analysis of Southwark Council's existing data and covariate analysis of demography and local characteristics
- Review of the Tenants Fund and Homeowners Fund to assess evidence of impact

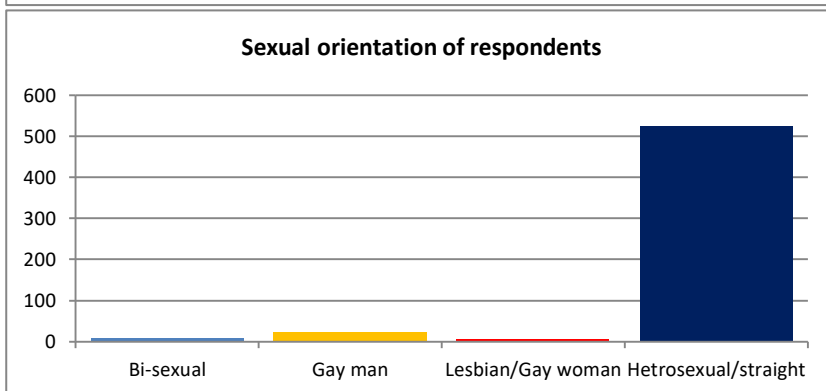
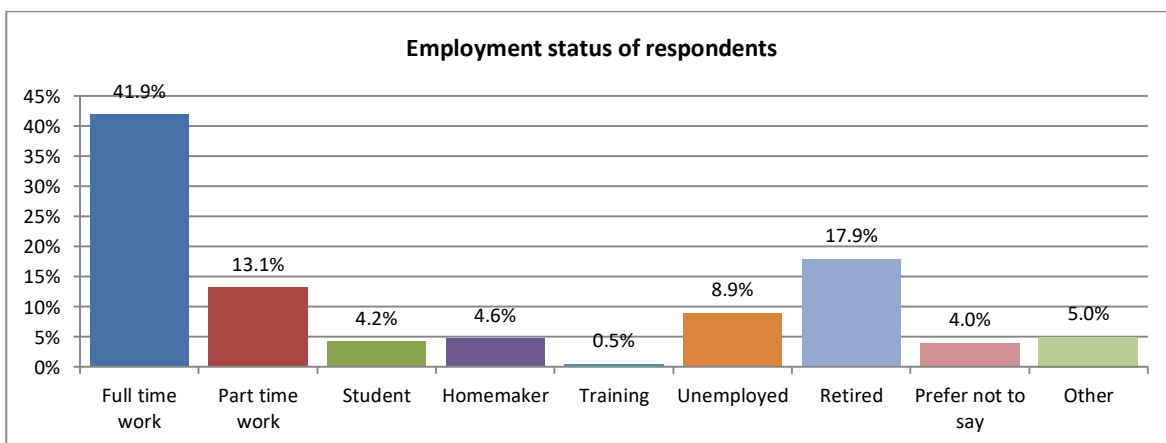
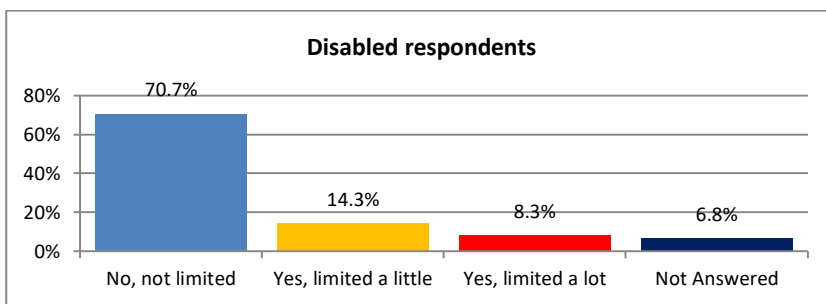
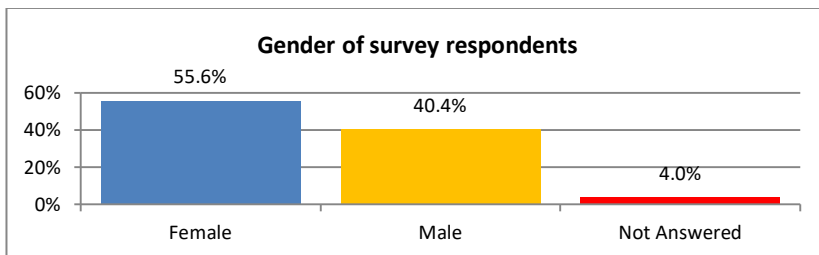
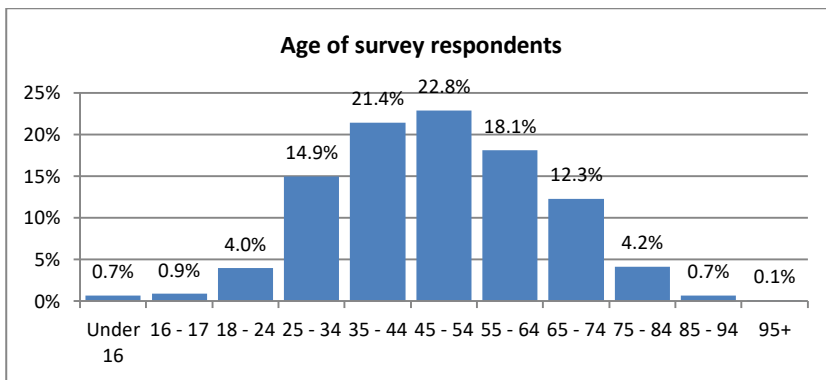
Findings from all these research strands have been collated, analysed and incorporated into our findings. In order to write a report that was readable and useful we have concentrated on extracting and presenting the key findings and reflections from across the range of methodologies and data sets rather than reporting back on them individually.

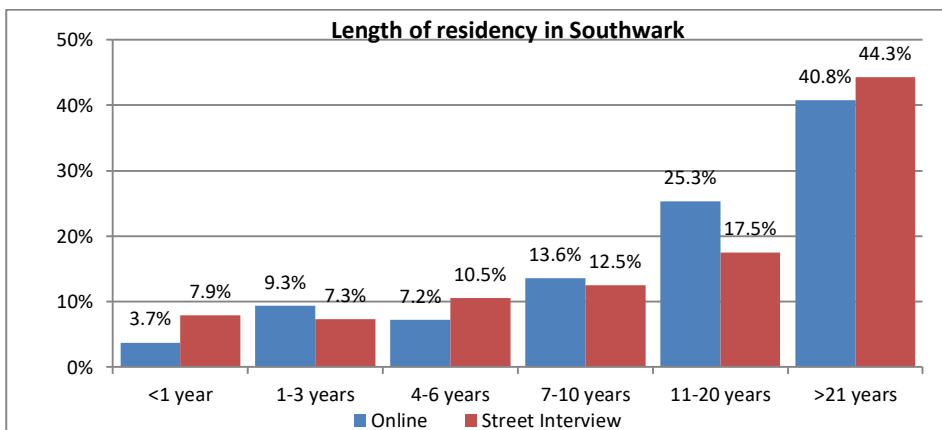
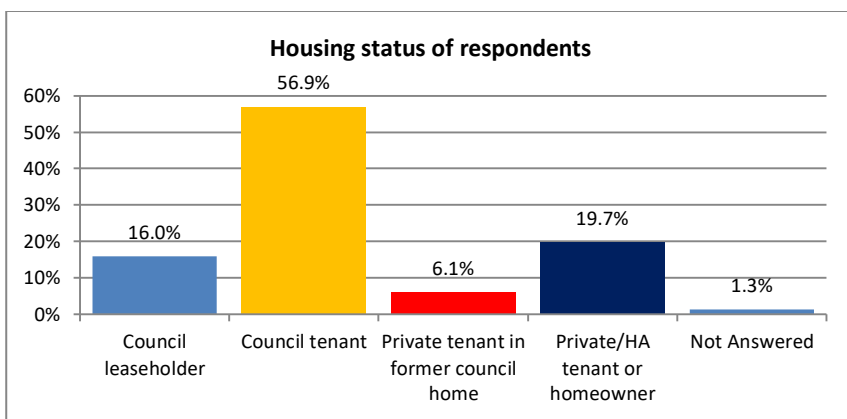
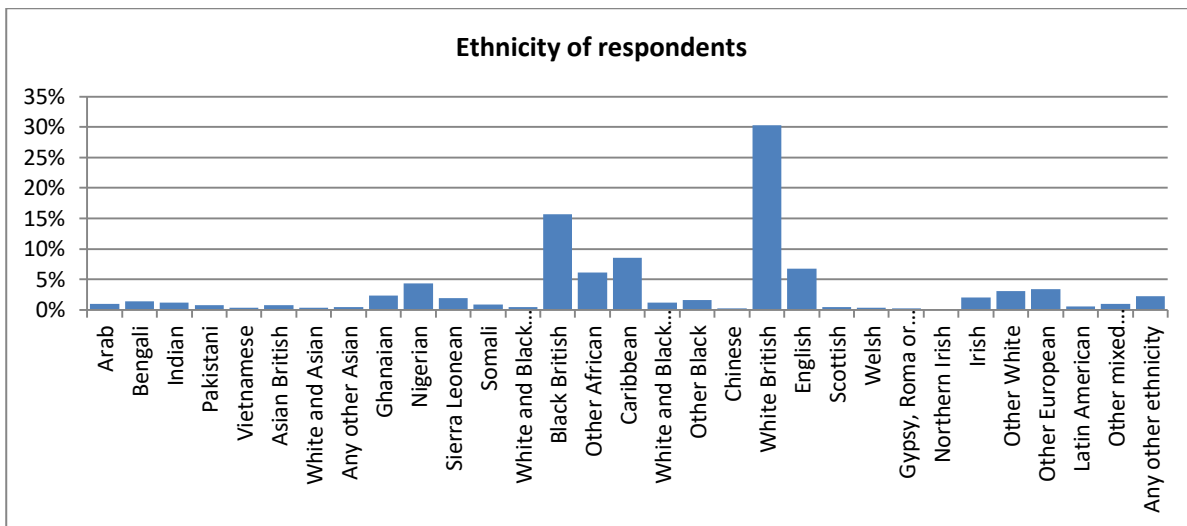
3.8 Research participants

The following demographic information is from the individuals interviewed in the community and those that completed the online survey.

As the charts below show, the review engaged a diverse group of Southwark residents across a range of demographic indicators. Although there was some difference with the overall Southwark population – for example fewer younger people and more council tenants than the proportion across the Borough as a whole – these do not undermine the overall reliability of the results.

Additionally a large number of young people were engaged via street focus groups and peer-to-peer engagement and those numbers are not reflected in the following demographic information as in those methodologies less detailed demographic data is collected than in the individual interviews.





4 Findings

The findings have been organised under the 5 broad research questions.

1. How aware and satisfied are Tenants and Homeowners and Council/other stakeholders with the current system and structures?
2. How does the Southwark Council approach compare to other housing providers? What examples of good practice could Southwark Council learn from?
3. Do the current systems and structures provide good value for money? Can cost savings and efficiencies be made which could save money and not compromise engagement (or even improve engagement)?
4. How can tenant and homeowner engagement be improved to reflect the way people live today and that deliver improved outcomes in Southwark?
5. What might effective engagement look like in 5 years' time – how best to define an active and involved tenant/homeowner?

4.1 Key Statistics

The following are a selection of key interesting statistics from across the research questions:

- 55,000 households under local authority ownership - Southwark has a higher proportion of Council tenants and leaseholders than any other London Borough.
- Only 17% of estates in Southwark are estimated to have active Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) according to estimates by the Council⁷.
- Southwark spends £13.40 per household on supporting tenant and homeowner engagement – far less than the £35.97 spent in Hackney and far more than the £4.95 in Greenwich.
- Well over 1,000 local residents contributed their views to the review:
 - 625 people were spoken to on the street (563 were interviewed and 62 participated in street focus groups)
 - 133 young people were engaged through peer-research run by Southwark Young Advisors
 - 380 people responded to the online survey
- 7 out of 10 – the average (mean) rating given by residents when asked if Southwark was a good place to live (10 being the highest and 1 the lowest)
- 92% of residents we spoke to said they agreed that ‘people have a responsibility to do their bit to improve their neighbourhoods and communities’.
- 57% of respondents said they knew nothing about the Tenants Council, Homeowners Council and Area Housing Forums.

⁷ ‘Southwark Council’s approach to engagement with council tenants and homeowners’, Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee report (5th December 2016)

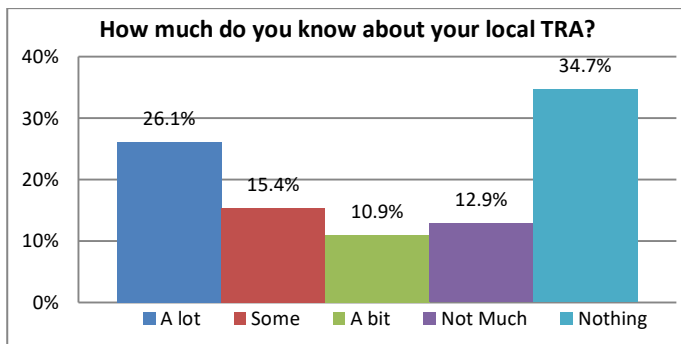
- 36% of respondents said they knew ‘a great deal’ about how to make a complaint
- People under 25 were twice as likely to say they did not feel informed at all about opportunities to have their say, compared with older people.
- Compared with 7 other London Boroughs we looked at, Southwark tenants and homeowners were less satisfied with housing services than all but one.
- Around half of residents say they want the council to communicate by letter and email, more than twice the number that prefer phone or face to face (but phone is more popular than letter for contacting the Council).
- Residents under 25 are three times as likely as those over 25 to favour social media as a way of keeping in touch – but they are also as likely as those over 65 to want the council to write a letter to them (34%).
- 64% of residents say they know nothing about the Tenants Fund and Homeowners Fund (which has an annual budget of over £600,000).
- 54% of people say they were interested in finding out more about how to get involved.
- On average, tenant satisfaction is 16% higher (4 points on a scale of 0-25 with mean of 17) when the respondent believes the council listens to residents.
- 42% of residents say they would get more involved to feel more a part of their community – over four times as many as those who said they were motivated by incentives offered by the council.
- A lack of time was the most common barrier to getting involved (34.5%) whilst worrying about what others would think (1.5%) was the least common reason given.

5 How aware and satisfied are Tenants and Homeowners, the Council and other stakeholders with the current system and structures?

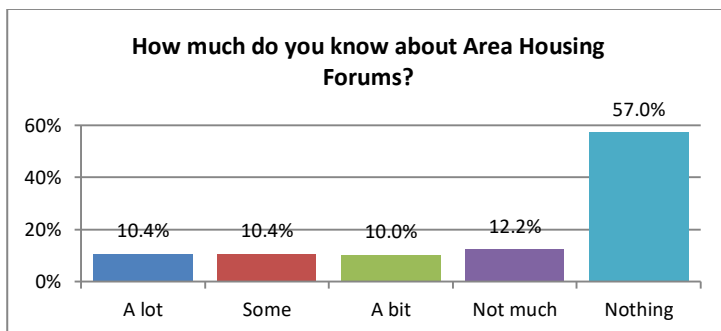
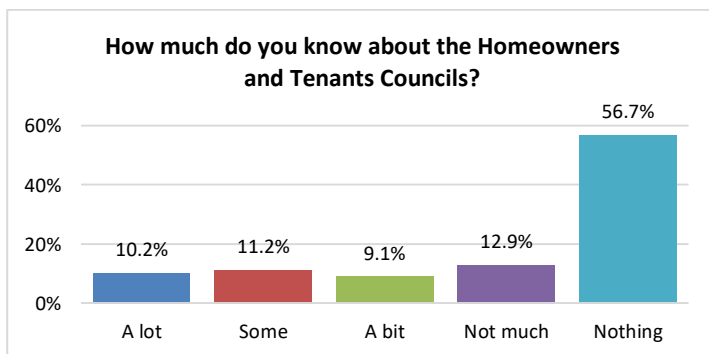
We explored this question in individual interviews as well as in focus groups and stakeholder discussions. The following are the key themes that emerged across the different research strands.

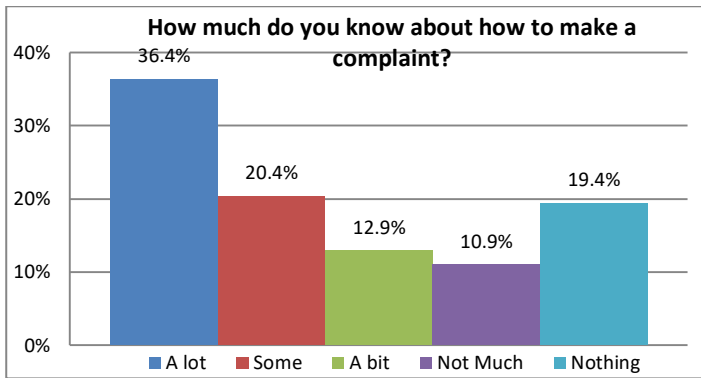
5.1 Awareness of the current engagement structures is generally low

Overall, awareness with the current formal engagement structures is low with the majority of people outside the Council stating they do not feel particularly well informed. In general people say they know very little about the formal engagement structures – Area Housing Forums, Tenants and Homeowners Councils and TRAs.



1 in 3 respondents to the survey said they know nothing at all about their TRA and over half said they know nothing at all about Area Housing Forums and Tenants and Homeowners Councils. By comparison awareness of formal procedures for making a complaint appears to be quite high - 58% of survey respondents said they know 'a lot' or 'some'.



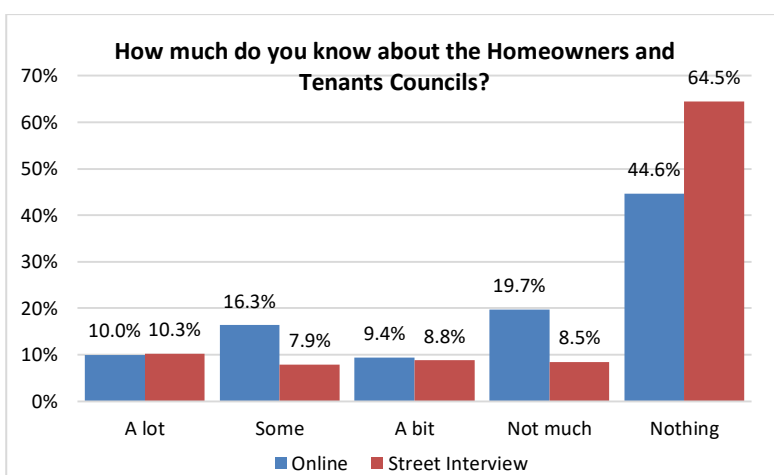


“Even as a member of the local TMO board, I am not 100% certain of what the Area Housing Forum and Homeowner Council do.” Survey respondent

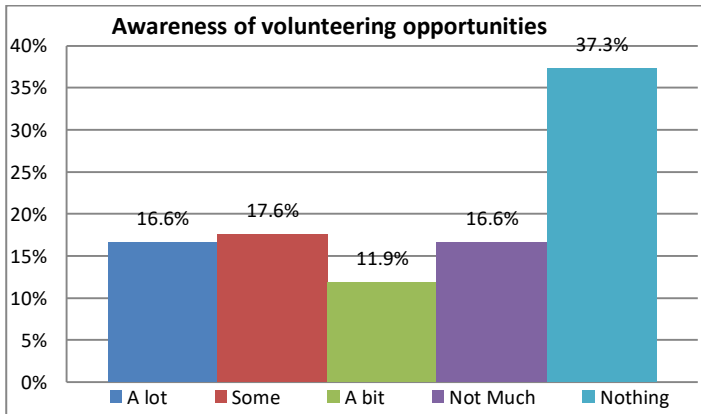
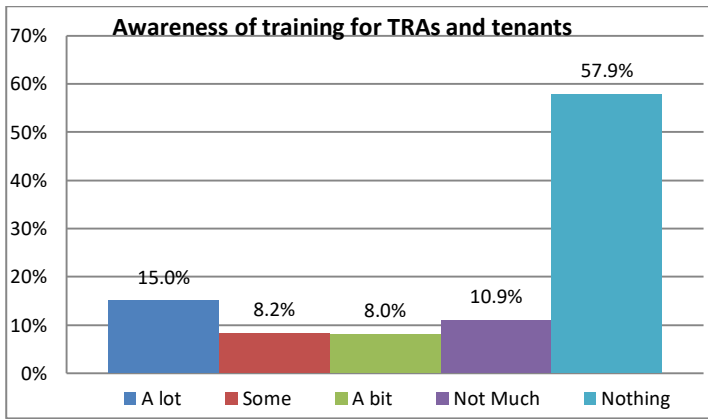
“I am a member of my TRA and have heard a lot about the Tenants and Homeowners Councils but am still not clear about their role or how they work, and am not sure how to find this information.” Survey respondent

Unsurprisingly those currently involved in the current engagement structures who participated in focus groups or one-to-one interviews were generally more aware of these, although almost all of them felt that other tenants and homeowners had little or no awareness. We found that people that had been active residents for a longer period of time had a better understanding of the structures, whilst a few people currently involved in formal structures felt they did not even properly understand the structures, particularly the detail of how they worked.

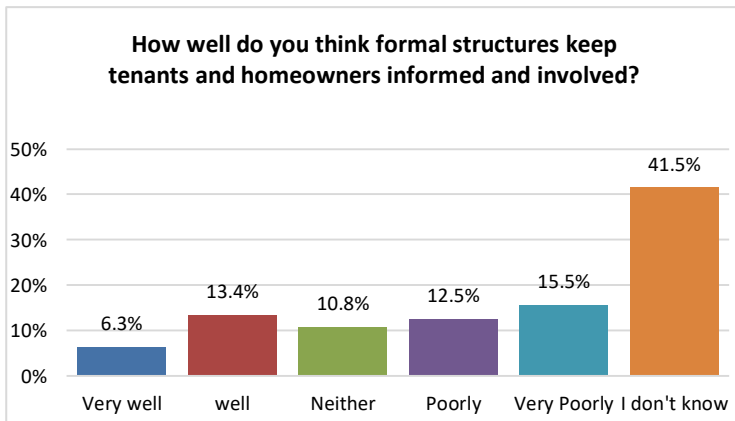
We found that people interviewed on the street were likely to feel less well informed than those responding to the survey online as the chart below shows. Since the online survey was a self-selecting group, it was reasonable to assume that online respondents were likely to be more engaged and aware than those randomly engaged for interview on the street. The findings on awareness of current engagement structures appear to confirm this.



Over a third of survey respondents said they know nothing about local volunteering opportunities and over a half stated they know nothing about training for tenants and TRAs.

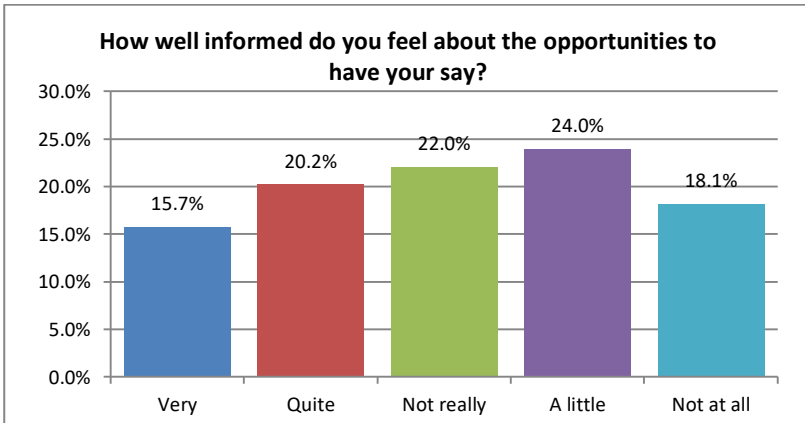


As a result of these low levels of awareness, most people felt they did not know whether or not these structures were effective at keeping Tenants and Homeowners informed and ensuring tenants' views were heard. However of those who felt they did know, the majority did not feel they did this very well.

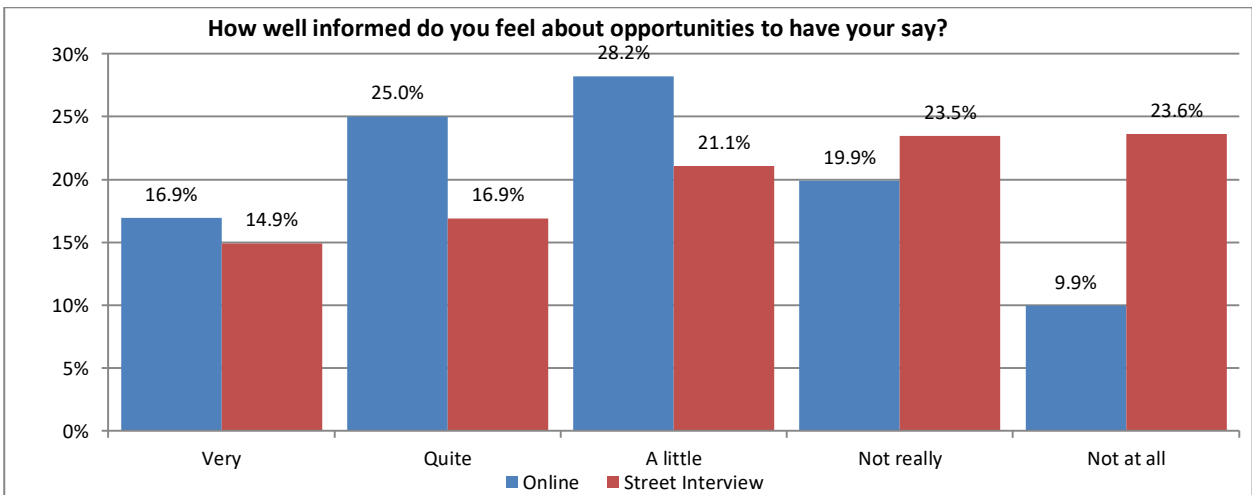


“The Area Housing Forums and Tenant and Homeowner Councils are no longer fit for their purpose.” Survey respondent

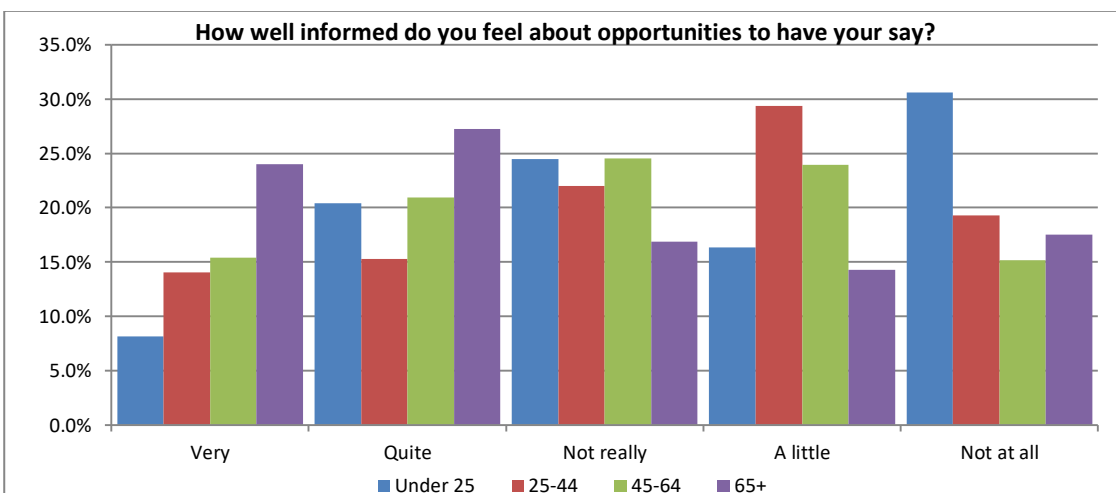
5.2 The opportunity to have your say



In general, awareness of opportunities to have a say was mixed, although as with awareness of engagement structures residents interviewed on the street were generally less aware than online respondents to the survey. Almost a quarter of those interviewed on the street said they knew nothing at all, compared with one in ten online respondents.

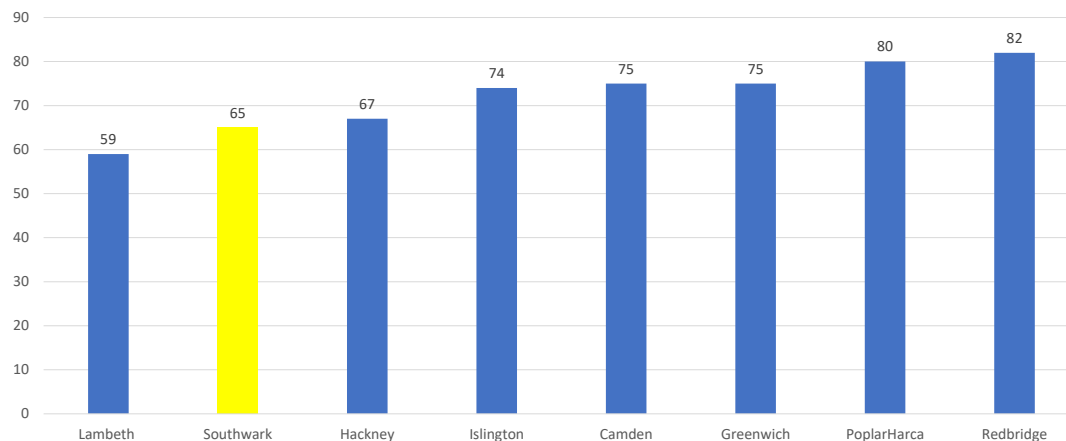


We see a similar picture when we look at responses according to age with older people feeling generally better informed than younger people. Respondents aged 65 or over were three times more likely to say they felt very well informed than young people (aged 25 or below).



The lack of awareness appears to be matched by generally lower levels of satisfaction with the housing service overall. Findings from the benchmarking exercise (see chart below) we carried out suggest that compared to other London Boroughs, Southwark tenants and homeowners were generally less satisfied with housing service provision.

Satisfaction with housing service overall



Not unsurprisingly, council stakeholders (officers and Members) were more aware of the formal structures albeit that they uniformly agreed that there was room for improvement in current approaches. All participants recognised the considerable effort made by a great many volunteers within the existing structures and the responsibility this places on Southwark Council to make sure that this commitment achieves best effect.

5.3 Relations between homeowners and tenants and the Council are in need of repair

Despite many within the Council vociferously advocating the importance of engagement, it is clear that trust has broken down between the Council and many of those involved in formal engagement structures including TRAs, AHFs and the Tenants and Homeowners Councils as well as among individual residents. As a result Council staff and tenants⁸ have a tendency to regard the other with suspicion or even hostility.

“I’m no longer convinced that my council really is concerned by my opinions.” Survey respondent

This distrust has undermined effective collaboration and risks further disengagement if it is not addressed. Some tenants, particularly those who are currently more engaged, have been reluctant to engage with this review or have expressed reservations about the process, amid concerns the Council has already decided what ought to happen in the future.

Council representatives stated that, on occasions, attending meetings can be an unsettling experience and that at times they have faced open hostility from tenants. This has, in some

⁸ Unless otherwise specified, we have used *tenants* to mean all households living in current or previously owned council properties: tenants, leaseholders and homeowners, including those sub-letting in ex-Council properties and those living in TMOs.

instances, meant that less experienced staff are cautious about attending, resulting in deployment of more senior staff at greater expense to Southwark Council.

“I suspect the evidence from this question⁹ could be collated to suggest the Area Housing Forums and Homeowners Councils aren't effective. But in my experience they are doing what they can but are stonewalled and undermined by council officers. “

Previous experience has to a great extent informed these opinions and whilst we do not believe it is particularly constructive to dwell on the reasons for them, it is important to acknowledge them in order to move forward constructively together.

“Often issues raised...more for information than for discussion - decisions have already been made.” Survey respondent

A lack of high quality facilitation appears to undermine effective engagement and for many existing participants (on both sides) the ‘battle lines’ have been drawn and an adversarial relationship has become the dominant culture.

Even among current participants in formal engagement structures, there were mixed views on whether these structures were fit for purpose, with some complaining that they were too complicated to engage with. Others expressed the view that the structures themselves were fine, but their effectiveness was inhibited by the Council’s failure to use them effectively. Some were critical of the effectiveness with which information cascades down from top to individual TRAs which means they cannot easily contribute.

“It falls down to some extent when the council does not use this mechanism in a sufficiently timely way to consult.” Survey respondent

In some situations engagement and consultation was described as merely ‘ticking boxes’ with limited expectations from Council and participants about the ability to influence decisions, and the breadth of opinions considered.

Council stakeholders identified limitations with current consultation practices, recognising that these are often focused on achieving statutory compliance (e.g. consultation regarding a particularly planning application) at the expense of wider ranging consultation about the strategic approach to regeneration and other matters.

5.4 The meaning of engagement is often unclear and inconsistent

The review has uncovered the absence of a clear and consistent vision and definition of what engagement means. This is resulting in different approaches and a lack of coherence across the Council at an operational level. Homeowners and tenants experience this inconsistency and are justifiably confused and frustrated by it, which undermines their willingness to engage. This is also resulting in unrealistic expectations on both sides.

⁹ Survey question no.10: ‘How well do you think Area Housing Forums and Tenant and Homeowner Councils keep tenants and homeowners informed and involved and make sure TRA views are heard?’

The research, coupled with our previous experience, suggest that there are three distinct functions of engagement:

The research, coupled with our previous experience, suggest that there are three distinct functions of engagement:

- information sharing
- consultation
- collaboration (co-production)

At present little or no distinction is made between these three different aspects of engagement and as a result there is a lack of clarity over what the purpose of different activities might be. Regulatory compliance appears to be too often driving the approach to consultation, resulting in a narrower and more limited focus, rather than engagement having a broader and more strategic function. Currently almost all the emphasis in meetings (even of the strategic groups) is on information sharing with only a small amount of consultation and seeking feedback and very little collaborative working.

As a result expectations of tenants are unmet and council officers feel equally frustrated by the responses of tenants to their engagement processes. Whilst effective engagement requires all three elements to be in evidence, they must be balanced and tenants should be able to expect clear and unambiguous information about what they are being asked to engage with and why.

5.5 Lack of strategic use of the strategic groups in the current structures

The Council and the many highly engaged tenants have invested considerably in these strategic engagement structures, however many expressed the view that the Council are not currently making strategic use of them. This approach is inconsistent with the messages and aspirations that Southwark Council advocates for its tenants on its commitment to engagement and undermines the credibility of the process and is a barrier to future engagement. Participants in the current structures who took part in focus groups also felt there needed to be a better balance between one-off social ‘fun day’ type events and opportunities for more strategic consideration of the roles and the effectiveness of TRAs and resident engagement as a whole. The purpose and role of TRAs is likely to encompass localised social activities as well as a more strategic role networking and channelling participation, however this balance is not always clearly defined or understood.

The Homeowners and Tenants Councils sit at the pinnacle of the current engagement structure and should be the primary strategic bodies for tenant engagement. However we have found that they are being overly used for information sharing, with much more limited strategic input or collaborative working.

In focus groups it was reported that this is also true for the Area Housing Forums and this was cited as an important factor in causing low attendance at meetings and drop out of delegates. It was also highlighted that the Area Housing Forums do not match with the housing areas and that this adds confusion to who is responsible for what and that some form of re-assessment of structure to clarify the purpose and remit of each element would be beneficial.

A related issue raised by the Tenants Council was that there are times when they are asked to give their opinion on things when either they haven’t had the time to review the documentation or to

use the engagement structure to cascade out to wider groups to get their feedback. Ideally, within the current structure, major or contentious issues should start at the Homeowners Council and Tenants Council then go to Area Housing Forums, then to the local TRAs and then back up the channels for the Homeowners Council and Tenants Council to report back on. It was recognised that this process inevitably needs several months and that this is not always practical, however missing out the process of cascading out and back in again means that active tenants at the local level do not necessarily get the opportunity to have their voice heard and included.

An alternative approach to the challenge of involving local active tenants in strategic discussion suggested in stakeholder interviews was to establish an online tenant and homeowner (or resident) panel. This is a mechanism which has been introduced by other housing providers as identified through the peer review.

5.6 The current structures lack accountability

We have observed a lack of accountability within the current formal engagement structures and a specific gap exists in the oversight of the effectiveness of the overall system – beyond the Council’s own scrutiny and oversight mechanisms. Tenants have no real (formal) opportunity to consider the effectiveness of the current system and structures and reported there is little oversight. As a result there is a widespread feeling that the current formal structures lack accountability and that participants are not adequately accountable to tenants across the Borough. In focus groups with the strategic bodies it was commented that attendance at meetings by council officers and members is inconsistent and unpredictable and that this also negatively impacted both relationships and the appearance of accountability.

Council stakeholders expressed concern about the effectiveness of current approaches and the inability to assess impact or value for money. From a Southwark Council perspective the lack of clarity about purpose of various meetings can mean that junior/less experienced staff are reluctant to attend, in some circumstances because they feel concern about the likely reaction they will receive. On some occasions this can result in over-attendance of a range of representatives (and seniority) in order to be prepared for any situation. From a resources perspective there is clearly considerable inefficiency in this approach.

5.7 There is an over-reliance on meetings

Aside from statutory consultations relating to housing developments and periodic surveys, meetings have become the default method of strategic engagement with tenants, particularly through formal structures. Whilst well run and effective meetings are an important part of engagement, the current arrangements have become too reliant on them at the expense of other ways of working. Meetings are, compared with other communication methods slow and time consuming to organise and generally reduce widespread participation and inclusivity. Although they don’t have to be, they are generally conducted quite formally and as such are unappealing to many, especially younger people.

“Home-owners council demands too much commitment” Survey respondent

The formal engagement structures of TRAs, Area Housing Forums and Tenants and Home Owners Council all operate mainly through meetings and with a regularity that significantly reduces

participation. Area Housing Forums meet approximately 10 times a year as do the Tenants Council and Home Owners Council. Members of the Tenants and Homeowners Councils are therefore expected to attend around twenty meetings a year in addition to their local TRA involvement and participation in any of the 13 working groups that the Tenant and Homeowner Council have.

This level of commitment to meeting-going is highly likely to put many, if not most, people off and therefore significantly restricts who can participate. The timing of meetings compounds this further, as early evening meetings make it very difficult for parents of younger children (for example) to attend.

“Tenant organisations made up mostly of retired people and working tenants who are expected to do a lot of work, put in a lot of hours, attend meetings but aren't taken seriously. “Survey respondent

5.8 Communication could be more conducive to encouraging engagement

This review looked at both the approach to communication and the channels used to communicate. A number of housing officers talked of very good relations with tenant reps – built over a significant period of time – which was also reflected in several survey responses. Despite this, the approach taken by the Council to communicating with tenants more generally – and in particular in written communications - was often found to be of a poor quality, lacking clarity, inaccessible and overly complicated.

Whilst we were not tasked with undertaking a communications assessment as part of the review, we did see a significant amount of communications sent by the council to tenants whilst we were carrying out the review. We saw no evidence of audience segmentation and personalisation and generally low standards of accessible or engaging formats or language. A significant number of survey respondents were quite vocal in their dissatisfaction with the tone and responsiveness of Council communications.

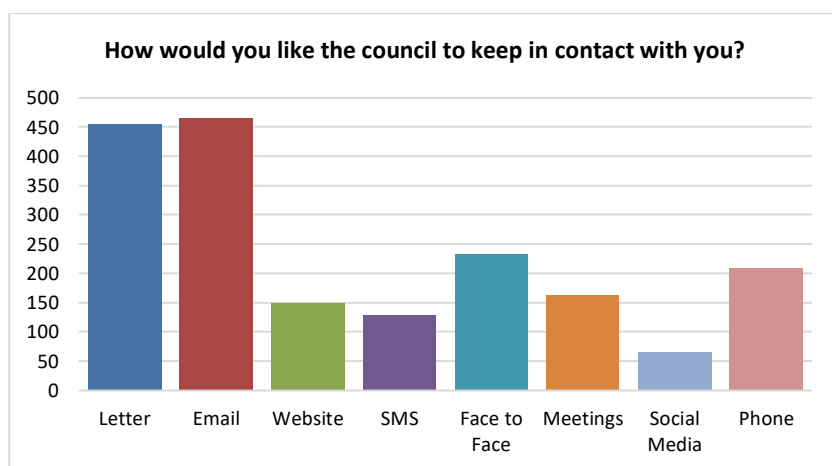
“Council make it difficult to communicate e.g. booking appointments on time. Very difficult. I have issues I want to speak to Council (about).” Street interview

“Communicate better- tell us before things happen – consult.” Street interview

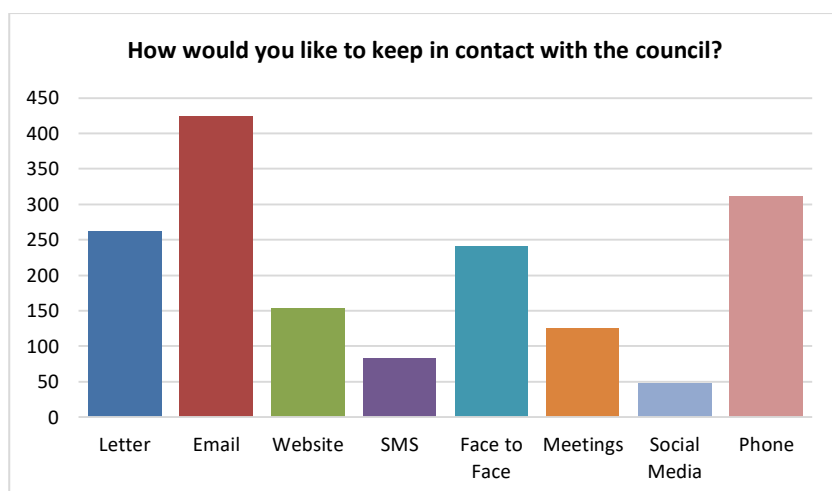
Personalising communications and tailoring messages to specific audiences is a well-established effective approach to marketing and communications which encourages engagement. This was not much in evidence from our review or from the feedback received from tenants. Undoubtedly the lack of a clear vision of engagement hampers effective communication, but this absence of clarity cannot account entirely for not using plain English and a more engaging style.

“I have had no communication from the Council... There are...multiple options to contact via email but no person to talk to. Emails go unanswered.” Survey respondent

Our findings on preferred channels for communication were mixed – reflecting the fact that people have very different needs and preferences. There is no single platform or channel which can effectively communicate with and engage every tenant and our findings reinforce this.

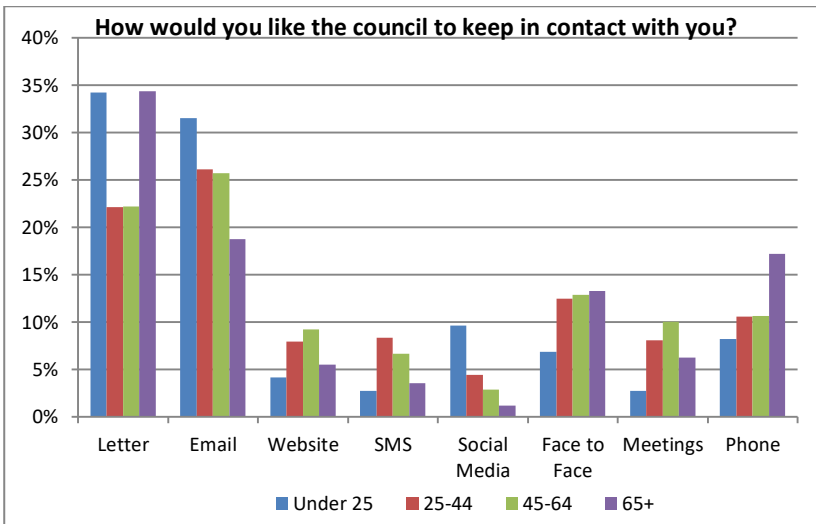


Letters and emails were the most popular communication methods, with around half of respondents saying they want to be able to communicate with the council those ways. Face-to-face and phone were also popular responses as communications preferences – with around a quarter of respondents saying they wanted to maintain contact with the council face-to-face. 30% of respondents said they wanted to be able to call the council whilst 20% said they wanted the council to call them.

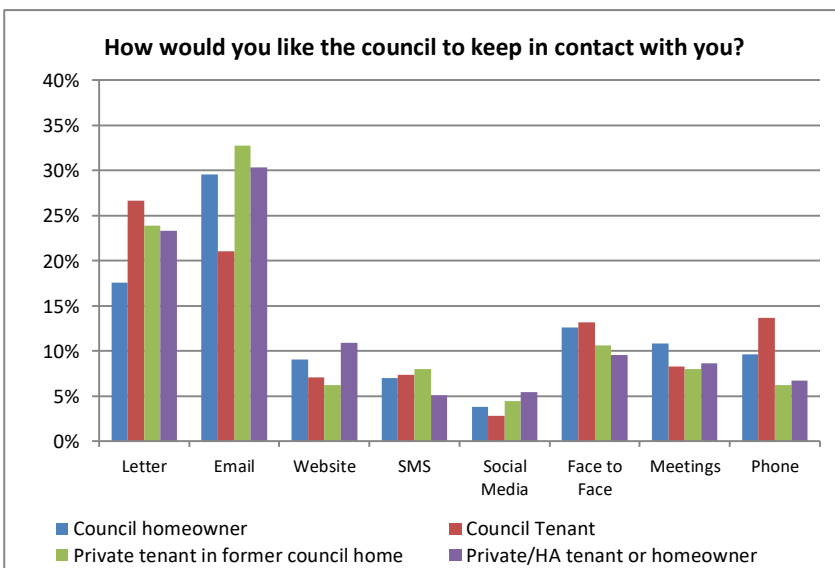


We see interesting differences in the channels people want to be able to use to contact the council, compared with the ways in which they want the council to contact them. Whilst respondents like to receive letters from the council they are far less keen on writing to the council themselves. The reverse is true when it comes to the phone – with a strong preference for being able to call the council compared to the council calling.

Website, text message, meetings and social media were not favoured by respondents with only a small number of respondents (between 10-20% of respondents) specifying that these channels were communications preferences.

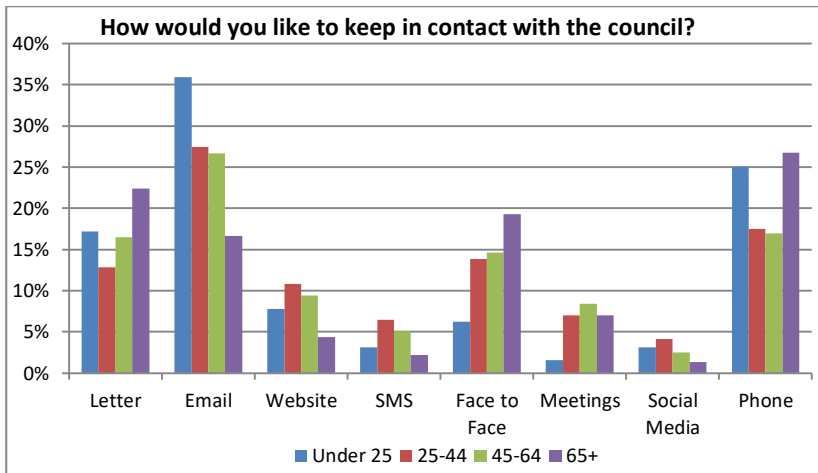


As might be expected we found differences in communication preferences across age groups – with young people being significantly more positive about social media and email than older people (particularly over 65s) as a way for the council to keep in contact with them. However whilst young people were keen on digital communications they were also more likely to favour letters – in common with over 65s – than other age groups. Those aged between 25 and 64 were more likely than other ages to favour meetings, website and text messages.

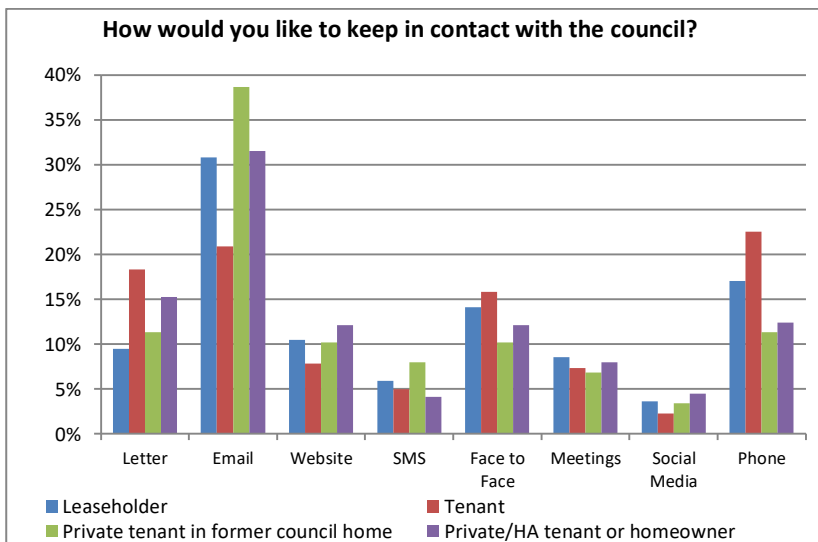


Council tenants were less likely than those in all other housing tenure to prefer email but were more likely to favour being contacted by letter and phone.

Being able to email the council is a strong preference for younger people – being the most common response by all age groups except over 65s, with over one third of those aged under 25 stating it as a preference. We find those under 25 and those over 65 are both more positive about letter and phone than those aged 25-64. Younger people are significantly less keen on meetings and face to face communication than older people with the over 65s being particularly keen on face to face communication.



Council tenants are again less keen on email than respondents in other types of housing tenure and more likely than any other group to favour phone and letter. Those living in former council homes (private tenants) were significantly more likely to prefer email.



One of the reasons why website is not a priority is suggested in the comments made by survey respondents which were critical of the website and how difficult they found it to find information that they were looking for, often resulting in them having to call the Council (by their own admission) 'unnecessarily'.

Discussions with current members of TRAs, AHFs and Tenant and Homeowners Councils were clear that a mix of communications methods were required – email, phone, letters and face-to-face – to engage tenants. However they also suggested that much of the written communication (emails and letters) received by the Council is too complex and jargon-heavy which leads to disengagement, particularly for those with literacy difficulties or for whom English is not a first language.

There was acknowledgement from interviews with Council officers and Members that there was a tendency to rely on 'broadcast' channels, rather than adopting more interactive and engaging approaches that encourage dialogue.

“The website is awful, letters are very poorly written and are often so bad they can be misleading or seriously off putting. So improve those, work at talking to us more, actually consult with us before making decisions.” Survey respondent

One specific issue which was raised by tenants both in the focus groups and in a small number of survey responses was the planned removal of the Freephone number to report repairs. Whilst the Council has made clear that it will remain in place until the conclusion of this review and subsequent plans are developed, it is an issue which is clearly exorcising a small number of tenants who are extremely vocal about their dissatisfaction. It is not clear whether this is an issue which will provoke significant upset among tenants more widely – as it may be awareness of this is still low – but it is worth monitoring closely.

“What happened to the 0800 number for reporting repairs? ... We often need to make multiple phone calls to get things fixed/ sorted out properly and having to pay extra to do this makes the stressful situation more annoying.” Survey respondent

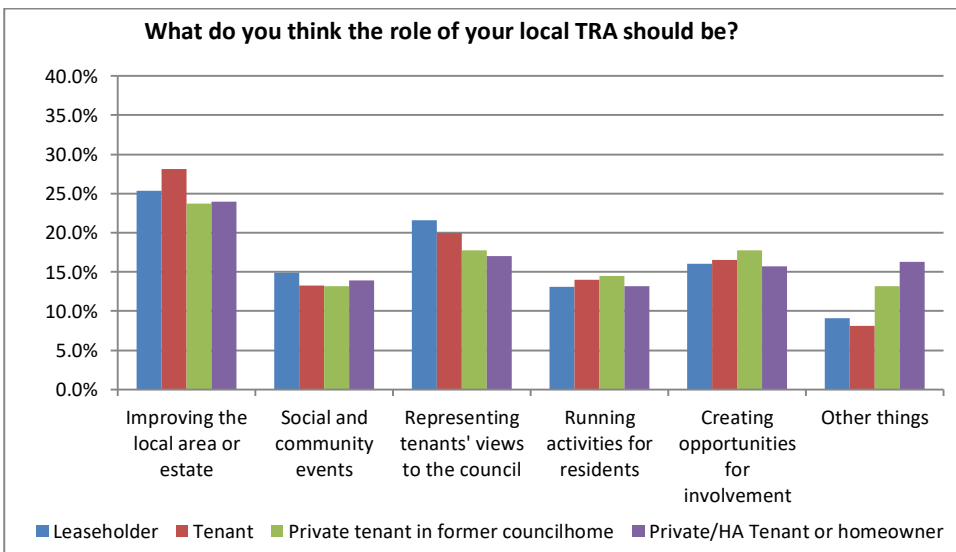
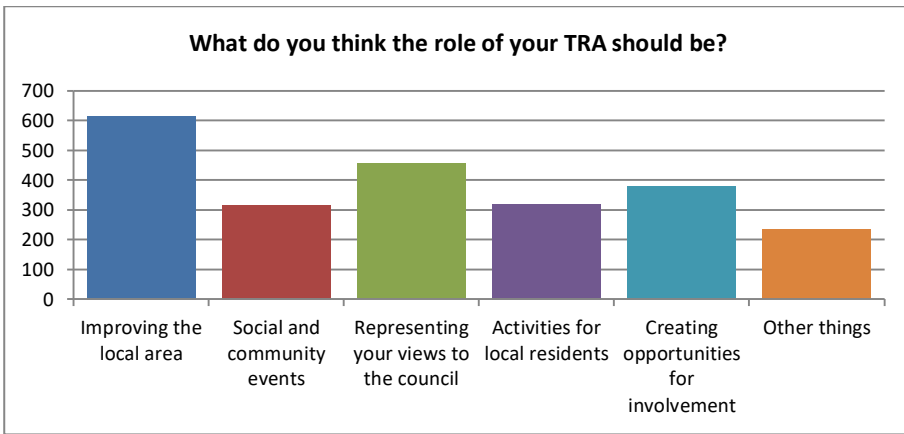
Whilst there may be sound financial reasons for scrapping the Freephone number, these may be dwarfed by the reputational damage and a frustration that could undermine engagement and we would encourage the Council to revisit this decision in the context of this review to ensure they have taken account of social impact as well as financial considerations.

5.9 People are generally clear over what the role of TRAs is

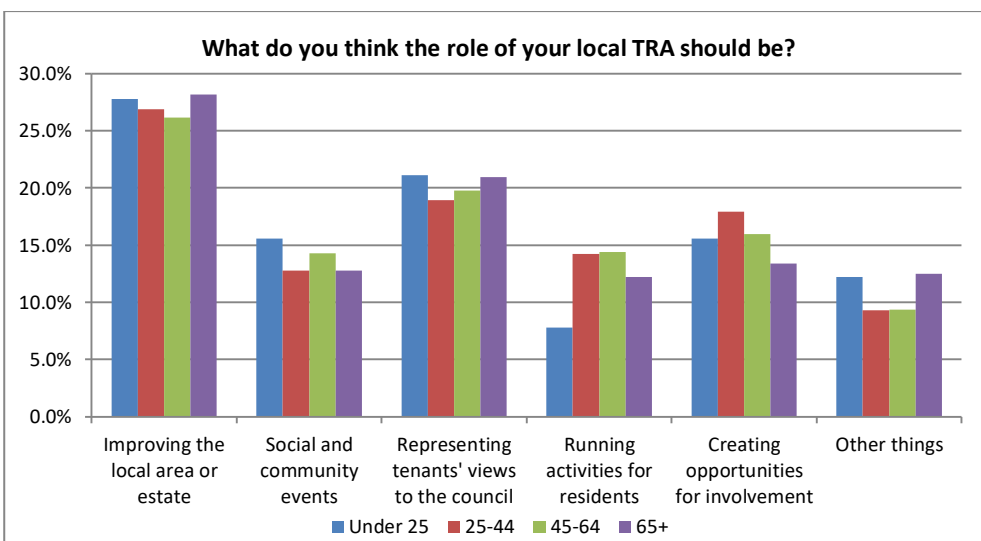
According to the Housing Scrutiny Committee report¹⁰ fewer than one-in-five estates have a TRA (18.5% - 130 TRAs on 703 estates) and they estimate that 11% of these TRAs are inactive (12 out of 130). Therefore only around 17% of estates have active TRAs.

Nonetheless survey respondents were clear in their views on what the role of their TRA should be, with two thirds saying they thought it should be to improve the local area and half saying the TRA should be representing tenant views about services to the Council. This view is consistent with our findings of the primary motivations people have for getting involved – helping to improve their local area – and they see this as central to the purpose of TRAs and tenant engagement (along with representing tenant interests to the Council). This support provides a good basis from which to grow the role and impact of TRAs to encompass a more ‘locality-based’ approach including leaseholders and on-street properties.

¹⁰ ‘Southwark Council’s approach to engagement with council tenants and homeowners’, Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee report (5th December 2016)

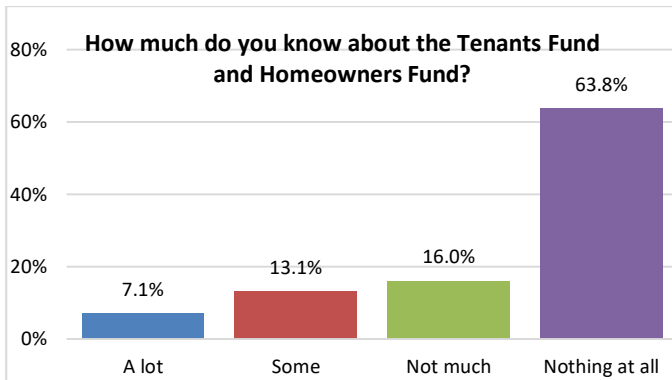


Again we see broad consensus across different housing tenure and age groups with local improvements to the area and representing tenants’ views to the council being the most frequent responses.

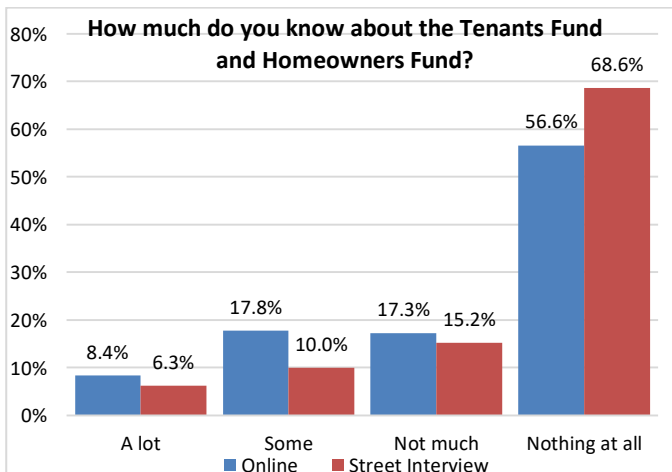


5.10 Tenants and Homeowners Funds could be better communicated and aligned with local priorities

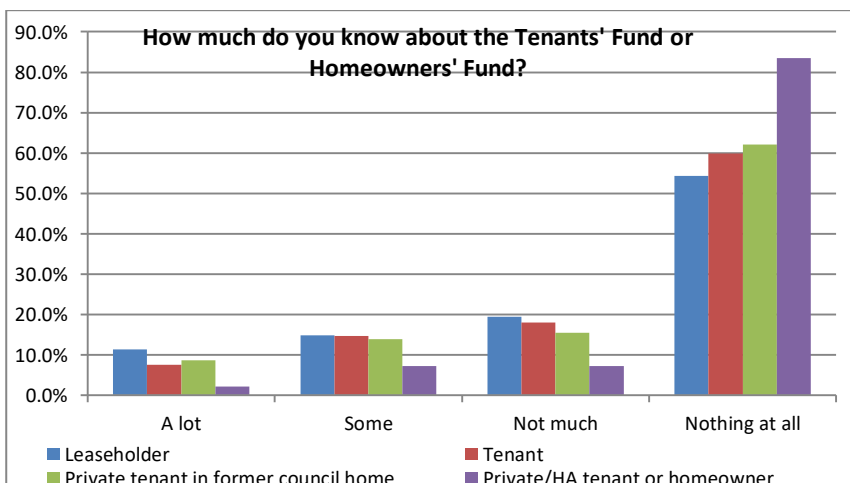
Almost two-thirds of survey respondents said they knew nothing at all about the Tenants Fund and Homeowners Fund.



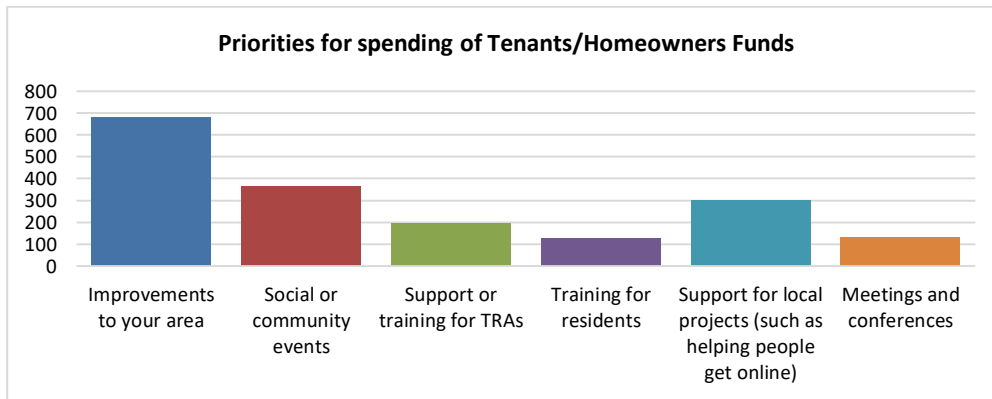
This lack of knowledge was even more pronounced among people interviewed on the street compared with online respondents.



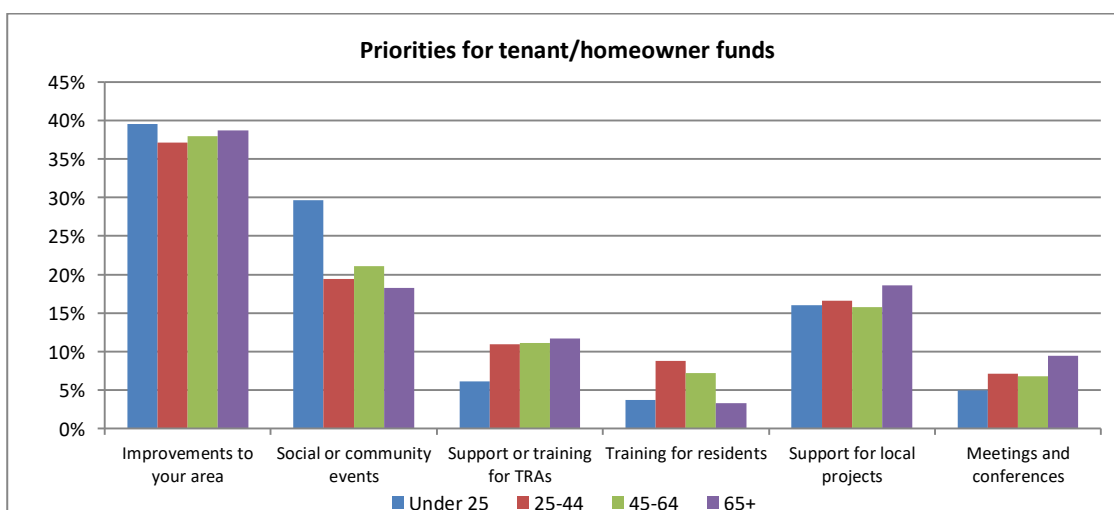
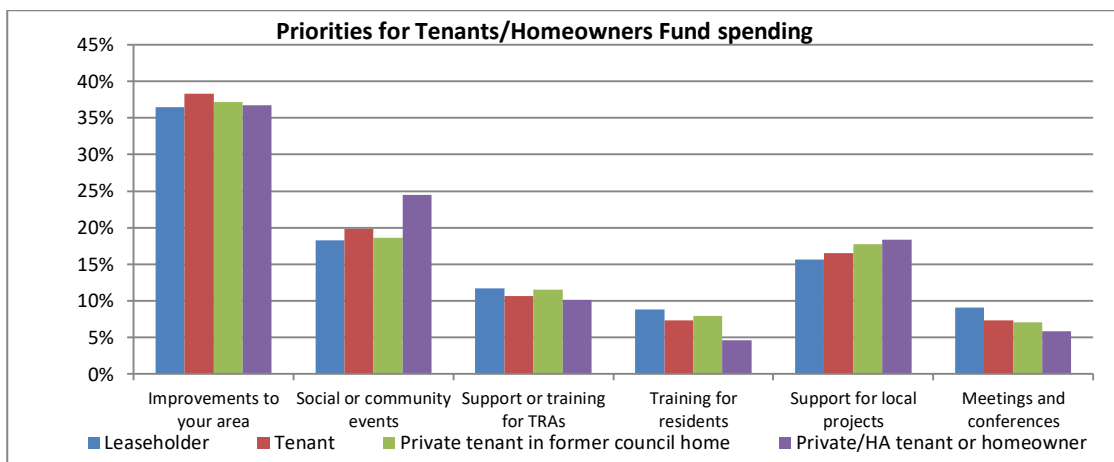
Although there is less awareness among private and housing association tenants and homeowners than among council tenants and homeowners, the difference between Council tenants and leaseholders is relatively small.



Respondents expressed a preference for spending to be allocated to activity which directly and demonstrably benefited their communities: improvements to the area, social and community events and support for local projects. Indeed, increasing the emphasis on local and community benefit may well be a significant motivator for encouraging engagement. They were less keen on funding being allocated for meetings and conferences and training for TRAs and residents.



We saw broad consistency in the priorities for spending funds across tenure type and age, although young people were more likely to be keen on support for community events and less keen on support and training for TRAs and residents.



Focus group participants suggested there could be a more clearly defined offer of support to residents to enable them to hold more community activities.

These preferences appear to be somewhat disconnected with the current allocation of funds, which places considerable emphasis on training and support for residents and TRAs, with much less emphasis on funding local improvements, community events and local projects. Whilst it is common for support and infrastructure costs to be less highly valued by people (often until the support they provide is withdrawn) there could be a better alignment between priorities and budget allocations. Equally, better explanation of the benefits and rationale for investing in infrastructure and support ought to be communicated to enable tenants to understand the current approach.

A review of Tenant and Homeowner Funds monitoring reports demonstrate evidence of tracking expenditure and financial monitoring – but there’s far less mention of outcomes and impact. There appears to be an over-emphasis on outputs, internal controls and financial management based on managing risk rather than delivering outcomes and opportunities that benefit local communities. Whilst it is clearly important for public money to be properly accounted for, this should not be at the expense of delivering tangible improvements for local communities.

5.11 Many people want to get involved but they want to engage in different ways

Not everyone wants to be involved – particularly if that means participating in formal structures and attending meetings. However that doesn’t mean that they don’t want to be kept informed and participate in a variety of ways that benefit their local community.

“I would like to be informed about what is going on in my neighbourhood and not everybody can attend meetings but that does not mean that I do not want to know about it or be able to take part. It should be done through flyers or /websites, should be transparent and inclusive. As it stands I know very little about them in my neighbourhood, although I would like to have a voice on issues, there are new ways of communications and that should be made available to all residents in the area and not only those who happen to know that there is a meeting or have time to go to meetings.” Survey respondent

When we asked people if they were interested in finding out more about getting involved a majority of people said they were definitely or possibly interested which indicates a massive untapped resource. There was a difference in responses to this question between online respondents and street interviews, with those on the street more likely not to be interested in finding out more about getting involved (43% street interviews and 30% online).

Would you like to find out more about how to get involved?			
	Online	Street Interview	All
Definitely	30.00%	29.91%	29.95%
Possibly	33.68%	17.70%	24.13%
No thanks	30.26%	43.19%	37.99%
Not Answered	6.05%	9.20%	7.94%

*“Lack of new members for the TRA on the estate - makes it hard for the few that are involved”
Survey respondent*

5.12 Formal structures can ‘crowd out’ different voices from being heard

A number of people felt that their voices were not heard and that the formal engagement structures were not as inclusive as they might be. Whilst the contribution of those who did participate in these structures was widely acknowledged and appreciated, there was a general feeling that they relied on a representative model at the expense of wider participation.

“Tenants Association is not run properly - it's run for a few - not the many.” Survey respondent

Feedback from homeowners suggested they sometimes felt that formal structures at a local level – e.g. TRAs and AHFs – were mainly geared up to support the needs of Council tenants and were therefore not relevant for them.

“My local TR&A isn't functioning. My local Area Housing Forum does not welcome Leaseholders and is of no benefit to me.” Survey respondent

Given the major emphasis on meetings (and at times which may make it harder for those in full-time employment or education to attend), it is unsurprising that the current active participants are less representative of the wider community. Council stakeholders readily acknowledged these limitations but did not suggest ways in which they have been able to improve the diversity of participant feedback.

There was recognition that a number of different Council Departments and services – including communities, housing and the communications team (amongst others) - might simultaneously be seeking engagement with Tenants. Council staff were wary of mixed messaging although recognised the opportunity for greater cross-departmental synergy.

Currently, consultation (such as over plans for a new development) is sought via TRAs but if *insufficient* feedback is received (no specific metrics were offered as to what was ‘sufficient’) then other activities, such as door drops and door-knocking would be used. However, there was no mechanism for assessing how representative of the population such feedback was likely to be and success appeared to be driven by achieving a given number of responses.

5.13 Young people feel excluded from the current structures

Young people have been identified as one group that are particularly likely to feel and be less represented in the current engagement structures. The review found that the majority of young people felt that their views were not heard and that they did not matter to the Council. They tended to be far more positive than older people about digital platforms (social media, website) as a preferred mechanism for engagement, but were also vocal on the importance of supplementing digital engagement with more ‘traditional’ methods such as face-to-face outreach.

Many young people were unaware of the formal structures for engagement, but even among those who were aware (mainly through parents or promotional materials on their estates) did not feel that TRAs and the Tenants Council were appealing to young people or seeking to engage

them. Some had sought to engage with their TRAs and had found the experience generally negative – feeling unwelcome and that they were not being listened to.

“Make young people feel more comfortable”, Young Advisors street interview

Although the opportunity to get more involved divided opinion among young people, some were extremely keen to be more involved, whilst others were adamant they would never be involved. Many young people felt a great deal more could be done to engage young people into such forums including events, seminars and meetings specifically aimed at young people and run by young people.

Young people we spoke to were very vocal and clear about the barriers to being involved, in particular they cited feeling that their opinions would not be heard, that older people looked down on them, they were not made to feel welcome and that nothing was likely to happen as a result of participating. They also gave a range of responses relating to how opportunities were communicated, the fact that the current structures were not appealing and that the times and locations of meetings made attendance difficult.

“If we don’t understand we won’t be interested” Young Advisors street interview

The majority of the young people did not know what the ‘Tenants and Homeowners Fund’ was. They were unaware that there was money available to TRAs to spend on making changes within their communities. They were aware that social events and trips were run, but did not know that they could contribute to how money was spent within their community and on their estates. The young people stressed that they felt that a lot of young people would not be aware of this and if they were then would be more inclined to get involved and speak out for the younger generation about what matters to them in their local areas. The young people felt that TRAs needed better advice and training on how to engage young people. They also felt that the Council needed to review/youth proof their resources so that these were specifically aimed at engaging young people.

5.14 Lack of dialogue mechanism between different parts of the structure

In focus groups it was noted that there is presently no mechanism (neither online nor face to face) to support dialogue between different parts of the engagement structure. For example, there is little or no opportunity for communication between the different Area Housing Forums or between the Homeowners Council and the Tenants Council. This means that individuals who participate in these formal structures (even if doing the same role e.g. chair of an Area Housing Forum) can be isolated from each other and there is no way to capitalise on opportunities to collaborate, share, discuss and coordinate action.

6 How does Southwark Council's approach compare to other housing providers? What examples of good practice could Southwark Council learn from?

The conclusion of our Rapid Evidence Assessment (which is included in full in the appendices to this report) is that the evidence-base relating to effective tenant engagement is extremely weak with very little high quality studies or research. Although there is a great deal of published information, it is generally very limited - largely consisting of single case studies and anecdotal evidence¹¹. Indeed, the 2017 TPAS survey finds that most organisations do not track the impact of engagement and in this respect; the approach taken in Southwark to engagement is therefore not atypical, even if it could be strengthened considerably.

Positively, in May 2017 a new UK-wide collaborative research centre was established (Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence or CaCHE¹²). It is a consortium of nine universities and four non-academic professional bodies led by the University of Glasgow which aims provide robust evidence to inform housing policy and practice. This new consortium and the work currently underway by 'What Works Wellbeing' which is looking at the impact of housing on wellbeing¹³ may prove useful in filling the evidence gap.

In summer 2015, the housing innovation organisation HACT completed a scoping study with 18 housing providers, looking into whether the current approaches to measuring and analysing resident satisfaction are fit for purpose. They found that substantial amounts of data are collected, but not analysed, that there are a range of methodological issues with current approaches, and that the strength and validity of benchmarking outputs is a key concern. Further work is underway to develop a new model for gathering data and understanding and responding to resident feedback that addresses the challenges present in current methods, and improves the evidence base about the methods used to build and analyse satisfaction scores. The findings, along with tools and guidance, are expected to be disseminated from early 2018¹⁴.

Given the current paucity of evidence to answer the questions around quality, quantity and relevance of different approaches to tenant and leaseholder engagement we have sought to use the evidence which is available to identify key features of what is seen to be good tenant and homeowner engagement approaches. However these features are put forward with the caveat that the themes identified are largely based on perceptions, isolated or single case studies or anecdotal analysis rather than robust and well evidenced data.

We have identified six key design features which underpin strong tenant and homeowner engagement. These are:

- **They are focused on enabling and capacity building:** In strong approaches to tenant and leaseholder engagement, housing providers act as community enablers and facilitators, helping to ensure the communities in which they work have the skills, knowledge and experience to be effective for themselves.

¹¹ For details of what constitutes high quality evidence see the Alliance for Useful Evidence's Using Research Evidence: A Practice Guide | <http://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/publication/using-research-evidence-a-practice-guide-january-2016/>

¹² <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/new-centre-for-uk-housing-evidence/>

¹³ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/2017/03/30/evidence-call-for-grey-literature-housing-interventions-for-housing-vulnerable-adults-and-their-relationship-to-wellbeing/>

¹⁴ See: <http://www.hact.org.uk/resident-satisfaction>

- **They place citizens at the centre of their approach:** In the best examples, tenants and leaseholders don't just attend meetings or respond to surveys; they are equal partners and play a role in designing the approach to engagement and then creating and supporting a good housing service.
- **They adopt a tailored approach to different audiences:** Good tenant engagement recognises that different people, families and parts of the geographic area that the housing provider covers may require different approaches - one size does not fit all.
- **They are proactive in their approach:** The best examples of engagement involve tenants and leaseholders early on in the process, this relates to everything from major repairs and rent consultations to identifying and resolving emerging issues on estates, and generating ideas for cost savings and improvements.
- **They make decisions on the basis of available evidence:** Good tenant and leaseholder engagement is driven by evidence. This enables the housing provider to focus its engagement resources on geographic areas, issues or particular groups in ways that work best for them.
- **They integrate the use of technology where it can improve outcomes:** Technology can support positive relationships between housing providers and tenants and leaseholders, but it has to be part of how things are done. It can't be 'bolted on' for its own sake and should only be incorporated if it helps improve efficiency or outcomes.

6.1 Key themes to have emerged from the peer interviews

Six in-depth interviews were carried out with housing providers – two London Boroughs and four Housing Associations – to get a better understanding of how other housing providers approach both formal tenant and leaseholder engagement and more informal relationships with their tenants and leaseholders. The following are key learning points from the peer interviews.

Clear strategy and values which underpin the engagement approach: It is interesting to note that different housing organisations are taking very different strategic approaches to tenant and leaseholder engagement with both of the peer authorities (Lambeth and Camden) taking a pared back, more statutory approach, another moving away from representative involvement altogether, while others are seeking deeper and more meaningful relationships with tenants and leaseholders through their engagement structures which relate to a much wider set of outcomes than just housing. Regardless of the strategy and values in the different organisations, what is clear is that strategy and values are important in guiding the overarching approach to tenant engagement.

A tailored approach to engagement: All respondents noted that effective engagement requires a range of different channels, methods and opportunities for both formal and less time intensive, one-off engagement. Many of the examples highlighted by participants and detailed in this report demonstrate how some of Southwark's peers have used different approaches to appeal to and fit in with the lives, interests and aspirations of their different client groups.

Strong leadership: Many of the interviewees reflected that clarity of strategic vision needs to be underpinned by strong leadership at both an organisational level and within TRAs and community-based organisations. They noted that from the perspective of the housing association or council that decisions relating to housing can often be contentious and it is important to have a clear and consistent management support to the staff involved in tenant engagement. They also noted a

key factor underpinning successful tenant engagement structures, whether formal or informal, related to strong community leadership.

7 Do the current systems and structures provide good value for money? Can cost savings and efficiencies be made which could save money and not compromise engagement (or even improve engagement)?

Southwark spends a considerable amount of money – albeit money which is paid for by tenants and homeowners through their rent and service charge income – on supporting tenant engagement. The Tenants Fund and the Homeowners Fund have a combined budget of over £600,000 a year – a significant amount, even when taking the high proportion of council tenants and leaseholders in the Borough into account. Although there is considerable scrutiny of this money from a financial management perspective, relatively little attention is given to specifying the impact it is intended to have or measuring the difference it makes.

Around a quarter of a million pounds is allocated each year from the Tenant Fund to Southwark Group of Tenant Organisations (SGTO) to support tenants and TRAs. SGTO employs five staff. It is not clear from our research whether or not this represents good value for money. Evidence of impact is extremely limited and awareness among tenants is low. There is some evidence of duplication – with organisations such as TPAS¹⁵ and National Tenants Organisation¹⁶ providing similar support for tenants and TRAs and others, such as Civic Voice¹⁷, Citizens Advice¹⁸ and Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE¹⁹) with overlapping or related interests. Whilst there are advantages to locally operating support providers, it is not clear that all the functions and activities which SGTO undertake are necessarily better able to deliver improved outcomes.

There also appears to be an overlap between SGTO and Council support staff – particularly in the provision of training support to tenants. SGTO offer a range of training services which are in addition to two Community Training Officers in the Council's Tenant & Homeowner Involvement Team which are funded through an allocation from the Tenant Fund budget. Whilst there are potential benefits to having an independent source of support for tenants, it is not clear whether there is any particular benefit accrued from the current arrangements, particularly in the provision of supporting training.

A far greater emphasis on outcomes – rather than outputs – would improve the ability to determine whether funds were delivering improvements that represented value for money. Addressing apparent duplication in services within SGTO (and Council staff) to ensure funds were being spent as efficiently as possible.

7.1 Monitoring outputs and measuring outcomes

The current systems and processes tend to focus on measuring statutory metrics and overly emphasise outputs. Much less consideration is given to the difference that funding and particular initiatives make to local communities. Such an emphasis on outputs does not enable the Council or tenants to accurately determine whether resources are being efficiently deployed. To be more effective – and in order to determine whether value for money is being achieved - there needs to be a shift from only monitoring outputs to measuring outcomes. Of course statutory indicators

¹⁵ <http://www.tpas.org.uk/>

¹⁶ <https://nationaltenants.org/>

¹⁷ <http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/>

¹⁸ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

¹⁹ <http://www.lease-advice.org/>

and accounting for public money must continue to be undertaken, but there needs to be a rebalancing towards measuring social, environmental and economic impact. Work will be required to develop a vision of what effective engagement looks like as well as a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that reflect softer outcomes.

7.2 More effective use of meetings

As mentioned earlier, there is an over-reliance on meetings at the expense of other forms of participation. It would be beneficial – both in order to broaden participation but also to increase the efficient deployment of resources – for there to be fewer meetings. Of course some meetings will be essential, but when meetings are held it is important to ensure their purpose is clear. It is also essential that information is provided in a timely way in order for people to contribute, and in accordance with the specified purpose of the meeting. For example it was mentioned in focus groups that there are times when a strategic group is asked to give feedback on a proposal when they have not been given the necessary background information or data on which to make a decision.

7.3 Coordination of engagement across the Council

Better coordination of engagement activity across Council departments and services – based on a common vision of engagement – will help to ensure messages and approaches are consistent. A lack of coordination leads to frustration among tenants that can adversely affect their willingness to engage. It also creates significant inefficiency within the Council, duplicating efforts and producing diminishing returns for the investment made. Mixed messages can cause reputational damage and confusion among tenants and undermine the authenticity and credibility of efforts to engage. Coordinating engagement and communications across the Council will require dedicated resources to manage the process effectively but is likely to produce savings and efficiencies elsewhere in the system.

7.4 Streamline structures and broaden their focus

Housing is important and will continue to be a priority issue for Southwark Council and its residents. However housing is closely linked to a wide range of other services, policies and priorities which mean it is increasingly ineffective to look at housing in isolation. Employment and enterprise, education, health, regeneration, the environment and transport are all closely connected to housing and have a complex inter-dependence on improving local outcomes. The concept of Place-Making²⁰ is not new to local government or Southwark and we believe it would be sensible to adopt a similar approach to tenant engagement.

Local people do not live their lives within the confines of specific Council Directorates or service delivery silos and so broadening the focus to reflect this is likely to encourage a more effective approach. Adopting a broader focus on local outcomes – including but not limited to housing – would enhance coordination across services and departments that reflect the lives of residents and enable stronger and more meaningful collaborative working.

²⁰ https://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/

This review has concluded that having a separate Tenants Council and a Homeowners Council creates inefficiency and duplication as well as reinforcing a division between leaseholders and tenants that is unnecessary and unhelpful. Whilst we acknowledge that there are differences in the interests of leaseholders and tenants on a small number of specific issues – for example major works and the setting of service charges – these do not necessarily warrant completely separate structures. We believe it would be more productive and more efficient – financially and socially – to bring these two together into a single body. The process would have to be carefully managed and with the full involvement of tenants and homeowners, but we believe that if it were done sensitively, inclusively and not rushed it would provide a much more efficient structure for engagement. Whilst we do not advocate the abolition of a distinct Borough-wide housing engagement structure in favour of a generic body, we do believe that greater connection with other related policy priorities and services would be beneficial. There is evidence both from the REA and from conversations with other providers that combining the Tenants and the Homeowners Councils together into one strategic group can work well. The findings from the surveys we conducted also demonstrate that the views of tenants and homeowners are broadly aligned on the vast majority of issues.

The review concludes that like the Homeowners and Tenants Councils, Area Housing Forums and Community Councils are not sensible to maintain as distinct structures. We see considerable disadvantages of maintaining these separately in that they encourage the separation of housing from other services and priorities, they place considerable burden on the volunteers who participate in them and they add significantly to the number of meetings which officers and Members are expected to attend which increases cost.

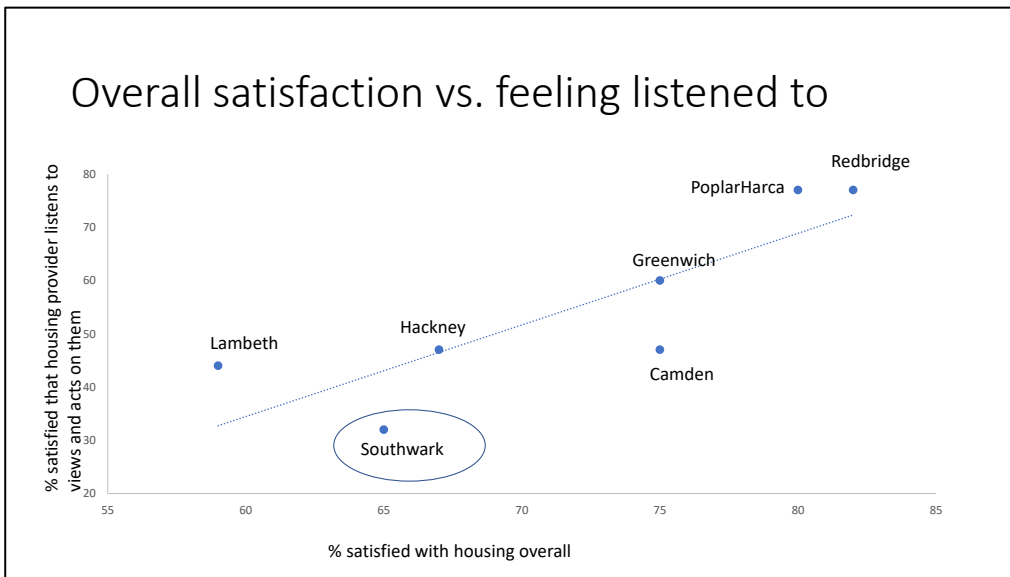
We consider that it would be more sensible for Area Housing Forums to be incorporated into Community Councils with a focus on broader outcomes and the wider interests of the Community Councils rather than maintaining a housing specific focus that AHFs currently have. We recognise that there would need to be an alternative mechanism for electing members to the Homeowners and Tenants Council, but devising the approach could form part of the co-design process recommended to develop the redesign of the Homeowners and Tenants Councils.

7.5 Benchmarking tenant satisfaction

There is limited publicly available benchmarking evidence which allows us to compare Southwark's performance and financial investment in tenant engagement with other providers. The limited information which has been gathered suggests that Southwark's satisfaction rates (for both housing overall and the ability of tenants and leaseholders to have a say) are lower than average and that while overall spending is well above average this is principally due to the large numbers of properties in Southwark's housing stock. Spend on engagement on a per household basis is in line with average.

The data demonstrates that while there is a strong link between overall satisfaction with housing services and residents feeling that they are listened to and their views acted upon. However we have found that the amount a provider spends on engagement does not appear to positively affect how well residents feel listened to. This suggests it is not purely how much that is spent, but how the investment in tenant engagement is used which is more important.

Whilst our findings are based on a limited set of data, we found that on key measures – satisfaction with housing service overall and satisfaction that the provider listens and acts on tenant views – Southwark’s tenants are less satisfied than average compared with other housing providers.

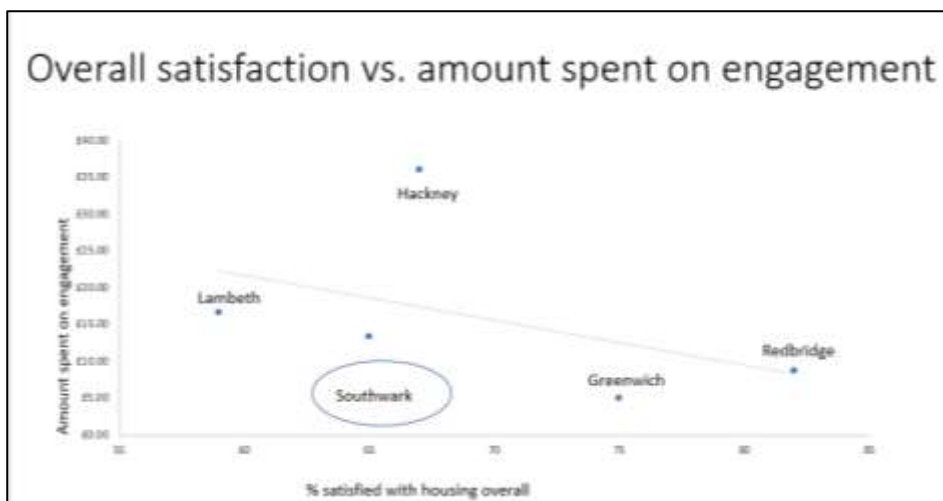


7.6 Financial benchmarking

How different housing providers finance and allocate money to their engagement structures has been difficult to ascertain. There is no consistency to data collection or analysis and we would caveat strongly the data which has been collected as different housing providers include very different things within the different headings. For example, Hackney’s staffing cost includes an estimate of the proportion of time general housing staff spending on engagement in addition to housing engagement specialists; whereas we believe the Redbridge figures are likely to be an under-estimate.

	Hackney	Lambeth	Redbridge	Greenwich	Southwark
3. Total number of properties (tenants & l/holders)	30,892	35744	6929	21332	55000
4. Total spend on tenant & leaseholder engagement	£1,111,250	£593,000	£60,000	£105,489	£736,747
5. Of engagement spend, the total spent on staff	£604,455	£313,000	£51,500	£104,805	£198,759
5a. % spend on staff	54.40%	52.80%	85.80%	99.40%	27.00%
6. Of engagement spend, total spent on grants	£150,193	£210,000	£400	£684	£435,770
6a. % spend on grants to TRAs/leaseholders	13.52%	35.40%	0.70%	0.60%	59.10%
7. Of engagement spend, the total spent on training	DK	£70,000	£250	£0	£102,218
7a % spend on training	DK	11.80%	0.40%	0.00	13.90%
Amount spent per household on engagement	£35.97	£16.59	£8.66	£4.95	£13.40

From the limited benchmarking data we have been able to gather we have found that there is a very weak negative relationship between the amount spent on engagement and how satisfied tenants and leaseholders are. Organisations that spend more on engagement actually yield slightly lower overall satisfaction rates in the limited data we had available to analyse.



We believe there would be value in further exploring these findings to incorporate data from all London Boroughs to determine whether the negative correlation the benchmarking identified is consistent across all authorities. Further refinement of a consistent methodology would also be advisable to verify these findings. Southwark Council would be well placed – possibly working through London Councils – to collect and analyse these data.

8 How can tenant and homeowner engagement be improved to reflect the way people live today and that deliver improved outcomes in Southwark?

The review process uncovered many ideas and suggestions for how tenant and homeowner engagement could be improved. The following are key themes that we feel are important and that could be usefully considered in the post-review process to identify what improvements could be made.

- Co-design a Council-wide vision for engagement
- Managing expectations to be clear and consistent in articulating its aspirations
- Recognising the strong connection between engagement and satisfaction
- Understanding motivations and barriers to engagement
- Rebuild trust and demonstrate a commitment to improvement
- Respond to the desire for greater transparency
- Develop more effective use of digital tools
- Involve Southwark Young Advisors and the Southwark Youth Council in actively engaging and representing young people
- Review the approach to and provision of training for tenants and TRAs

8.1 Co-design a Council-wide vision for engagement

The need for a more strategic and coherent approach to engagement which is consistently applied across the borough requires the development of a clear Council-wide vision for engagement. Co-designing this with citizens could help to restore trust, establish clear expectations and standards on all sides and provide support to officers seeking to engage local communities. We regard this as a really positive opportunity if Southwark Council seek to genuinely and meaningfully utilize the good will and talent of local people. Aligned to this, develop a narrative and key messages to be used across a range of platforms.

There are many possible ways of defining engagement and it will be important for Southwark Council to define it in ways that open not only link to broader strategic priorities but also enable tenants and homeowners to easily understand what engagement is, why it is important and how they can get involved. Engagement is a means not an end in its' own right. It can empower residents and improve the performance of the Council but ultimately it is about delivering tangible improvements to the lives of Southwark's residents.

Hanover Housing Association have adopted a way of defining engagement which could be very relevant for Southwark as a place to begin conversation. The Hanover Housing Resident Engagement Strategy²¹ published last year (which Kaizen helped to support) identifies three inter-related engagement outcomes (further detail on this can be found in the Rapid Evidence Assessment in Appendix A):

- Challenging performance and improving services
- Building community and encouraging reciprocity
- Speaking out and being heard

²¹ See: <http://www.hanover.org.uk/media/6738711/Resident-Engagement-Strategy-Final.pdf>



Hanover sees engagement as a means to empower residents, improving performance and making a tangible difference to their lives. This set of values where tenant involvement is aligned with a strong overarching strategy is something that was identified by both LGiU/Mears Group research in 2013²² and TPAS as being critical to strong engagement. It was also identified within the stakeholder depth interviews including Poplar HARCA and Trafford Housing Trust.

Southwark, like the LGiU/Mears group, TPAS, Hanover and others, also believes that active resident engagement can create the foundations for stronger communities and higher quality services. Therefore, it will be important to articulate exactly how the Southwark approach to engagement can be designed explicitly in order to create the conditions for communities to flourish.

8.2 Managing expectations

It is apparent that the current structures and inconsistency in engagement that occurs is creating significant frustration on both sides and resulting in expectations that are often high but also unclear. Being clear on what basis tenants and homeowners are being asked to engage – to receive information, to share their views or to work collaboratively with the Council – will help to better clarify and manage expectations.

It is worth noting that expectations from this review are very varied – some regard the current system and structures as being effective and others see them as out of date and ineffective. This makes it even more important for the Council to be clear and consistent in articulating its aspirations and the principles underpinning its approach in order to effectively manage expectations.

8.3 Engagement and satisfaction are strongly connected

Our statistical analysis has shown a strong and positive association between engagement and satisfaction with the Council. This finding is when we used different measures of satisfaction,

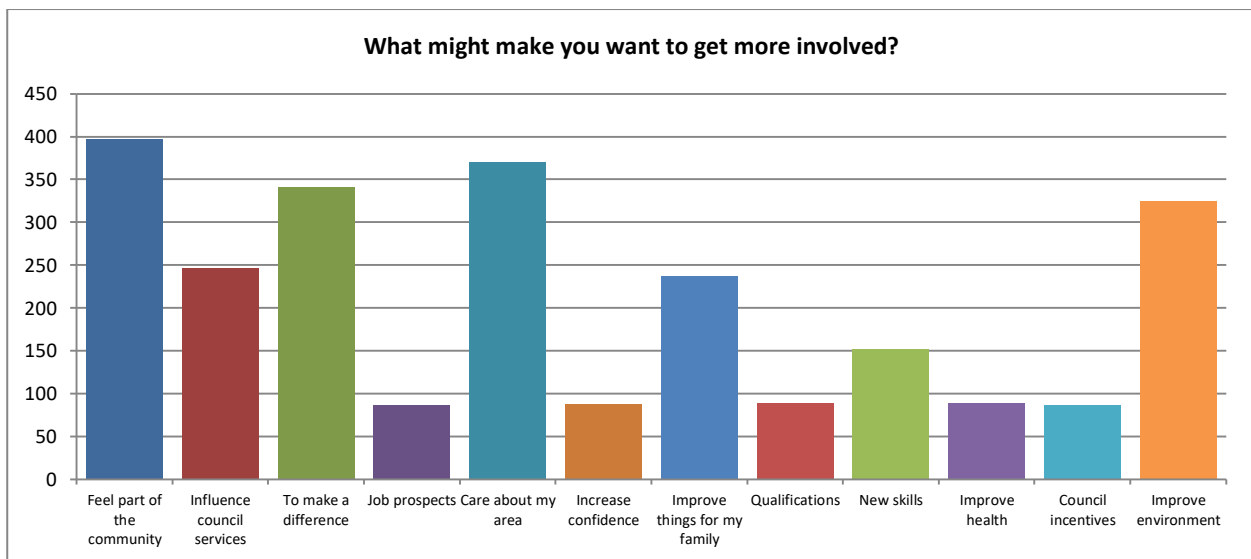
²² LGiU and Mears Group (2013) Strong Foundations: Building better dialogue between tenants and landlords - <http://www.lgiu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Strong-Foundations-pdf.pdf>

different measures of engagement, and different statistical models. On average, satisfaction scores are 4 points higher (on a scale of 0-25 with mean of 17) when the respondent believes the council listens to residents. Although we cannot determine causal inference - whether higher engagement is caused by engagement, or indeed whether this relationship runs in both or just one direction - it is clear that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between engagement and satisfaction.

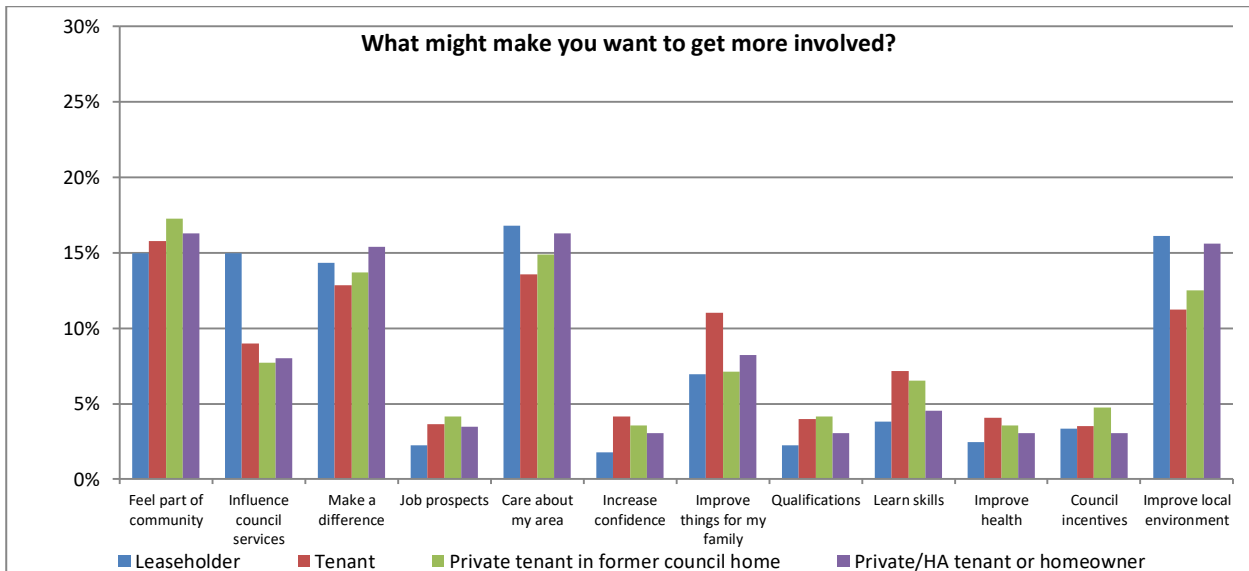
We found significant differences in the strength of this connection according to age, ethnicity, disability, and tenancy type, but not with gender. For example, the link between engagement and satisfaction is strongest for those aged 18-34, and weakest for those aged over 65, suggesting that for older people engagement is less important as a determinant of overall satisfaction. Our analysis found that deprivation has no meaningful effect on the association between engagement and satisfaction. If the council want to target particular sub-groups to improve their perceived engagement, the analysis points to leaseholders, younger residents and residents of Asian background, who not only appear to experience the least engagement at present, the investment in engagement could leverage a greater increase in their overall satisfaction with the council.

8.4 Understanding motivations and barriers to engagement

Greater understanding of why people want to participate; what will encourage them to do so and the factors which are likely to inhibit their participation should directly inform the Council's approach to engagement. This intelligence should be used to tailor opportunities to particular audiences as well as enabling the Council to address specific barriers to engagement.

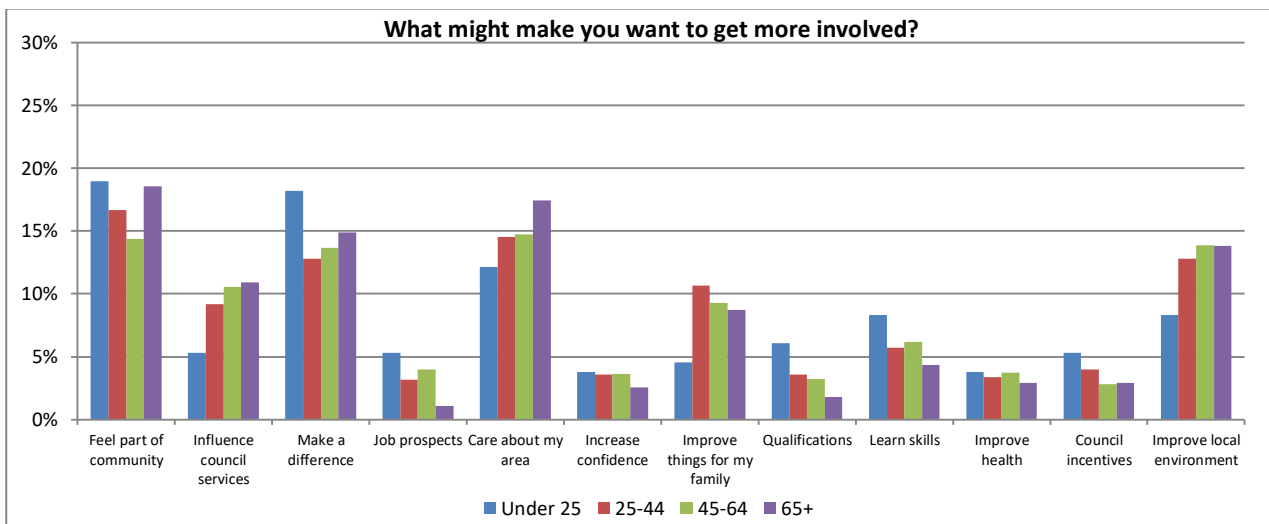


The research has found clear evidence that people want to feel connected to their local community and contribute to making improvements. These were the most common reasons for getting involved: To feel more a part of my community was the most common response (42% of respondents); because I care about my area (39%); to make a difference (36%) and to improve my local environment (34%). Influencing the council and improving things for my family were the next most popular (26% and 25% respectively). The least frequent responses were generally those offering extrinsic incentives (personal benefits): improving job prospects and confidence, gaining qualifications and skills or because of incentives that might be offered by the Council.



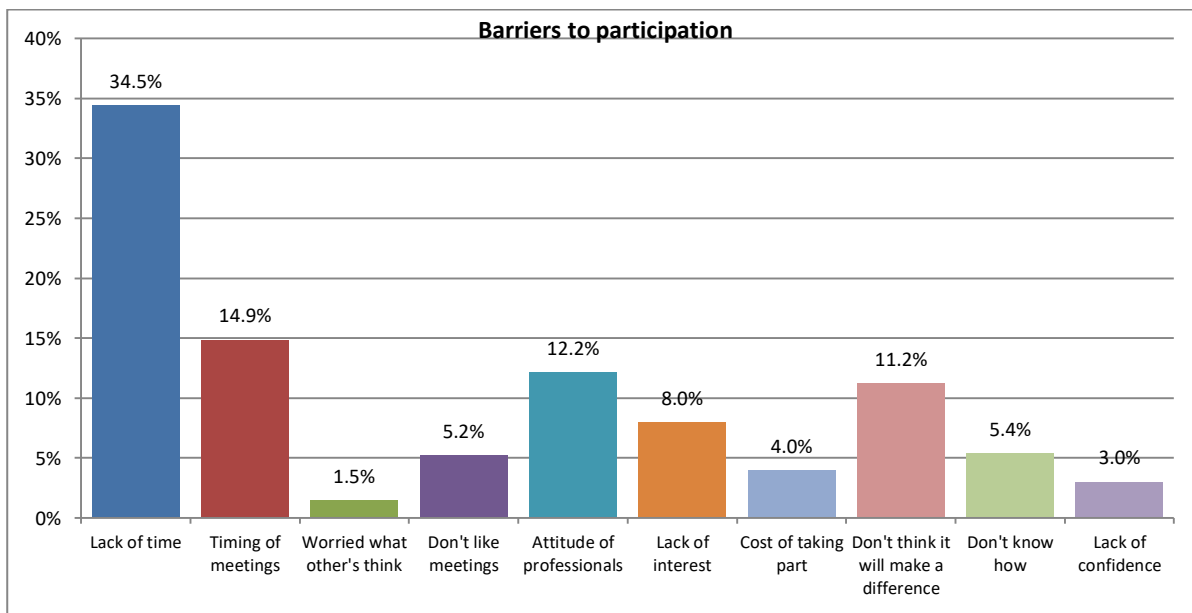
While the broad findings remain consistent across housing tenure types, we found that leaseholders were more likely to say they were motivated by influencing council services than other groups and council tenants were more likely to be motivated by improving things for their families. Leaseholders were also more likely than tenants to say that improving the local environment would encourage them to get involved.

These same primary motivations of feeling part of the community, caring about the local area and improving the local environment - are present across age groups. However there are some variations between these with young people and respondents over 65 more frequently referring to feeling part of the community. Young people were slightly more likely to say they were motivated by making a difference and less frequently said they would get more involved because they cared about their area or to improve the local environment. Nonetheless the general emphasis on people being motivated by a sense of community and a desire to improve things is common across all groups.

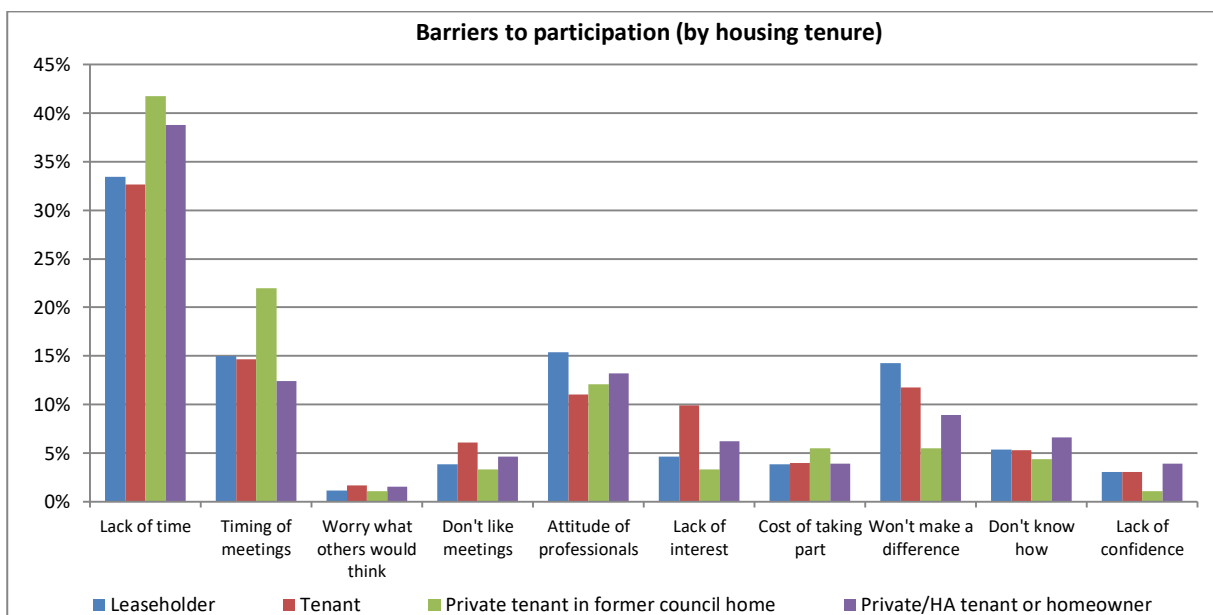


By far the greatest barrier to participating was a lack of time with over one third of respondents selecting it. By contrast the next most frequent response was the timing of meetings (14.9%) and the attitude of professionals (12.2%). Such a strong finding underlines the importance of

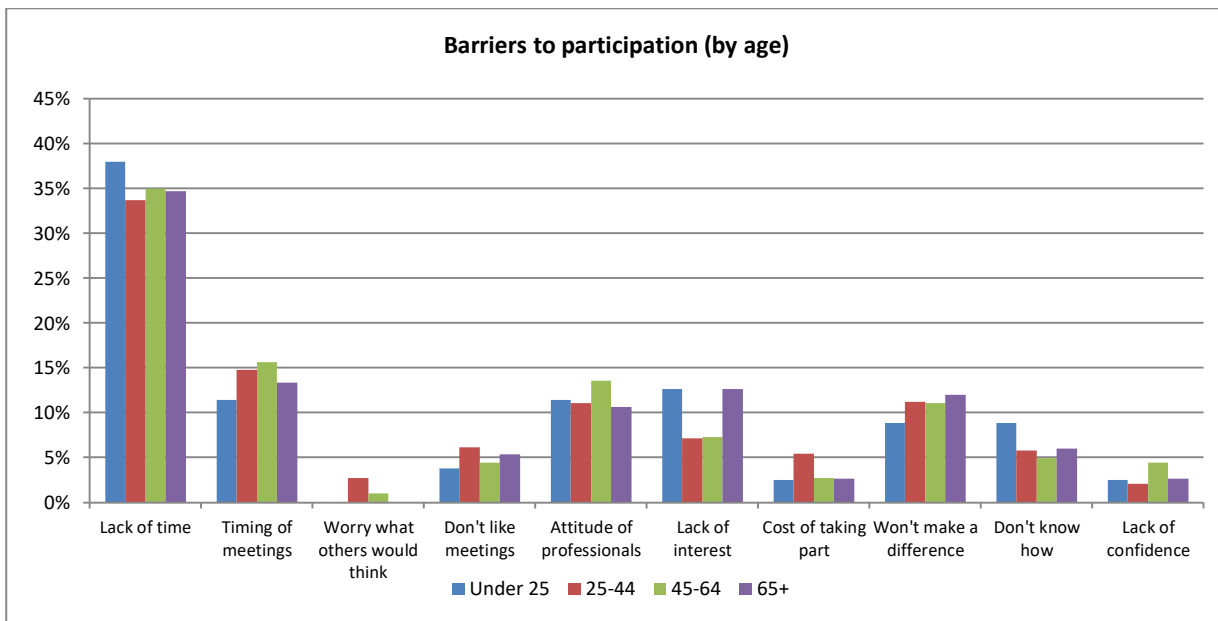
addressing the overreliance on meetings and the need to ensure tenants and homeowners are able to engage in shorter and more flexible ways.



We found some variation in responses according to housing tenure, however there was – as with other themes – broad consistency between tenants and homeowners. Private tenants living in former council homes were more likely than other groups to identify a lack of time or the timings of meetings as a barrier to participation and less likely to cite a lack of interest or feeling it would not make any difference. Not knowing how to participate was not frequently mentioned as a barrier to involvement – with around one in twenty respondents across all groups giving this response.



Age did not appear to offer many significant differences to barriers to participation either, with a lack of time being by far the most frequent response for all groups. Older and younger people were more likely than those aged 25-64 to say a lack of interest was a barrier to getting involved.



Some of those who are currently active participants in the formal engagement structures felt that the increasing emphasis on digital communication was a barrier. They said that for older tenants who don't own computers or have internet access and for tenants for whom English is a second language, find it harder to get involved.

8.5 Rebuild trust and demonstrate a commitment to improvement

The breakdown in trust and the suspicion which exists makes it hard for many participants to see a clear way forward. Current participants who have invested heavily in the current structures feel bruised and disempowered. Until there is a greater level of trust and a shared commitment to build effective structures for the future, little progress is likely to be made.

The Council will need to demonstrate its commitment to a new approach to engagement based on meaningful collaboration and inclusive participation. Whilst Council stakeholders have consistently emphasised the importance of engagement and a commitment to improve (as evidenced by the commissioning of this review), this has not been universally recognised by tenants and leaseholders. Tenants and homeowners feel they have little opportunity to influence change – over decision making or more strategic considerations such as the effectiveness of the current structures and ideas for improvement. Southwark will therefore need to send a clear message to tenants that their commitment to change is founded on working openly and honestly with tenants to find solutions. Given the current state of relationships and the lack of trust and positive collaborative working practices, work will need to be done to repair and rebuild the relationships. An independent facilitator would be invaluable in mediating differences and rebuilding trust.

8.6 A desire for greater transparency

A lack of transparency was perceived by many to be undermining effective engagement – with some viewing this as a deliberate attempt by the Council to hide information or avoid scrutiny of decisions. Although others saw it as something more benign, the effect was still to impede the meaningful engagement of tenants in decision making.

Whilst we have not found any evidence to suggest the Council are deliberately withholding information from tenants in order to pursue a pre-determined agenda; we do believe that a lack of timely, accurate and available data are inhibiting meaningful engagement. Clearer communication before decisions are made coupled with making available the information on which decisions are being based would create the foundation for a more open and honest dialogue. We recognise – from feedback from Council stakeholders and our contextual knowledge – that this is often the result of reduced resources and increasing demands on staff time. Nonetheless we believe it would be beneficial to invest more time and effort into ensuring engagement is meaningful in order to capture the potential benefits of participation.

“Getting information from council officers re: funds that are available is like pulling teeth” Survey respondent

One idea that was suggested for how transparency could be improved would be to share full anonymised data sets by default with strategic bodies so they can see the underlying data and analyse it for themselves. Whilst it’s unlikely to be of interest to more than a handful of people, it will help address the perception that things are being hidden and there is no justification for not sharing it. It may also generate new uses and insights arising from the secondary analysis.

8.7 More effective use of digital tools

New technology presents considerable opportunities and Southwark Council can take full advantage of social technology to communicate with residents, whilst recognising the barriers that some residents have to using digital technology. In the future more and more residents will be digitally equipped (both psychologically and practically) but it is important to recognise that a digital by default approach will never be appropriate and that there will always be a technology gap between tech understood and used by the older generation and the tech used by young people. Technology can enable wider participation and involvement and it will be beneficial to seek out ways to blend approaches. This will not only save money (via channel shift) but also increase engagement. An example of a digital tool would be to establish an online sounding board or panel. This is something used by other housing providers to good effect and it can provide a way for a more diverse range of tenants and homeowners to be involved.

8.8 Make use of Southwark Young Advisors to engage young people

The Southwark Young Advisors team felt the Council in general engages well with the local community however feel that they could better engage with young people – a view reinforced by the opinions of a number of stakeholders, both young and old. In Southwark Young Advisors, the Council have an invaluable local resource which has the skills, knowledge and experience of supporting efforts to engage young people more effectively. Young Advisors can assist the Council to enhance its approach to engagement, as well as consulting young people directly to contribute to decision-making. They have demonstrated a detailed understanding of the issues and suggested a wide range of ideas for improvement.

A coherent programme of youth engagement could be developed based on the ideas young people offered to enhance effective engagement:

- Door to door canvassing – face to face discussions with tenants and homeowners about the various forums/meetings

- Educate and engage the community through these door to door canvassing sessions. This in turn would assist with engaging the more hard to reach community members including young people
- Make meetings less formal where possible
- Making the community feel as though they would be made to feel welcome – this could form part of a code of conduct by members i.e. views of all are encouraged and will be heard etc.
- Social media – better information being put out on the Southwark social media/website. Tenants and resident associations to be encouraged to use social media especially Twitter, to keep up to date with things happening in their area so this can be promoted to the community. Young people’s website/social media so that it encourages young people to get involved. This should be youth proofed/run by young people.
- Estate and community engagement events. Educational and fun and aimed at all age groups.
- Visits to schools/colleges to engage young people
- Key speakers – visits from organisations/partners that have something to discuss with the whole community for example: London Fire Brigade to educate re: home fire safety visits for the elderly/vulnerable – this could then encourage more members of the community to attend who may then attend future meetings.
- Times of meetings need to be varied or changed to ensure all community members can have a voice and not just held in the evenings.

Young people continue to be under-represented in engagement with the Council and are more likely to feel that their views are not heard. The Council is clearly aware of and concerned by this situation, however without a dedicated and tailored effort to engage young people this is unlikely to change. Much closer working and engagement with the Southwark Youth Council will also be important and they could be used as a strategic group to engage with like the Tenants Council and the Homeowners Council.

8.9 Training for tenants and TRAs

Although relatively little qualitative information was available on the provision of training to support TRAs and tenants, those participants who were already active in the current engagement structures were generally positive about the quality of training provided. Some respondents suggested the location and timing of training sessions was inconvenient which made the training offer less accessible.

However the range of training provided appeared very closely connected to the formal business of TRAs and their representative function – rather than anything more aligned to the priorities identified by local people – improving their local area and building community. The emphasis on formal training should not come at the expense of an asset based approach: enabling skills, knowledge and other ‘softer’ community assets to come to the fore. Whilst this may be beyond the remit of SGTO at present, there is an opportunity to reassess the training offer in light of the priorities for spending identified in this review.

8.10 How might Southwark Council pave the way for better engagement?

Whilst engagement is at least a two-way process, it is important that all participants reflect on their role in ensuring the most effective method and outcome. Within this context Southwark Council has a key opportunity to consider its approach whilst recognising the inherent power imbalance between its role and that of many stakeholders. Recent years have seen significant changes in both the types of tenure and the nature of people's lives. Southwark continues to be landlord to a great number of people but it is increasingly seen as a 'service provider' to the growing number of consumers who live within housing stocks, many more of which have changed hands more than once since the original Right To Buy was exercised. Alongside development of a vision for engagement Southwark could develop greater insight into its role in people's lives and the ways in which Council activities can influence attitudes towards it.

Useful steps could include:

- Mapping the customer journey - when and why are people likely to get in touch? What is their experience – It would be useful to develop a few case studies to explore the touch points and the opportunities to make that positive.
- How might Southwark explore better joined up working? Would it be possible to map which departments tenants are (more) likely to be engaged with? Within the context of exploring customer journey, such mapping could highlight some key opportunities to present a joined up message and approach.
- Taking this still further, it would be worth considering what opportunities there are to increase inter-departmental working, particularly with regard to consultation and engagement. How could it be more synergised and holistic across the range of council departments?
- Southwark could reflect on its role as a service provider in an increasingly consumer-driven society. What does this mean for the provider and the consumer? Within the housing context what reasonable expectations might a consumer have? Is there need for a 'charter' or 'service level agreement' to specify processes and expectations?
- How do current communications processes and methods reinforce engagement ambitions? How does the current website/customer services offer make it easy or difficult for engagement?

9 What might effective engagement look like in 5 years' time – how best to define an active and involved tenant/homeowner?

Applying the learning from this review to the design of new structures and approaches to tenant engagement will take time and effort on all sides. It will also require a period of transition with the Council and residents collaborating to co-design a new approach to engagement; reflecting on the findings of this review and considering the implications and developing the new approach. This process is an opportunity to demonstrably display the Council's commitment to the principles and behaviours of effective engagement.

The Council needs to be a participant in this process – not simply a leader or convenor – which suggests it would be very beneficial to seek independent facilitation to support and facilitate the co-design process. There is likely to be an element of mediation required to rebuild trust, but would be unwise to dwell unduly on the past at the expense of focussing on the future.

Housing is very important and will continue to be a priority issue for Southwark Council and its residents. However housing is closely linked to a wide range of other services, policies and priorities which mean it is increasingly ineffective to look at housing in isolation. Local people do not live their lives within the confines of specific Council Directorates or service delivery silos and so broadening the focus to reflect this is likely to encourage a more effective approach. Adopting a broader focus on local outcomes – including but not limited to housing – would better reflect the lives of residents and would help enhance coordination across services and departments and enable stronger and more meaningful collaborative working.

9.1 Incorporating the six characteristics of effective tenant engagement

It will be important for Southwark to reflect and consider how it can build the six characteristics identified through our Rapid Evidence Assessment in to its revised approach. In particular consideration should be given to:

- Introducing a range of opportunities which enable people to participate in different ways from bite-sized, lighter touch, one-way opportunities through to deeper and more meaningful two-way engagement which relates to not just housing but a range of local public services.
- How the new engagement approach can be used to kick-start and/or further develop the pre-conditions for civic engagement more widely.
- How a map of touchpoints could be developed to identify and act upon all the opportunities to develop a relationship with tenants and leaseholders and respond effectively first time.
- Using technology and social media to have a credible and meaningful, two-way conversation (not just to broadcast official messages). This needs to be accompanied by a level of sophistication, engagement expertise and leadership (not to mention coordination with other Southwark communications) in order to make it 'live' and relevant.
- How to shape the engagement offer so that it meets the needs of particular groups including leaseholders, younger people, and people for whom English is a second language

- Developing a robust approach to evaluation to ensure the new approach to engagement is delivering the outcomes that are intended.

Additionally were Southwark to take up some or even many of the ideas and suggestions in the previous section on what could improve tenant and homeowner engagement, this would produce a significant change in both approach and practice around engagement. It is important to keep in mind that engagement is not like a light switch which is on or off, but rather a continuum that runs from very poor engagement to excellent engagement. In this paradigm there is always room for learning and improvement and it is to be hoped that ongoing reflection and adaptation will be a part of the Southwark approach to engagement into the future.

9.2 Defining an active tenant

There is no universal definition of what constitutes an active and involved tenant or homeowner. However at the moment there is far too much emphasis on participation in formal engagement structures as a way of determining whether someone is an active tenant.

Kaizen have developed a framework for community participation which identifies different archetypal ways that people engage with and participate in their community. The framework can provide a basis to audit current engagement opportunities and to develop new ones that cover a wider range of archetypes to form an attractive menu of engagement opportunities. It also provides a way of looking at participation which goes beyond involvement in strategic or consultative groups and recognises the value of all types of community participation.



The following give examples of the types of actions that could be associated under each archetype. These are all framed in the housing context but could apply in any setting.

Reactive

- **You *react* to things that happen and say when things go badly, or when they go well.**
- Examples of this could be calling up to report a burnt out car, telling your housing officer when something on the estate isn't working

Responsive

- **You *respond* when asked for your view or opinion**
- Examples of this could be filling in a survey about your area, attending a community meeting, being part of a focus group, being on an online sounding board, or having any conversation with someone who works in your area, when you are asked: *"what do you think about..."*

Strategic

- **You operate at a *strategic* level and influence policy, projects or organisations**
- Examples of this could be being on your local tenants association or any of the other formal parts of the engagement structure

Supportive

- **You *support* projects and schemes that are already happening**
- Examples of this could be volunteering at the estate fun day, doing your recycling, being part of a project on your estate (eg supporting an after school club), being part of a neighbourhood watch scheme

Generative

- **You *generate* new projects, organisations or initiatives, based on seeing something is missing**
- Examples of this could be being a social entrepreneur and setting up your own organisation, to starting a new project within your organisation, setting up a TRA on your estate

Engaging

- **You *engage*, catalyse, connect or encourage others**
- Examples of this could be network building, introducing two people (or organisations together) or facilitating and engaging others to be a part of a project, or to change their mind, or even stopping by to welcome a new resident on your estate

Helping

- **You *help* out by doing things**
- Examples of this could be assisting an elderly neighbour with their shopping, or taking a pot of soup around to someone who is ill, or picking up some litter off the street

We also posed this question to the Southwark young advisors and it is interesting that their response covered many of the areas across the breadth of the Kaizen archetypes. Young advisors said they would define an active resident/tenant/homeowner as an individual or a group of people who actively work together to make positive changes within their local area to benefit the whole community ensuring everyone's voices are heard.

A majority of young people were fully aware of what it meant to them to be an active resident, tenant or homeowner and came up with the following:

- Volunteering at a local/community event
- Helping out within the local community
- Looking after the area where you live
- Attending meetings
- Being an active citizen
- Community cohesion
- Help/volunteer with community events and action days for example: litter cleanups, community engagement/educational events – ensuring these are for the whole community
- Look out for your neighbours – in emergencies and in times of need for example: loss of power, cold weather
- Get involved with meetings/forums – have a voice / voice opinion
- Register to vote/take part in elections
- Respond to consultations by the community and the local authority
- Join a neighbourhood watch
- Report crime and anti-social behaviour
- Attend ward panel meetings

10 Recommendations

From the huge amount of data and evidence we have gathered as part of the review, we have attempted to distil the many findings from the review into a set of key recommendations and areas which we feel warrant further consideration. They are based on our analysis of what we found and our effort to translate these views into practical and achievable actions which the Council can, working collaboratively with tenants and homeowners, work to develop and deliver. They are offered as guidance and advice which should inform the discussion and reflection on the review process and the future re-design of any new systems and structures.

We have organised our recommendations into three distinct, but related, areas: the approach to engagement, the structures for engagement and the methods of engagement. It is hoped that a new approach to engagement, jointly developed and owned by officers, Members and local residents can be used to kick-start and/or further develop the pre-conditions for civic engagement more widely. The Archetypes of Community Participation (see 9.2 above) provide a framework for developing a broader and more inclusive set of engagement opportunities that go beyond involvement in strategic or consultative groups and recognises the value of all types of community participation.

In setting out our recommendations, we have resisted the temptation to prioritise or to be prescriptive in when and how these should be developed, as it is our view that developed detailed plans and implementation must come from a collaborative process in the next phase of development. The process must start with clarifying the approach to engagement – which will provide the basis for developing appropriate structures and methods for engagement – and in that sense this is the first priority as form must follow function. We acknowledge that developing a new approach to engagement cannot be a single continuous path from one to the other, but will inevitably require fluidity, flexibility and determination. However, by remaining focused on the goals and working openly and collaboratively, the ‘right’ path will emerge.

10.1 Approach to engagement

- 10.1.1 Establishing a collaborative approach to engagement.** Genuine collaborative approaches need to be embedded. As a starting point we strongly recommend that following from this review a co-design process is established which enables a 'community conversation' to look at the review and come up with recommendations to take to Cabinet. This process should build on the active involvement of voices that have been heard for the first time through this review, as well as those more established participants and include tenants, leaseholders, council officers and members and it should be independently facilitated.
- 10.1.2 Creating clarity of process and purpose is vital in all areas.** There is a need to develop a clear definition of what engagement means for Southwark which can be consistently applied across the Council (currently there is no general understanding of what engagement is or why it is important). This would ideally be co-designed by residents, Members and council officers and would be used across all areas of the Council not just in housing. Aligned with this is the need to develop a clear narrative which underpins all communication.
- 10.1.3 Focus on outcomes, not just outputs.** It is important to accept that engagement will always be a work in progress and commit to a continuing process of review and evolution. Focussing more on outcomes will enable a robust approach to evaluation to be developed in order to ensure the new approach to engagement is delivering against its intended outcomes.
- 10.1.4 Transparency and openness will build trust.** An example of how this could be improved would be if the default is that full anonymised data sets are shared with strategic bodies so they can see the actual data and analyse it themselves. Even if it's only going to be interesting to a small number of people, it will help address the perception that things are being hidden and there is no justification for not sharing it.
- 10.1.5 Ensuring the integrity of the process will enable better decision making.** No consultation should happen if a decision has already been made, and it is important that in any consultation there is clarity at the outset what is up for negotiation and what are the red lines.
- 10.1.6 Work is needed to re-build trust between all parties.** This is a priority as it will unlock assets and trust is a foundation stone for effective engagement. There is a lot of historic baggage on all sides that is hindering effective collaboration. Independent facilitation of key elements of the formal structure (in the short term) will support this to happen but will not be sufficient on its own.
- 10.1.7 Accountability must be embedded into structures.** It is important that members and officers attend key meetings in the formal engagement structure. Presently this is not always the case and attendance is not consistent. Fewer meetings will make this easier and the benefits of attendance at the meetings will be myriad, including increasing accountability, helping to rebuild trust and developing collaborative working practices.
- 10.1.8 Asset based working helps recognise the value of participants.** There are huge amounts of untapped or under-used assets. This includes residents who have much to offer and the desire to be involved, but are not able to fit in with the formal structures, as well as inefficient use of current resources (eg over-reliance on meetings).

- 10.1.9 Creating and valuing different ways for residents to engage.** A much wider menu of engagement opportunities needs to be developed with opportunities of different types as well as crucially ways for people to be involved which are not huge time drains. These should range from bite-sized, lighter touch, one-way opportunities through to deeper and more meaningful two-way engagement which relates to not just housing but a range of local public services.
- 10.1.10 Develop discreet ways to include young people.** Younger residents are particularly likely to feel their voices are not being heard. Southwark Young Advisors and the Southwark Youth Council are well-established existing resources, which the Council has already invested in developing, and which could be key to filling the gap in terms of engagement with young people in the Borough about housing. Much closer working and engagement with the Southwark Youth Council and Southwark Young Advisors could significantly enhance the Council's approach to engagement, as well as consulting young people directly to contribute to decision-making. A coherent programme of youth engagement could be developed based on the ideas young people offered to enhance effective engagement. We believe that a relatively small investment in this area would be very cost effective and deliver a range of outcomes beyond the specific scope of housing.
- 10.1.11 Tenants and Homeowners Funds could be better communicated and aligned with local priorities.** As part of this, there is a need to reassess the training and support offered to tenants and TRAs in light of the priorities for spending identified in this review. It is essential to ensure that the range of training and support offered reflects the broad needs and aspirations of tenants. In reviewing training provision consideration should be given to the range of providers, availability and costs to ensure these deliver high quality, relevant and accessible provision as well as delivering value for money.
- 10.1.12 Strong leadership within the Council and the community is essential.** Many of the peer review interviewees reflected that clarity of strategic vision needs to be underpinned by strong leadership at both an organisational level and within TRAs and community-based organisations. They noted that from the perspective of the housing provider decisions relating to housing can often be contentious and it is important to have a clear and consistent management support to the staff involved in tenant engagement. They also noted a key factor underpinning successful tenant engagement structures, whether formal or informal, related to strong community leadership.
- 10.1.13** Alongside development of a vision for engagement Southwark could develop greater insight into its role in people's lives and the ways in which Council activities can influence attitudes towards it. Practical ways to achieve this include:
- Mapping the customer journey - when and why are people likely to get in touch? What is their experience? – case studies could help explore the touch points and the opportunities to make that positive.
 - How might Southwark explore better joined up working? Would it be possible to map which departments tenants are (more) likely to be engaged with? Within the context of exploring customer journey, such mapping could highlight some key opportunities to present a joined up message and approach.
 - Considering opportunities to increase inter-departmental working, particularly with regard to consultation and engagement. How could it be more synergised and holistic across the range of council departments?

- Reflect on the Council's role as a service provider in an increasingly consumer-driven society. What does this mean for the provider and the consumer? Within the housing context what reasonable expectations might a consumer have? A 'charter' or 'service level agreement' specifying processes and expectations would be one way to achieve this.
- Consider how current communications processes and methods reinforce engagement ambitions. How does the current website/customer services offer make it easy or difficult for engagement?

10.2 Formal Engagement Structures

10.2.1 Taking steps to improve the formal engagement structures. The review has highlighted some areas of duplication and (in our opinion) redundancy in the formal engagement structures. Our suggestion is that the structure could be usefully looked at afresh with a clear focus on identifying the purpose and remit of each element of the formal engagement structure.

10.2.2 Engagement structures could be made more effective in a number of ways:

- Merge the Homeowners Council and the Tenants Councils – carefully, sensitively and collaboratively over a period of time - but we do not believe the current separation is necessary or desirable and good practice from other areas strongly leads to combining rather than separating resident strategic groups. [NB where there are actual differences – e.g. major works or service charges – then these can be handled through working groups or sub-committees]
- Merge the Area Housing Forums with the existing Community Councils - housing can be covered in the community councils. We do not feel it is efficient or sensible to have separate AHFs especially as the AHF areas do not match either housing or “real” community boundaries. The function of AHFs in terms of election to higher strategic groups could be managed through other mechanisms.
- Establish a new stakeholder oversight group for housing - bringing together council (members and officers), tenants, homeowners and other stakeholders – to provide oversight or overview or improvement (bearing in mind that the language used is important). It should have a limited and specific role which is clearly defined and based on a shared vision.
- Establishing a new 'Ideas and Innovation group' with a remit to develop new initiatives or to encourage rethinking ways of working would provide a mechanism for collaboration and creative approaches to be developed. This group could be comprised of tenants, homeowners and council officers.
- Increased use of co-design groups involving council officers, members, tenants and leaseholders to look at specific aspects and issues as needed.

10.2.3 Using resident groups more strategically. There has been too much information sharing taking place in the strategic groups rather than using them strategically; this not only actually reduces genuine engagement, it also means the groups are not able to fulfil their purpose. If engagement can be divided into information sharing, feedback and collaboration, then this needs to be reflected in the agenda at meetings with greater focus on feedback and collaboration than information sharing.

10.3 Engagement Methods

- 10.3.1 Communication needs to be multi-channel and able to be tailored to the audience.** Personalising communications and tailoring messages to specific audiences is a well-established effective approach to marketing and communications which encourages engagement. This needs to be accompanied by a level of sophistication, engagement expertise and leadership (and coordination across the Council) in order to make it 'live' and relevant. Removing the Freephone number is causing genuine upset and may well be a false economy in terms of reputational cost, erosion of trust and goodwill as well as becoming a perceived (if not actual) barrier to engagement.
- 10.3.2 Address the over-reliance on meetings.** Meetings have historically been the default mechanism for engagement and many of them do not appear to be a productive use of time. The key barrier to participation we have identified is a lack of time and so quicker and more flexible ways of participating need to be developed. One possibility might be to establish an online sounding board but reducing the number of meetings is a priority.
- 10.3.3 Make more effective use of Digital Tools.** Greater use of digital tools will bring many benefits but it is important to remember that digital by default will exclude many residents. However whilst barriers exist for some tenants, digital technology can also enable a more diverse range of tenants and homeowners to be involved. A blended and integrated approach that uses digital to complement more traditional approaches will be optimal. It is vital that the digital approach enables two-way engagement rather than being just another broadcast channel. One example of a digital tool which is used by other housing providers to good effect is an online sounding board or panel.
- 10.3.4 Identify and address poor engagement and communication practice – staff training would support improved communication and achieve greater consistency.** The engagement offer must meet the needs of particular groups including leaseholders, younger people, and people for whom English is a second language, whom are currently more likely to feel excluded. Personalisation and customer segmentation needs to be embedded and use of technology can help with this.

This review has provided the opportunity to reflect on a significant range of data and opinions. It has provided an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders to consider the current situation and ambitions for the future. In doing so, Council interviewees were encouraged to consider the Fairer Future Vision developed in 2012. This overarching strategy²³ set out aspirations for efficiency, transparency and the relationship sought between the Council and those who live and work within Southwark.

The principles of transparency, accountability, of scrutinising spend and enabling local people to shape the future were felt, by all respondents, to remain as relevant today as they were in 2012. Whilst all recognised the need to go further, this review is an important part of the process of critiquing current approaches and scoping future development.

This review provides some clear feedback and a range of options for consideration. However, it is clear that delivering against some of these opportunities will require leadership and commitment from within the Council. Some of the opportunities for clarity and efficiency relate to the ways in

²³ http://www.2.southwark.gov.uk/info/200293/a_fairer_future/2959/fairer_future_for_all_vision

which the Council operates more widely and this involves a broader range of departments and functions than those focused just on housing. In this respect, strategic and operational leadership will be needed to embrace the opportunities and to ensure progress can be delivered within the authority.

11 Appendices

- A. Rapid Evidence Assessment**
- B. Secondary data analysis and statistical report**
- C. Benchmarking report**
- D. Southwark Young Advisors Report**
- E. Tenant and Homeowner Survey**
- F. Promoting the opportunity to participate in the review**

Appendix A - Rapid Evidence Assessment

1. Summary and recommendations

This review has synthesised and distilled best practice and evidence to identify the features of successful tenant and homeowner engagement to inform Southwark's review of its approach. The HCA, LGIU, TPAS as well as academic research and analysis of the work of individual housing providers have enabled us to identify six key design features which underpin strong tenant and homeowner engagement. These are:

- **Enabling and capacity building:** In strong approaches to tenant and leaseholder engagement, housing providers act as community enablers and facilitators, building capacity in the communities where they work.
- **Citizen role:** In the best examples, tenants and leaseholders don't just attend meetings or respond to surveys; they are equal partners and play a role in designing the approach to engagement and then creating and supporting a good housing management service.
- **Tailored approach:** Good tenant engagement recognises that different people, families and parts of the geographic area that the housing provider covers may require different approaches - one size does not fit all.
- **Proactive:** The best examples of engagement involve tenants and leaseholders early, this relates to everything from major repairs and rent consultations to identifying and resolving emerging issues on estates.
- **Evidence-based:** Good tenant and leaseholder engagement is driven by evidence. This enables the housing provider to focus its engagement resources on geographic areas, issues or particular groups in ways that work best for them.
- **Integrated technology:** Technology can enable deeper and wider relationships with tenants and leaseholders, but it must be integrated into the overarching strategic approach. It should not be pursued just for the sake of it and should only be incorporated if it helps improve efficiency or outcomes.

Recommendations:

It will be important for Southwark to reflect and consider how it can build the six characteristics in to its revised approach. In particular consideration should be given to:

- Introducing a range of opportunities which enable people to participate in different ways from bite-sized, lighter touch, one-way opportunities through to deeper and more meaningful two-way engagement which relates to not just housing but a range of local public services.
- How the new engagement approach can be used to kick-start and/or further develop the pre-conditions for civic engagement more widely.
- How a map of touchpoints could be developed to identify and act upon all the opportunities to develop a relationship with tenants and leaseholders and respond effectively first time.
- Using technology and social media to have a credible and meaningful, two-way conversation (not just to broadcast official messages). This needs to be accompanied by a level of sophistication, engagement expertise and leadership (not to mention coordination with other Southwark communications) in order to make it 'live' and relevant.

- How to shape the engagement offer so that it meets the needs of particular groups including leaseholders, younger people, and people for whom English is a second language
- Developing a robust approach to evaluation to ensure the new approach to engagement is delivering the outcomes that are intended.

2. Scope of this document

This report draws on published evidence and articles regarding best practice in Tenant Participation and Engagement. It takes a wide and inclusive definition of participation and engagement and considers successful approaches to engage a diverse group including both tenants and leaseholders and people from a variety of different backgrounds.

The initial parameters for this report were to undertake a Rapid Evidence Assessment which:

- Reviewed policy and practice regarding effective structures to support tenant and homeowner engagement
- Identified key indicators for benchmarking
- Analysed support structure costs and how tenants and leaseholder engagement funds were being spent.

The purpose of this was to identify the impact of engagement on housing outcomes and satisfaction as well as the impact of engagement on softer issues like cohesion, crime reduction, health and wellbeing. The original scope was also to identify the financial efficacy of different approaches.

However, despite the fact that many sector leaders point to the tangible financial impact that good engagement can bring^{24, 25}, we have found little publicly-available, convincing evidence to demonstrate the scale of return on investment of good quality engagement. Nor have we found robust evidence which enables us to quantify which engagement approaches work best overall, and are most appropriate for different groups.

Whilst a range of evidence sources have been included within the scope of this document (see references at the end of the REA) the quality and availability of data which demonstrates the financial or other impacts of different approaches to tenant and homeowner engagement is sparse.

Conclusion of REA: Therefore, the conclusion of the Rapid Evidence Assessment is that the evidence base is extremely weak (quality), there is a great deal of limited evidence which is largely case based and anecdotal. Indeed, the 2017 TPAS survey finds that most organisations do not track the impact of engagement.

²⁴ “Regardless of the changing political environment, there is a strong business case for involving tenants in the provision and management of their homes. This is based not only on meeting regulatory requirements but on ensuring effective business management...The providers that are the best and most efficient at service delivery have not only invested time and money in making sure tenants are fully involved. They have also made sure that tenant involvement is a core activity embedded throughout their organisations and firmly linked to service and performance improvement.” Value for Money and Tenant Involvement: Marianne Hood OBE: HouseMark 2012

²⁵ John Giesen, the Chair of TPAS, the tenant participation organisation says ‘meaningful and flexible engagement is proven to drive business improvement and community development... it helps organisations deliver results’ The TPAS national tenant engagement standards <http://www.tpas.org.uk/standards>

Positively, in May 2017 a new UK-wide collaborative research centre was established (Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence or CaCHE²⁶). It is a consortium of nine universities and four non-academic professional bodies led by the University of Glasgow which aims provide robust evidence to inform housing policy and practice. This new consortium and the work currently underway by 'What Works Wellbeing' which is looking at the impact of housing on wellbeing²⁷ may prove useful in filling the evidence gap.

Given the current paucity of evidence to answer the questions around quality, quantity and relevance of different approaches to tenant and leaseholder engagement we have sought to use the information which is available to identify key features of what is seen to be good tenant and homeowner engagement approaches (with the caveat that the themes identified are largely based on perceptions, or isolated, anecdotal analysis rather than robust data).

3. Definition

For the purposes of this review we are including the following areas within the definition of tenant engagement:

- Relating to all social housing (housing cooperatives, council housing and housing associations)
- Relating to the relationship between tenants, shared owners and homeowners (including non-resident home-owners) and their housing provider
- Relating to consultation, engagement, scrutiny, co-design and coproduction
- Relating to housing strategy, housing repair, major works, estate regeneration, Annual Service Charges and rent as well as wider social impacts like community safety and cohesion
- Relating to a range of different engagement channels (face to face, email, social media, telephone, events, formal representation structures and organisations etc.)

The rest of this document summarises and distils the key learning from various academic and sector reports which look at what constitutes good Tenant and Leaseholder engagement. The final section provides a number of case studies largely drawn from the same sources to help bring to life the key themes, and to provide practical examples which Southwark may wish to draw from.

4. Key findings

Tenant and leaseholder perceptions

In March 2017 TPAS published a comprehensive survey of tenants, leaseholders, and professionals about tenant engagement. Respondents from more than 230 housing organisations and tenants believed that involvement delivers a host of value to housing organisations, including elimination of waste, fewer complaints and improved customer focus with most engagement focusing on repairs and housing management.

The 2015 leaseholder survey undertaken by TPAS identifies that many of the concerns and perceptions of tenants are shared by leaseholders and that therefore leaseholders need not be solely supported through separate engagement structures (with the exception of major works

²⁶ <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/new-centre-for-uk-housing-evidence/>

²⁷ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/2017/03/30/evidence-call-for-grey-literature-housing-interventions-for-housing-vulnerable-adults-and-their-relationship-to-wellbeing/>

where a slightly different approach to engaging and involving leaseholders may be needed). Therefore, Southwark will need to think about how its new approach to engagement adequately reaches and involved leaseholders in ways that work for them. The TPAS leaseholder survey found:

- A high number of leaseholders (85%) consider their landlord should work more closely with leaseholders.
- Over 54% of leaseholders stated they were not actively involved due to personal issues or just felt it was not worthwhile if the housing landlord does not show commitment.
- When asked what ways leaseholders would most like to be engaged this was overwhelmingly stated as email (75%) being the most popular approach, postal communication (35%) was the second most popular option and facilitating panels (28%) being the third best option.
- Leaseholder perceptions of the opportunities to get involved was low (23%), with 49% saying they would get involved as long as the consultation means something and not just a 'tick in the box'.

Citizen or consumer?

An academic evidence review undertaken by the University of Birmingham in 2016 usefully differentiates two different strategic approaches to tenant and leaseholder engagement which should inform the sort of engagement which a housing provider develops. They distinguish consumerist approaches from citizenship focused ones.

Consumerist approaches regard the tenant or leaseholder as a consumer of a housing service and therefore their involvement with social housing should be service orientated. Whereas the citizenship perspective alludes to more participatory approach, with citizenship framed a communal function and consumerism as an individual perspective.

Since at least the 1980 Housing Act (and Tenants Right Act 1980 in Scotland), the identities of social housing tenants have been reconfigured from passive recipients to empowered and responsible individuals. This shift has seen a move away from a dependency culture among tenants and is reflected in the greater variety of opportunities which housing providers are now offering to enable tenants and leaseholders to participate and help drive housing services.

Indeed, many of the case studies in the final section identify 'consumerist opportunities' that allow residents to take their involvement in bite-sized pieces but which also place the tenants and leaseholders as equals to the housing provider; driving the agenda and adding value where they are best able to (which more closely aligns with the citizenship definitions of engagement).

It may be useful for Southwark to consider the breadth of engagement opportunities it introduces ensuring a range of opportunities available across the consumer versus citizen, or collective versus individual continuum. It will also be important (especially given the high proportion of council tenants in the borough) to develop a strategy which enables and encourages tenants and leaseholders to move from lighter touch, one-way relationships into deeper and more meaningful two-way engagement which relate to not just housing but a range of local public services.

Features of successful engagement

In this section we review major pieces of research into successful tenant and leaseholder engagement; summarising key findings then distilling the key messages from across the different evidence sources.

TPAS in their report Tenant Engagement Standards identify six factors they believe underpin good tenant engagement. They are:

1. Engagement Strategy: Ensuring the tenant and homeowner engagement strategy aligns with organisation's strategic business plan objectives and outcomes
2. Resources for engagement: Ensuring that engagement is appropriately resourced
3. Information and insight: Ensuring information is accessible at the right level, at the right time, to the right people, in the right way
4. Influence and Scrutiny: Ensuring tenants and homeowners can influence and scrutinise the housing offer in terms of budgets, repairs, major works, long term strategy and a range of other things.
5. Community Engagement: Ensuring tenants and homeowners, wider communities and stakeholders work together to develop projects and plans to meet jointly identified needs
6. Valuing engagement: Ensuring the outcomes of engagement benefit tenants, leaseholders and communities as well as the housing organisation

In a separate report the LGIU in partnership with the Mears Group in 2014 identified many of the same themes, concluding that:

'The relationship between social landlords and their tenants is undergoing a period of sustained and fundamental change. This is a direct result not only of a shifting welfare landscape, but of long-term challenges associated with the growing gap between demand for services and availability of resources. As a consequence, many social landlords are moving away from purely transactional relationships with their tenants and employing new and proactive ways of engaging them in meaningful conversations, particularly those who have been furthest away from engagement in the past. This may take the form of more targeted communication strategies, of community resilience work, of more efficient partnership working or of empowering community champions. What is certain is that if we are to adapt successfully to the challenges we face in future as a society, our work must be supported by an active, flexible and open dialogue between the citizen and the state. Nowhere is this more true, in these challenging times, than in the relationships between social landlords and their tenants.'

Based on the major piece of research they undertook, which involved 200 different housing providers, in-depth interviews and surveys, LGIU and the Mears Group made the following four recommendations about tenant and leaseholder engagement:

Recommendation 1: Invest in sustainable tenant-landlord relationships: Where possible, tenant and leaseholder engagement must invest in resilience, and focus on giving people the tools they need to support independent lifestyles. This scope is broader than traditional tenant and leaseholder engagement and suggests digital inclusion strategies, energy efficiency schemes, employment brokerage programmes, coordinated financial advice/support and referrals to community networks all have a role to play.

This report argues there is a pressing need for housing organisations to think seriously and creatively about how they engage their tenants. The survey in the LGIU/Mears Group report shows that there is an aspiration among housing providers to think creatively and to move away

from a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to tenant and leaseholder involvement; however, the 2017 TPAS survey shows that in the main housing providers continue to rely on quite traditional approaches. The LGIU/Mears report notes that utilising a range of engagement methods is particularly important when considering how to involve individuals often defined as 'hard to reach', who may need support, but are unlikely to respond to traditional forms of communication and engagement. LGIU and Mears conclude that future engagement cannot rely on transactional relationships; it must be proactive and participative and empower stronger forms of citizenship in all communities. Mirroring the point made in the TPAS tenant engagement standards (which calls for a close alignment between tenant engagement methods and overarching organisational strategy) LGIU/Mears Group note that it is important to engage all partners behind a common goal and to align values and objectives behind a shared vision.

Recommendation 2: Maximise the value of customer contact points: LGIU/Mears note that mapping the formal contact points between tenant and landlord is a crucial first step to delivering coordinated and clear communications and a coherent approach to engagement. This includes relationships with third parties, such as contractors and the voluntary sector who regularly engage with tenants. Too often people receive mixed messages, or are subject to consultation and engagement overload as a result of different sources not coordinating as well as they should. Frontline members of staff have a key role to play in signposting tenants to appropriate services and in flagging up potential problems, so a multi-agency approach can make a real difference.

Recommendation 3: Identify community champions: While the coordination of customer contact points can be useful in sharing important messages, identifying overlaps, moving away from siloes and preventing crises; it is recognised that people are often more likely to engage with a member of their own community than with 'authority' figures such as landlords, particularly in the context of welfare and finance. LGIU/Mears recommend that housing providers should identify champions within the community who can provide good information and support as an important way of reaching those groups who are furthest from engagement with their landlord.

Recommendation 4: Target communications using data segmentation: Local authorities, registered social landlords and their partner organisations hold vast quantities of data about tenants and their use of services. Making sure that there are intelligent systems in place for collecting, analysing, and sharing that data to support more effective communications is key to engaging differently with different sections of the community. This isn't just about the channels people use, or how they interact with services, but data segmentation when combined with qualitative and ethnographic research can be used to help understand tenants and leaseholders' motivations, giving behavioural insights which can help to identify those in need of specific forms of support, particular messages and campaigns targeted to specific groups or areas or behaviour change and demand reduction approaches. Trialling and testing different approaches with tenants can also pinpoint the best means of sharing information with different groups, allowing for more nuanced and targeted use of resources.

Engagement approaches

According to the 2017 TPAS National Survey, despite strategic moves to diversify approaches to engagement a dedicated scrutiny group is by far the most commonly used mechanism for tenant scrutiny, with nearly all respondents saying their organisation has one. Tenant inspectors, task and finish groups and online approaches are much less prevalent but growing.

The same survey (which involved over 230 organisations) found that repairs and maintenance and housing management are the most common areas for tenants to have a formal role. It is much less common for tenants to be formally involved in development, rents and allocations and lettings and there is scope to increase activity in these areas. Tenant newsletters and annual reports are the most commonly mentioned vehicle for communicating success of engagement activities. Social media was mentioned by nearly half of respondents. However, as described in the TPAS National Survey housing organisations' use of social media currently feels limited to pushing out information in a broadcast manner, rather than using social media to really engage citizens. It will be important for Southwark to consider how it moves from superficial to more meaningful use of social media to enable quality discussions and two way exchange.

The analysis of the TPAS survey notes that there is no doubt that approaches to digital engagement in the sector are changing. Of those respondents who knew what proportion of formal tenant engagement is delivered through digital channels, 35% said more than a quarter of activity was delivered in this way. Currently, the most popular channels are Facebook, organisational websites, Twitter and email groups, which are much more widely used than YouTube and Instagram, and than bespoke landlord apps, portals and online forums. Despite an acknowledged lack of awareness about future plans, most thought that these four channels (Facebook, websites, twitter and email) would still be most prevalent in the coming year, with efforts focusing on increasing digital participation rather than changing or diversifying channels. Customer insight derived from digital engagement is most frequently being used to inform service design, tailor services to meet individual needs, highlight specific support and intervention needs and inform budget and investment decisions.

The 2017 TPAS survey demonstrates that housing providers are still relying on very traditional approaches to engagement, and are focused solely on engagement relating to housing. This is also the picture painted by 2015 research from Tenant's Leading Change in England which suggests that local tenant involvement and management in 'service delivery' and 'tenant scrutiny' are currently seen as the most effective methods of involvement for delivering benefits, followed by involvement in governance and tenant panels. It is interesting to note that both the 2017 TPAS survey and the 2015 TLCE research relate to tenants' and housing professionals' perceptions of the most effective approaches to engagement. This REA demonstrates that there is little robust evidence to support the notion that these traditional engagement methods are most effective, which does not mean the perceptions are incorrect, just that at this stage they are assumptions rather than being evidenced.

It does not yet appear that a significant proportion of housing providers are using tenant and leaseholder engagement as an opportunity to create a deep relationship with citizens which can then be used to help build a stronger community and shape a wider variety of local public services.

Features of successful engagement - conclusions

Taking the LGiU/Mears report and the work of TPAS together, then reviewing a number of case studies we have distilled the following six areas which feature in the strategic analysis of sector bodies and are demonstrated in practice in the case studies section of this report. We believe these six features are present in strong approaches to tenant and leaseholder engagement and

Southwark should consider how it can embed them in its revised approach:

- **Enabling and capacity building:**

In strong approaches to tenant and leaseholder engagement, housing providers act as community enablers and facilitating, building capacity in the communities where they work and equipping and supporting tenants and leaseholders to get involved in ways that are meaningful and convenient for them.

- **Citizen role:**

As a result of the enabling and facilitative approach taken, in the best examples, tenants and leaseholders don't just attend meetings or respond to surveys. They are equal partners and play a key role in creating and supporting a good housing management service. Citizens also play a role co-designing the approach to tenant and leaseholder engagement, helping to design all the engagement methods from formal scrutiny to online tenants' panels and community events. In some examples tenants and leaseholders are involved more broadly than housing and play a role in creating strong communities and in helping to design a breadth of local public services (including health and social care, community safety, and employment as well as housing). The best examples are owned, designed and driven by tenants and leaseholders, and are not just about the council (or other housing provider) deciding to replace one form of formal tenant engagement with another (or a group of others).

- **Tailored approach:**

Different people, families and parts of the geographic area that the housing provider covers may require different approaches. Strong examples of tenant and leaseholder engagement recognise that one size does not fit all, and just because an approach worked well in another borough, or for a different housing provider does not necessarily mean it can be replicated. This means that buildings, technology and staff must be used flexibly in ways that work for tenants and leaseholders, rather than in ways that only work for housing providers.

- **Proactive:**

The best examples of engagement involve tenants and leaseholders early and often, this relates to everything from major repairs and rent consultations to identifying and resolving emerging issues on estates. Tenant and leaseholders can be drawn upon to help prevent issues from happening in the first place, and where problems do occur, strong engagement and early intervention drawing on the expertise of tenants and leaseholders can help to stop them from escalating.

- **Evidence-based:**

There are several examples of good tenant and leaseholder engagement which are driven by evidence. This enables the housing provider to focus resources on geographic areas, or on issues or particular groups. In the context of constrained financial resources the benefit of customer and geographic segmentation is significant, and also enables housing providers to take an intelligence-driven approach to tailoring services and approaches. Being evidenced-based also refers to the monitoring and evaluation approach. This desk research highlights that there is a real paucity of evidence about the tangible impact of tenant engagement. Therefore, a strong tenant and leaseholder engagement not only uses evidence to target the approach, but also uses evidence to assess the impact of different approaches.

- **Integrated technology:**

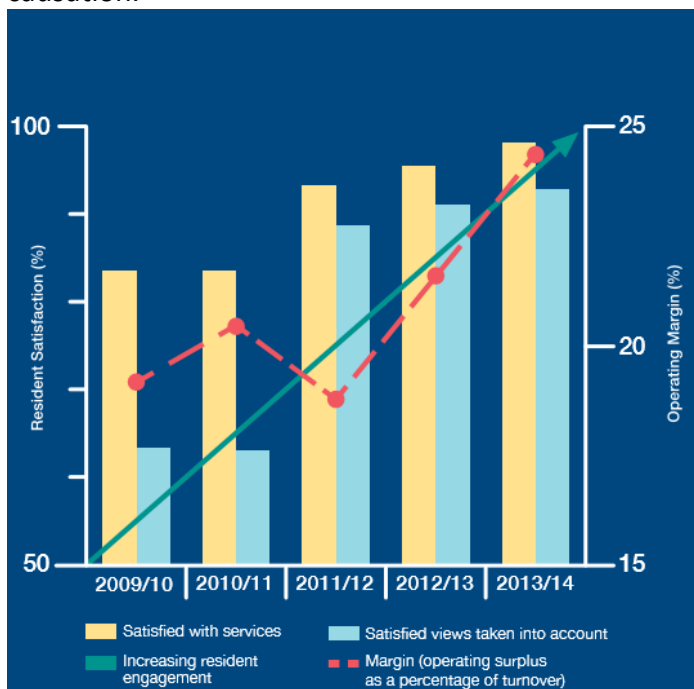
There are several examples of housing providers who have used technology to engage with and develop relationships with a wider variety of tenants and leaseholders using channels which appeal to different audiences to engage with them. However, the key insight from this review is not that online is good, and meetings are bad, but that technology must be integrated into the overarching strategic approach, and that a wide range of channels should be used. Technology can be used to enable groups that may be less interested or able to participate in other ways but it should not be pursued just for the sake of it and should only be incorporated if it helps improve efficiency or outcomes. Equally, whilst Southwark could benefit from developing digital channels; this needs to be accompanied by a level of sophistication, engagement expertise and leadership (not to mention coordination with other Southwark communications) in order to make it 'live' and relevant.

5. Case Studies

AmicusHorizon: Enabling and capacity building, citizen role

The University of Westminster reviewed Amicus Housing's approach to resident engagement to test the hypothesis that involvement can simultaneously deliver improved services, higher satisfaction and better value for money. Their research looked at two specific areas: complaints and procurement and found an estimated annual resource savings of at least £2.7m, attributable in large part to resident involvement.

AmicusHorizon has achieved the highest levels of satisfaction of any large social landlord in the UK (97% overall satisfaction with services). They attribute high satisfaction scores to effectiveness in designing and refining services on the basis of resident input; however, as noted earlier in the conclusions of this Rapid Evidence Assessment, there is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate causation.



Satisfaction vs. engagement and operating margin²⁸

²⁸ University of Westminster: AmicusHorizon (2015) Success, Satisfaction and Scrutiny: The business benefits of involving residents

Staff, Board members and residents have embedded a 'One Team' culture by undertaking identical training and working towards a clearly defined and importantly shared set of goals. The notion of 'One Team', all working together, underpins everything the association does. Resident engagement in governance has created a more productive working environment. Resident meetings were widely described as effective with 'difficult conversations' conducted within an atmosphere of openness and trust.

One example of the work AmicusHorizon has done is to establish the **London Regional Youth Forum** to strengthen the work of the three local forums, ensure young people do not feel isolated and that they are able to scrutinise services and influence decisions. It has 25 members in total, made up of previously uninvolved residents aged 11-19 as well as representatives from the three local youth forums serving Croydon and Surrey, London South East and London South West. The Forum has worked with their local authorities, healthcare providers and the Department for Work and Pensions and they have held meetings with MPs, MEPs and local councillors, empowering the young people to further engage in their communities and represent the interests of young people. Based on discussions which first started on a residential trip away, the Forum worked for over 12 months to produce a booklet, 'Keeping Safe', covering issues such as bullying, domestic violence and stop and search procedures. Several London schools ordered copies of the booklet and so far over 6,500 have been distributed. By working on the booklet young people gained new skills and also developed greater respect and trust in the police.

As part of their work on safety the Forum helped organise two youth conferences focusing on gun and knife crime, held at the Ministry of Sound. The Forum has also been extremely valuable in building their communities. The Forum has organised a number of projects to build relationships with older residents, including a Living History project whereby young people visit older people in sheltered accommodation to hear personal accounts of history and the 'Silver Surfers Project', an IT training programme delivered by young people to older residents. A 'Love Your Neighbourhood' campaign organised by the Forum led to a 50% reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area and, in addition to this campaign, the Forum organises annual Clean Up Days across the region.

Specifically for young people, the Forum has established art and homework clubs, a reading project and a Girls Night In scheme which gives young women a safe place to meet up to openly discuss personal issues.

Another example relates to the **new complaints policy** which was designed by residents and resulted in annual savings estimated at £181,000 with key improvements including:

- A more solution-focused approach with the emphasis on dealing with complaints at the first contact.
- The creation of a central Customer Experience Team to improve consistency and ownership.
- Resident representatives chairing Stage 3 panels to make the complaints process more transparent and collaborative.

Southwark may also wish to consider how it could develop a map of touchpoints to identify all the opportunities to respond effectively first time.

Residents have also played a key role in shaping the organisation's approach to **procurement**, helping to produce annual efficiency savings of around £2.3m. Changes have included:

- Resident engagement in recruitment and selection of contractors

- Empowering residents to identify value for money improvements; and
- The appointment of Resident Monitors to carry out post-work inspections and challenge performance

Hanover: Citizen role, enabling and capacity building, tailored approach

The Hanover Housing Resident Engagement Strategy published last year, which Social Engine and Kaizen helped to support articulates, we think, a strong strategic approach which identifies three inter-related engagement outcomes:

- Challenging performance and improving services
- Building community and encouraging reciprocity
- Speaking out and being heard

Hanover sees engagement not as an end in itself; but, a means to empower residents, improving performance and making a tangible difference to their lives. This set of values where tenant involvement is aligned with a strong overarching strategy is something that was identified by both LGiU/Mears Group and TPAS as being critical to strong engagement. It was also identified within the stakeholder depth interviews including PoplarHarca and Trafford Housing Trust.

Southwark, like the LGiU/Mears group, TPAS and others also believes that active resident engagement can create the foundations for stronger communities and higher quality council services. Therefore, it will be important to articulate exactly how the Southwark approach to engagement can be designed so that it creates the conditions for communities to flourish.



The Hanover approach identifies a core offer which will be consistent across their communities, as well as number of different approaches to engagement which they will tailor dependent on resident interest and needs. The strategy also clarifies the outcome and performance measures they will use to demonstrate the impact of their approach to resident engagement. The key areas are summarised below:

Area	What Hanover Housing is doing	Outcomes they will measure
Challenging performance and improving services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-constituted Residents' Council with a more clearly defined remit • Formation of an Oversight and Intelligence Group • Formal and "pop-up" scrutiny groups • Formation of an Ideas and Creativity group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible improvements made to services as a result of resident input/feedback/recommendations • Residents will influence decision making – at a strategic and operational level

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy review group • Complaints Panel • Green Shoots Panel • Ad-hoc working/project groups set up by residents / staff and residents as needed • Resident inspectors or a similar scheme • Resident researchers • Mystery Shopper scheme • Residents' groups • Local offers co-produced with and monitored by residents, incorporating a revised approach to local agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new approach to scrutiny will have been co-produced with residents with a range of opportunities • Changes in policy and practice will be made at (estate, regional or national) levels that reflect differences in residents' aspirations, needs and perspectives • Hanover will be regarded as an exemplar for effective scrutiny and accountability to residents by its peers, regulators and other stakeholders
Building community and encouraging reciprocity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to the estate/community processes / schemes / group (walking tours) • Green Shoots Fund as well as "pre-shoot" fund and Greenshoots Panel • Community notice board • Digital Champions scheme • Facilitating residents attending local events • Hanover volunteering scheme • Hanover membership scheme • Develop and promote adult learning opportunities • Community connector role Wellbeing Assistant • Good Neighbour Schemes – outreach and befriending, buddy system • Skills audits/register and community mapping • Sharing schemes eg Library of Things, Timebanks between estates • Support for social/micro-enterprise – residents that want to set up new social ventures (eg gardening maintenance) should be supported to do so • Resident engagement teams made up of residents to promote opportunities to other residents (and support them to take advantage of the opportunity) • Coffee mornings and other regular social gatherings • Peer-to-Peer training/support eg Digital Angels, Human Library • Resident -led cooking classes • Established links and co-projects with local organisations eg swap of skills with local Primary School • Recognition and reward scheme for community activity • Oral history/Listening project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of social capital and interaction between residents on estates – people knowing their neighbours and are involved in a wide range of social activities that contribute to life on the estate (and beyond). • Residents will be connected to the wider community and agencies outside the estate – linking with other services and activities in the local area • Staff will be involved in supporting residents to engage in (run, participate) social activity – signposting to ideas, activities and organisations that residents might be interested in. • Residents will be able to fulfil their aspirations and needs, making full use of their skills, knowledge and experience of residents. Community assets will be identified, made use of and supported

	• Staff volunteering scheme	
Speaking out and being heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse communication methods across multiple platforms – a blended digital and non-digital approach • An annual survey of customers as well as other less formal feedback approaches (eg pop-up focus groups) • Improved capacity, promotion and curation of Hanover World or an alternative online network for residents. • The In-touch Panel, including theme based sub-groups • Informal feedback gathered at social events and coffee mornings • Regional & National Question-time events (questions crowd-sourced), recorded and shared • Estate meetings to discuss local issues as and when needed • Complaints and compliments system – actively sourcing positive and negative feedback via multiple channels (eg rant and rave) • Listening advocate role for residents to hear from those who may struggle to engage without support. • Anniversary card scheme linked to feedback method • Petitions scheme; where if a certain number of residents sign a petition, it triggers a Senior Management response • Resident editors and contributors to local and national newsletters • Ideas and suggestions scheme across multiple channels (online, suggestions box, face to face, phone, written) • Annual review process. The Engagement Strategy Steering Group could meet on an annual basis to review progress in the implementation of the Engagement Strategy and make recommendations for areas of improvement by reporting to the Residents' Council • Translators – people (staff/residents) willing and able to translate documents/information to assist residents for whom English is not their first language. • Community Connector and Wellbeing Assistant Hanover staff roles that will act as conduits for informal listening and data gathering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents will feel well informed about Hanover and their estate and be aware of opportunities for them to have their say • We will be able ask targeted groups of residents for their views and receive useful and timely feedback that can be used to inform decision making • Residents will engage with the organisation and access services digitally • Residents will support each other to make full use of social technologies enabling them to interact with each other and to access information and services (beyond just Hanover's) • We will understand how residents feel about the organisation and services and will use a wide range of communication methods to inform and engage residents • Our approach to communication will be based on a strong customer-centric perspective using behavioural insight to inform the approach • ELT and The Board will receive regular papers providing an overview of engagement activities, including information about residents' main concerns and their impact or likely impact on the organisation.

Moat: Citizen Role, Enabling and capacity building

Moat has put in place policies which build capacity and demonstrate a more balanced relationship; they move the relationship from being solely about consultation to one which is about rights and responsibilities and now touches a number of areas outside of simply providing housing (like energy efficiency, and welfare reform support).

Under the 'Moat Promise', tenants can apply for 'Five Star membership' if they meet certain criteria for the year. This includes having a clear rent account, not engaging in anti-social behaviour and generally adhering to all the terms of their tenancy agreement. Five Star membership allows them to access an enhanced offer from Moat, including more choice on planned works, evening/weekend repair visits, local decorating/gardening service and other offers through the 'Moat Marketplace'.

The standard service Moat previously offered to all residents was rebranded Four Star. Residents who continue to adhere to their tenancy automatically receive the Four Star Service. Moat does allow residents who have arrears and are adhering to repayment agreements to stay in the Four Star Service. Conversely, tenants who are repeatedly in breach of their tenancy agreement and do not change their behaviour receive the Three Star service. This is the minimum required service (health and safety repairs). All residents are pre-warned they could fall into the Three Star service and given the opportunity to address the issue. Support is offered to vulnerable residents and individuals can be exempted by frontline staff on the basis of vulnerability.

City West Housing Trust: evidence-based, tailored approach, proactive, integrated technology

City West is a not-for-profit organisation and owns 14,600 homes across West Salford. It took a multi-media approach to communicating the messages of welfare reform to its tenants. By using a range of communication channels City West has been able to open a dialogue with members of the community who are furthest from engagement (there are low levels of adult literacy and numeracy in some of its neighbourhoods).

The campaign has made use of some of the following techniques:

- An infographic DVD on the welfare reforms, highlighting the likely numbers of people affected in Salford and what the effects may be.
- Creation of 'Creature Comforts' style brand to ensure a cohesive, instantly recognisable campaign. This was carried across all communication channels. Its YouTube videos received just under 1000 views.
- A creative animated video, featuring frank, unscripted conversations with real tenants, which was sent to 4,000 customers and posted online. A second film, tackling Universal Credit has also been developed. These were created following customer feedback requesting something more dynamic than the initial DVD.
- SMS texts to target groups of customers.
- A dedicated welfare reform section on its website is signposted to by Twitter and Facebook and has received more than 4,300 hits. A new Facebook page allows customers to discuss mutually exchanging properties.
- An information roadshow with the local radio station, holding drop-in sessions and door knocking.
- Advice letters sent to over 4,000 households.
- Housing Benefit advice drop-in sessions, which have so far attracted over 225 customers.
- Home visits to more than 400 households.

City West worked with tenant panels on its communication materials to ensure the messages were clear and the communications were targeted to different groups of tenants. Using the data it gathered, every tenant due to be affected was tagged as either 'coping' or 'struggling' in relation to the welfare reform change in question, allowing for more tailored messaging. Direct advice to tenants via letters, text messages and emails, was then personalised accordingly. City West's Welfare Reform Dashboard provides up-to-date intelligence on who is affected by the changes and has helped to tailor the campaign to individual needs and better target communications.

However, whilst City West was able to track and evidence the reasons why it pursued different approaches to communication and engagement, and it could measure how many people were reached in these different ways, it was unable to evidence the difference that taking this more nuanced approach made to real outcomes like tenant satisfaction, the quality of housing or the efficiency of services.

livin: the 'Monkey' project: tailored approach, proactive, integrated technology

livin is a registered housing provider which was established in 2009 following a stock transfer from Sedgefield Borough Council. livin has received funding from the Big Lottery to support the Monkey project: a five-year financial inclusion programme backed by the National Housing Federation. It operates as a partnership of seven registered providers and 10 voluntary sector bodies led by livin. It is aimed at all new tenants and existing tenants aged between 16 and 25.

The project is designed around three themes of finance, fuel and furniture which includes help with obtaining and setting up bank and saving accounts, debt management, household incomes and budgeting as well as sourcing the best deals on affordable furniture and fuel solutions and low interest, affordable finance. It aims to support 20,000 beneficiaries over five years with support to help tenants to sustain their housing tenancy.

The scheme has had significant interest from tenants, especially from younger participants. As they become more confident in the scheme, they are beginning to run workshops themselves and operate as champions in their communities.

livin have found that many tenants would prefer to speak to someone in their own community about financial concerns, and are now in the process of identifying and training neighbourhood volunteers as welfare champions.

livin recognises that they must be more proactive and find different ways of communicating with different tenants, rather than relying solely on residents panels and traditional forms of consultation.

This includes making better use of data and contact points with residents. Working with its repairs and maintenance contractor Mears, they have now delivered 'toolbox talks' with frontline staff of third party contractors such as repairs and maintenance workers. They find that tenants are sometimes more willing to speak freely with these staff than with representatives of the landlord. It may be useful for Southwark to think about how different change agents and different sorts of contact points might be best utilised in the new approach.

asert: citizen focus, capacity building and enabling

asert was set up to provide an independent auditing service for social landlords and third party providers. Taking the view that the best people to scrutinise services are the service users themselves it recruits through residents' and tenants' associations across the country. Those tenants are fully trained and employed to carry out inspections, feedback surveys, and customer insight analysis.

This provides opportunities for employment opportunities but also an effective means of making contact with residents, who are more likely to talk candidly with someone that relates to them, or can sympathise with their situation, than with a contractor.

A great deal of asert's work involves checking that clients' key performance indicators are met. One recent project was carried out on behalf of the energy supplier E-on. asert designed a tenant-friendly survey to assess the impact of E-on's funding to help social landlords meet carbon emissions reduction targets. It focuses on a wide variety of housing concerns, including sustainability, energy efficiency, standards, and domestic social care.

The company is based in Manchester, though it works and recruits from all over England. Its strength lies in the skill level of its recruits, as well as the average of 10,000 customer contacts they have a month, across 133,000 homes.

Having analysed trends and spotted significant patterns, asert feeds back to contractors and landlords. They also devise solutions to the problems that are raised and engage with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that tenants' concerns are incorporated into wider development plans.

Description of formal engagement approaches across some London boroughs

The table below does not provide detailed case studies, but describes the sort of engagement approaches other London boroughs are pursuing which may be useful for Southwark to consider in the development of their new approach. It was put together by Lambeth Council ahead of proposed changes to their formal tenant engagement structures (due to be endorsed in July 2017).

	Numbers	Type of engagement structure
Hounslow	3000	Formal Community Forum structure which Leaseholders may be involved in.
Islington	8500	No formal Engagement structure except through Scrutiny and representations from Islington Leaseholders Association
Waltham Forest	2100	Area Forums: 1 per year plus a residents' day.
Redbridge	2500+	Longstanding LH Forum which meets every two months to discuss general leaseholder issues. There are approximately 7 members . Also Resident Housing Panel (face to face). And Annual Conference for tenants and LHs

Greenwich	21000+	Just set up Housing Scrutiny. No LH Forum. But have borough wide Tenants Forum currently under review due to cost. There was a Leaseholder Improvement Group, but became dysfunctional and was disbanded and not replaced. Leaseholders interests are covered by Tenants and Residents Associations
Newham	6500+	Moved away from borough-wide Tenant Liaison Committee structure and introduced 'Citizens Panel' - with virtual involvement as well as Focus Groups, Surveys, and other Quant/Qual methodologies depending on the consultation topic. Tenant's Federation closed down, and now NO T&RAs. Cost driven review.
Haringey	4000+	Done away with Forums ('dysfunctional'), but still have RAs (50, 20 active) Involvement through Task & Finish Groups and Officers attend local meetings. Engagement App and Website being launched in October. Will be door knocking to find out what residents are interested in who then become part of virtual panel in own area of interest.
Camden	23000+	LH Forum traditional formal structure across 5 districts with Committee of 4 and monthly meetings with 1 AGM. Similar TA structure. Also have resident's virtual panels. No separate LH Forum.
Hackney	30000+	ALMO, came back in house this April. Still has traditional structure with 75-80 active T&RAs, so very strong input. Are keeping the TRAs and also have 5 Area Panels at the next level. LHs no longer have a Forum and must engage through the TRA structure. The TRAs nominate reps for the Area Panels. The level above this (Board/Exec etc) is under review following the re-integration and Board has been disbanded whilst this happens. There is a Leaseholder Open Day once a year but no LH Forum or separate engagement structure for LHs.
Lewisham		Lewisham Homes previously had 2 Area Panels which combined to form 1. The Area Panel comprised of members of Tenants and Residents Associations. In 2016, that Panel was renamed Resident Engagement Panel and the Terms of Reference changed to include any Lewisham Homes secure tenant or leaseholder to membership. The Resident Engagement Panel is a Consultation Panel for Service delivery and improvements and Policy/Strategy consultation. Below this Panel sits the Resident Scrutiny Committee, which is comprised of members of the Resident Engagement Panel and interested Lewisham Homes residents.

Tower Hamlets	10000+	Have active T&RAs but most engagement activity is built around resident working groups which are themed by service area: Repairs, Environment; ASB; Customer Service; and Leasehold Development; There are 5 service areas. Each service area group contains both LH and tenants except the Leasehold group which only has LHs.
Enfield	Info through web pages only as difficult to contact via telephone.	Most activity is through The Federation of Enfield Residents' & Allied Associations

6. Key References

- Tenant Central How to guides how to guides - <http://www.tenantcentral.org.uk/how-to-guides/>
- Tenant Central Case Studies <http://www.tenantcentral.org.uk/resources/case-studies/>
- TPAS (2015) Leasehold Engagement Guide <http://www.tpas.org.uk/ebooks>
- TPAS (2017) National Survey Summary <http://www.tpas.org.uk/ebooks>
- TPAS National Engagement Standards <http://www.tpas.org.uk/ebooks>
- Hanover Housing (2016) Resident Engagement Strategy <http://www.hanover.org.uk/media/6738711/Resident-Engagement-Strategy-Final.pdf>
- University of Birmingham (2016) Tenant Involvement in Governance: Models and Practices <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/SPSW/Housing/2016/evidence-review-tenant-involvement-in-governance-march-2016.pdf>
- University of Westminster: AmicusHorizon (2015) Success, Satisfaction and Scrutiny: The business benefits of involving residents. <http://housingrights.org.uk/sites/default/files/Success%20Satisfaction%20and%20Scrutiny%20-%20summary%20March%202015.pdf>
- Tenants Leading Change DCLG (2015) An Investment not a Cost: The business benefits of resident involvement. <https://nationaltenants.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/tlc-dclg-executive-summary.pdf>
- LGIU and Mears Group (2013) Strong Foundations: Building better dialogue between tenants and landlords <http://www.lgiu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Strong-Foundations-pdf.pdf>

Appendix B - Engagement and Satisfaction with Southwark Council: Secondary data analysis report

Summary

This analysis asks two questions: firstly, what relationship is there between tenant and homeowner engagement and satisfaction with the council and council services? Secondly, how do local characteristics (such as deprivation, housing tenure and demographic traits) affect engagement and customer satisfaction? The STAR survey was run from May 2016 to March 2017 and sheds new light on these questions. Specifically, the analysis indicates:

- Engagement and satisfaction have a strong and positive association. This finding is robust to different measures of satisfaction, different measures of engagement, and different statistical models.
- On average, satisfaction scores are 4 points higher (on a scale of 0-25 with mean of 17) when the respondent believes the council listens to residents.
- The STAR survey does not allow for causal inference, meaning we cannot claim that higher engagement caused higher satisfaction. Indeed, we cannot tell if the relationship runs in both directions, or just one direction. However, it is clear that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between engagement and satisfaction.
- The strength of this relationship varies by age, ethnicity, disability group, and tenancy type, but not with gender. For example, the link between engagement (council listens) and satisfaction is strongest for those aged 18-34, and weakest for those aged over 65, suggesting that for older people engagement is less important as a determinant of overall satisfaction.

The report is structured as follows. Section 1 presents descriptive statistics of the 2,394 STAR respondents included in the analysis. Section 2 details the outcome variables and how they were constructed from the data. Section 3 presents statistical analysis of the relationship between engagement and satisfaction. A statistical appendix provides further detail on the analysis and limitations.

1. The STAR survey

a. Characteristics of the respondents

The STAR dataset contained 2394 responses from unique properties.²⁹ Women made up 59% of the sample. The modal age group was 35-50 (42%), and the modal ethnic group was white (45%). More detail is set out in Table 1. Tenants made up 55% of the sample and leaseholders 45%, with the majority of respondents being Council leaseholders or tenants (76%). Disability or health problems were cited by 24% of respondents.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics		
	N	%
Gender		
Missing data	592	25
Of available data: Male	734	41
Female	1068	59
Age		
Missing data	621	26
Of available data: < 18	2	0.1
19-34	292	16
35-50	741	42
51-64	453	26
> 65	285	16
Ethnicity		
Missing data	673	27
Of available data: White	787	44.8
Black	609	34.7
Asian	167	9.5
Other	194	11
Tenancy Type		
Council leaseholder	863	36
Council tenant	957	40
TMO leaseholder	204	8.5
TMO tenant	370	15.5
Disability or Health Problems		
Missing data	667	28
Of available data: No	1308	76
Yes	419	24

Notes: Missing data includes 'prefer not to say'. Male and female % reported for sample where data is available (n=1802). Age group % reported for sample where data is available (n=1773). Ethnicity % reported for sample where data is available (n=1757). 'Other' ethnicity includes Latin American, mixed ethnicity, and other ethnicities. Disability % reported for sample where data is available (n=1727).

²⁹ See appendix for more detail on sample size.

b. Geographical coverage

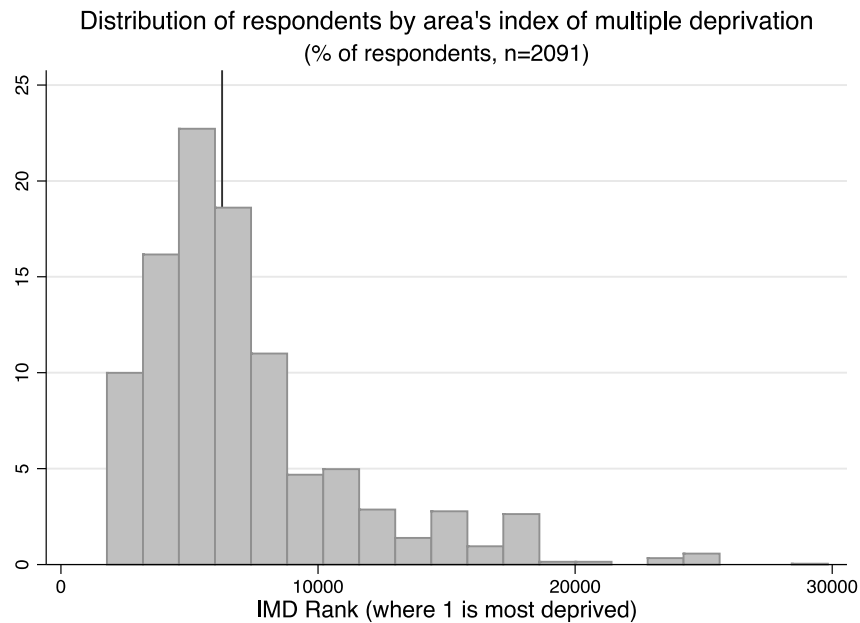
The survey reached all 21 wards across Southwark, with a larger share of respondents from Chaucer, South Camberwell, Grange and South Bermondsey. The lowest share of respondents came from Camberwell Green, East Dulwich and Surrey Docks (see Table 2).

	N	%	IMD rank (mean)
Brunswick Park	144	6.9	7384
Camberwell Green	13	0.6	4941
Cathedrals	38	1.8	8457
Chaucer	202	9.7	6663
College	61	2.9	10269
East Dulwich	15	0.7	16946
East Walworth	111	5.3	4567
Faraday	116	5.6	5431
Grange	174	8.3	7923
Livesey	149	6.7	4492
Newington	127	6.1	5608
Nunhead	127	6.1	5331
Peckham	56	2.7	4678
Peckham Rye	55	2.6	11641
Riverside	56	2.7	11154
Rotherhithe	134	6.4	4913
South Bermondsey	158	7.6	5558
South Camberwell	188	9.0	9983
Surrey Docks	27	1.3	6271
The Lane	100	4.8	6213
Village	49	2.3	20128
Missing data	303	12.7%	

Notes: Lower IMD rank indicates greater deprivation. IMD data available for 166 lower super output areas (Isa) across the 21 wards. See statistical appendix on sample size.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents across the 166 local areas that have an index of multiple deprivation ranking (where a lower number indicates higher deprivation). The median rank is indicated by the black line, and shows that most respondents were clustered in higher deprivation areas, with smaller proportions of respondents from areas with lower deprivation.

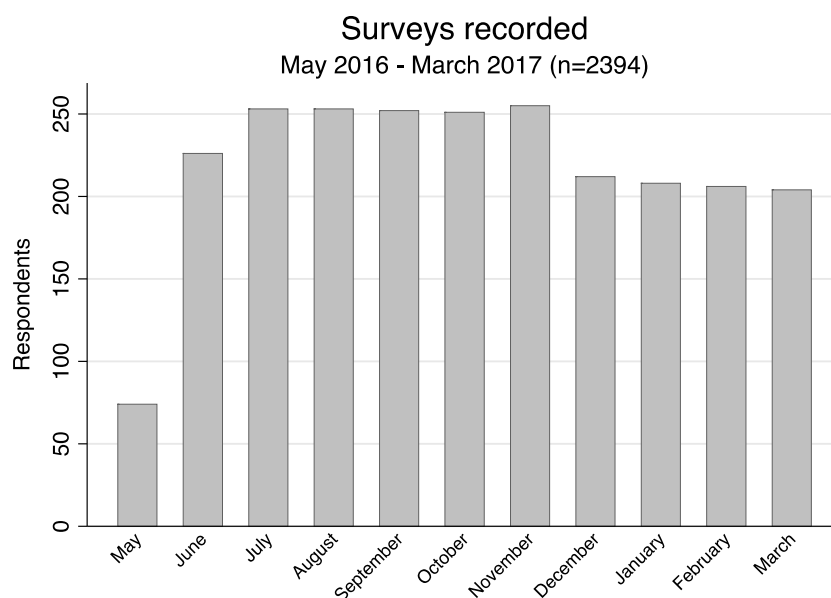
Figure 1



c. Seasonal coverage

The survey captured broadly equal numbers of participants across the 11 months it was running, with a notably exception during the first month (May 2016).

Figure 2



2. Outcome variables

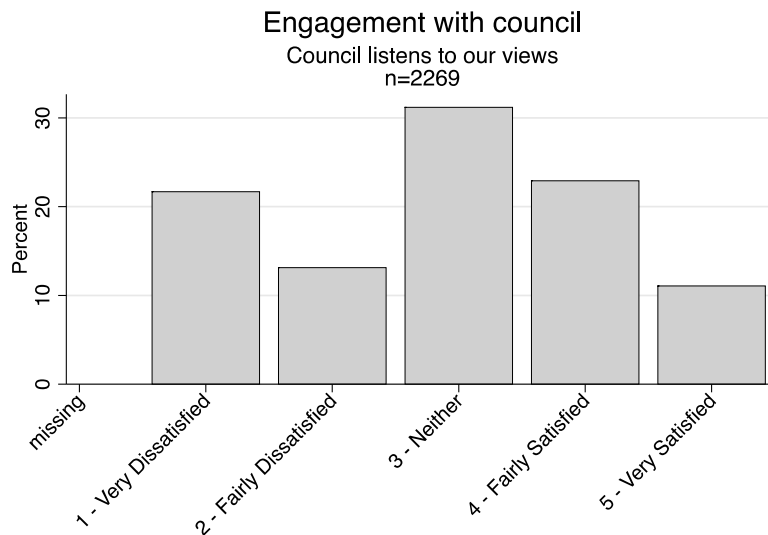
a. Engagement

Engagement is measured in the STAR data through the proxy variable 'the council listens to our views', rated on a 5-point Likert scale from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. In this sense,

engagement is a reflection of how satisfied residents are with the way the council engages with them, rather than alternative variables that might measure how actively involved residents are with the council.

32% of respondents scored this statement positively (fairly or very satisfied). The modal answer was 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', and 5% of respondents did not provide an answer.

Figure 3



The STAR data allows for engagement scores to be broken down by respondent characteristics. Table 4 highlights that engagement varies by gender, age, ethnicity, tenancy type and whether the respondent cites disability or health problems.

Table 4: Engagement by respondent characteristics			
		Mean	Std Dev
Gender	Male	0.31	0.46
	Female	0.35	0.48
Age	< 18	0	0
	19-34	0.30	0.46
	35-50	0.30	0.46
	51-64	0.36	0.48
	> 65	0.45	0.50
Ethnicity	White	0.34	0.47
	Black	0.37	0.48
	Asian	0.28	0.45
	Other	0.26	0.44
Tenancy Type	Council leaseholder	0.22	0.41
	Council tenant	0.43	0.49
	TMO leaseholder	0.18	0.38
	TMO tenant	0.39	0.49
Disability or Health Problems	No	0.32	0.47
	Yes	0.37	0.48

Notes: hypothesis testing suggests statistically significant associations between engagement scores and gender, being a leaseholder, being older, being of black

or white ethnicity, and reporting disability or health problems.

Triangulation with the Residents Survey 2013-16

An alternative data source, the Residents Survey, offers different proxy measures for engagement that were collected over 2013-16, summarised in Table 3 below. As with the STAR measure, engagement is once again focused on council outreach rather than citizen action. Comparison with the Residents Survey allows for triangulation with the more recent STAR data.

The older data suggests higher levels of engagement when measured as being informed of services, benefits and future plans; but lower engagement when measured as being able to influence decisions and having their views taken account of. The rank order of these measures remains broadly stable, with one exception: the sense that residents can influence decisions fell from over 50% to below 40% between September 2014 and January 2015. Around the same time, the measures of how well residents were informed began to improve (Figure 4).

Across each of the 4 Residents Survey measures, the share of respondents providing a positive response on engagement is higher than the more recent STAR data. The two waves of the Residents Survey undertaken in June and September 2016, offer the closest overlap period with the STAR survey. The Residents Survey reports higher levels of engagement in general.³⁰ For example, 42% of men agree the council is engaged (compared to 31% of men surveyed in the STAR exercise). The measure most closely related to the STAR dataset, ‘the council takes account of residents’ views when making decision’, is declining over the period 2013-16, and it is plausible that the STAR dataset picks up this lower engagement as a reflection of an ongoing downward trend. The exception to this trend is that respondents reporting a disability are more satisfied with council engagement in STAR (40% compared to 34%), while those without a disability appear more satisfied with the council in the Residents Survey (41% compared to 34%).

A key difference in the surveys is housing type, with 45% of Residents Survey respondents in social housing, 33% homeowners and 12% private tenants. However, engagement is scored at a consistent 41% across each of the housing groups (suggesting this is not driving the difference in engagement outcomes).

Table 3: Measures of Engagement across Southwark 2013-16

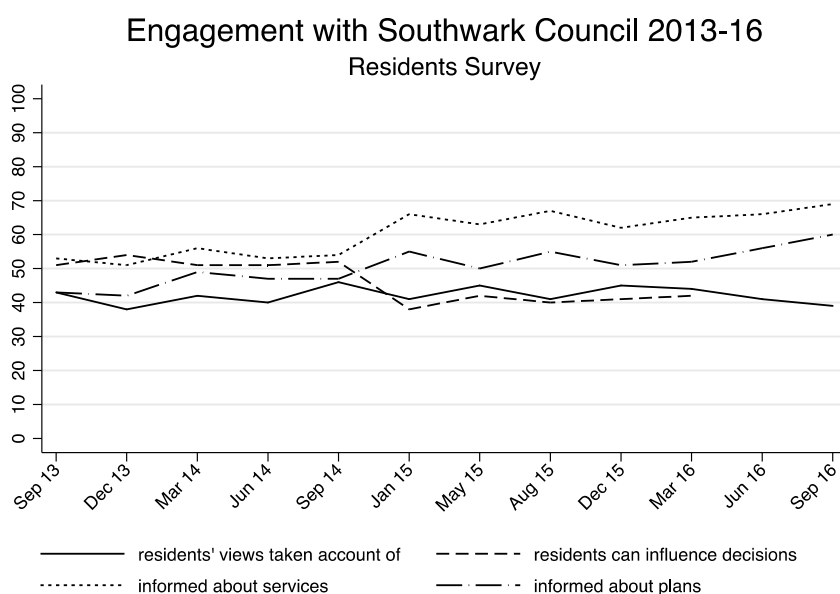
Engagement proxy	N	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
1. The council keeps residents informed about services and benefits (%)	6340, 12 waves	60.4	6.5	51	69
2. The council keeps residents informed about future plans (%)	6340, 12 waves	50.6	5.4	42	60
3. Resident can influence local decisions (%)	5275, 10 waves	46.2	6.1	38	54
4. The council takes account of residents’ views when making decisions (%)	6340, 12 waves	42.1	2.5	38	46

Notes: indicators 1 and 2 count ‘fairly informed’ and ‘very informed’ as a share of all

³⁰ Measured as agreement with statement ‘the council takes account of residents’ views when making decisions’. Full details on the June and Sept 2016 Residents Survey data can be found in the appendix.

responses, indicators 3 and 4 count 'tend to agree' and 'strongly agree' with statement. Range given of mean values over available waves of data collection.

Figure 4



b. Satisfaction

Satisfaction is measured through 5 variables from the STAR data, summarised in Table 4. Each measures satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Repairs and maintenance records the lowest proportion of respondents who are fairly or very satisfied (37%). Neighbourhood satisfaction records the highest proportion of satisfied residents (75%). Figure 5 provides a graphical comparison, and Figure 6 drills down on the lowest ranking of these satisfaction measures: repairs and maintenance. Further detail on the breakdown of scores for the other indicators is set out in the statistical appendix.

Table 4: Satisfaction with Southwark Council

Rank order		Fairly or very satisfied (%)	N	Missing (%)
5	Repairs and maintenance	894 (37)	2337	57 (2.4)
4	Value for money	1145 (48)	2377	17 (0.7)
3	Service provided	1376 (57)	2375	19 (0.8)
2	Quality of home	1384 (58)	2354	40 (1.7)
1	Neighbourhood	1783 (75)	2367	27 (1.1)

Notes: Binary measures of respondents 'fairly satisfied' or 'very satisfied' against each satisfaction measure.

Figure 5

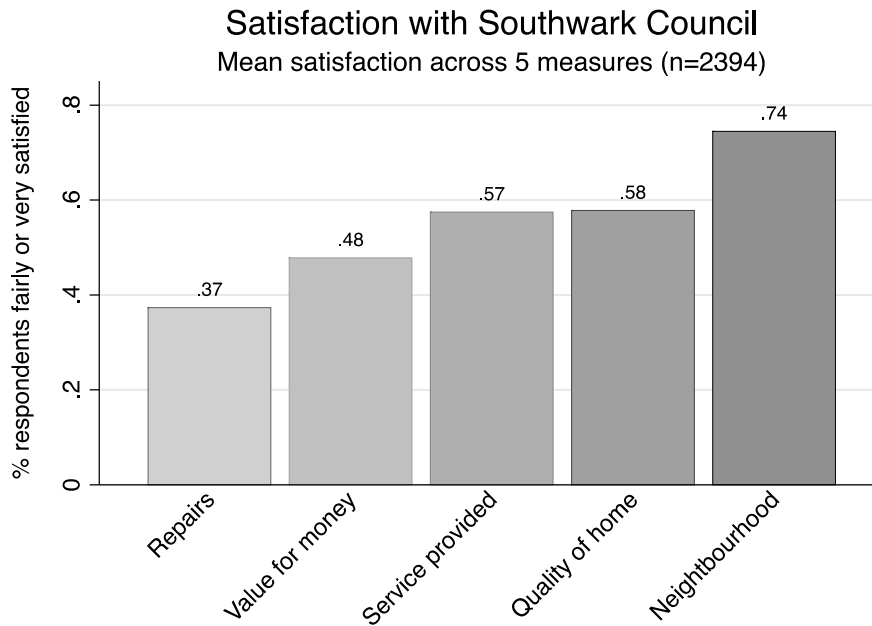
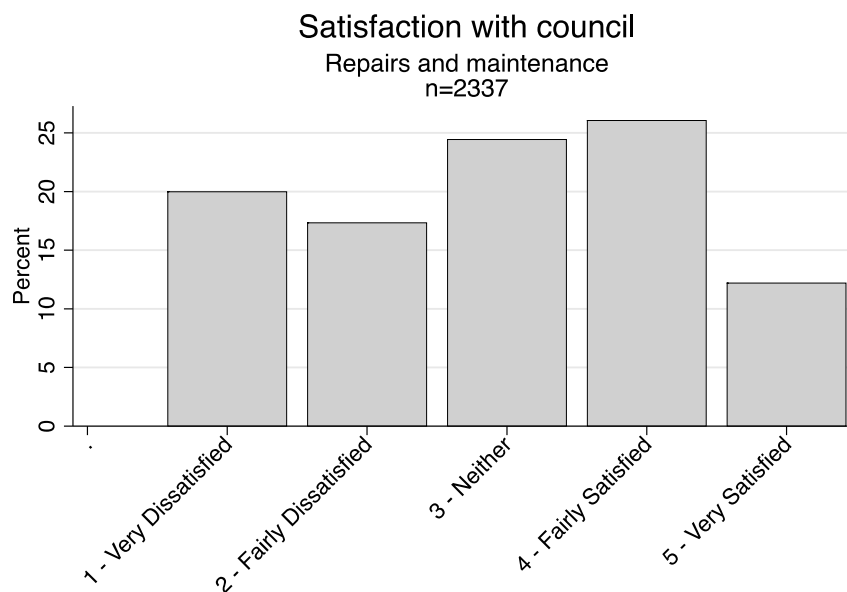


Figure 6



Average measures of satisfaction from the earlier Residents Survey (2013-14) broadly corroborates the findings of the STAR survey. For example, the highest satisfaction score is with Southwark as a place to live, which fits with the high neighbourhood satisfaction in the STAR data. Conversely, value for money is scored lowest in the Residents Survey, with only 43% of respondents agreeing; and this too fits with the data emerging from the STAR survey.

Table 5: Measures of Satisfaction across Southwark (2013-14)

	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
Engagement proxy				
Satisfaction overall	66.8	1.5	65	69
Value for money	43.4	1.5	41	45
As a place to live	82.4	1.9	80	85
Satisfaction with housing	61.8	3.1	58	65
Satisfaction with repairs	57.8	2.2	55	61

c. Creating an index of satisfaction scores

An aggregate measure of the 5 satisfaction variables was created, adding the scores for each dimension. Roughly speaking, the higher the score of the index variable, the higher the overall satisfaction. Missing data is scored 0, but accounts for a small portion of satisfaction responses.

Table 6: Satisfaction index

	N	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
Satisfaction index	2394	16.9	4.3	0	25

This overall satisfaction index varies by respondent characteristic. For example, leaseholders report lower satisfaction than tenants. Older respondents, women, and white respondents report higher satisfaction.

Table 7: Satisfaction by respondent characteristics

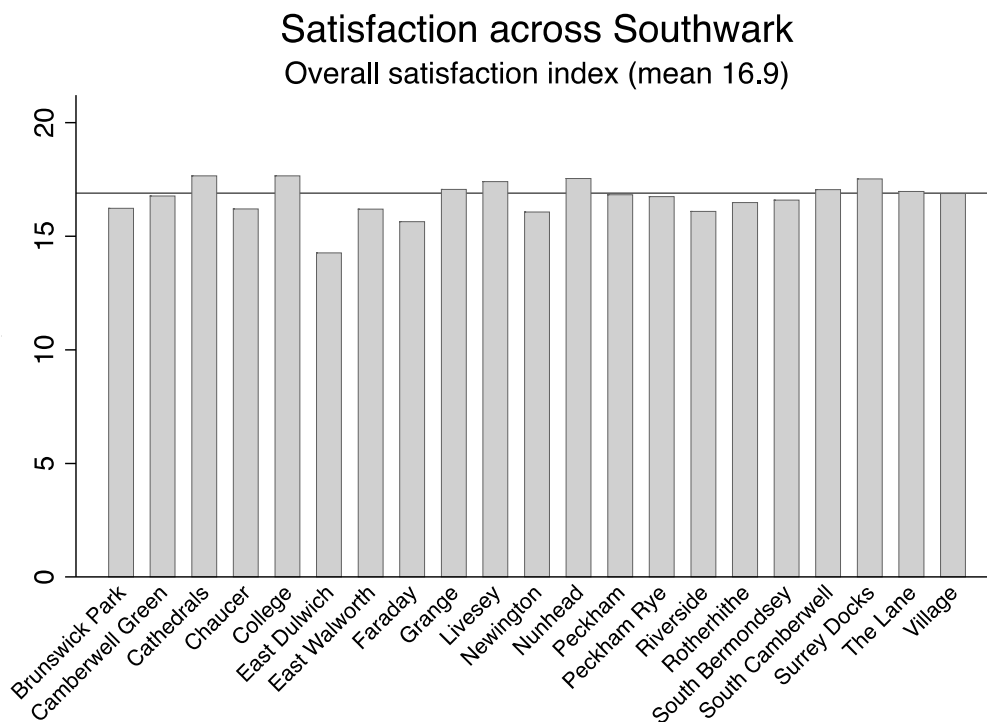
	Mean	Std Dev
Gender		
Male	16.6	4.3
Female	17.2	4.3
Age		
< 18	12.5	2.1
19-34	16.7	4.5
35-50	16.5	4.2
51-64	17.1	4.2
> 65	18.7	4.0
Ethnicity		
White	17.4	4.0
Black	16.9	4.6
Asian	16.3	4.2
Other	16.6	4.2
Tenancy Type		
Council leaseholder	15.1	4.0
Council tenant	18.0	4.4
TMO leaseholder	16.6	4.0
TMO tenant	17.9	3.8
Disability or Health Problems		
No	16.9	4.3
Yes	17.5	4.2

Notes: hypothesis testing suggests statistically significant associations between satisfaction scores and gender, being a leaseholder, reporting disability or health problems, and ethnicity (white).

As wards contain more than one lower super output area, which is used to identify local deprivation, a comparison across wards offers slightly different information to the analysis between deprivation, satisfaction and engagement (reported in section 3). Within certain limitations, the geographical analysis makes two points:³¹

- Satisfaction varies across wards. Figure 7 shows satisfaction using the overall index by ward. The highest scores are reported in the wards of College, Cathedrals, Nunhead, Surrey Docks and Livesey. East Dulwich ward reports the lowest overall score.
- Bivariate regression of wards against satisfaction and engagement responses suggests a significant association between locality and engagement ($p=0.000$) and to a lesser extent with satisfaction ($p=0.083$).

Figure 7



³¹ This data has not been checked for distribution of missing satisfaction outcomes by ward. A higher number of missing satisfaction variables could give a misleading impression of satisfaction varying by ward. Further, some wards have a small number of responses, for example East Dulwich ($n=15$) and Camberwell Green ($n=13$). This data is presented for illustration.

3. Statistical analysis

a. What relationship is there between tenant and homeowner engagement and satisfaction with the council and council services?

Engagement is positively associated with satisfaction (to a high degree of statistical significance). This finding holds across all satisfaction measures, and when engagement is captured as a categorical variable.³² Moving to a positive response on engagement is associated with an improvement in overall satisfaction of 4.3 units, equivalent to one standard deviation on that index (panel A).

The statistical model improves its explanatory power as it controls for demographic and geographic covariates (columns 2 and 3). The analysis further tests this finding using alternative satisfaction measures. Binary variables for ‘satisfied with repairs and maintenance’ and ‘would recommend Southwark as a landlord’ are presented in panels B and C. More detail on the statistical model underpinning the regression analysis is set out in the appendix.

Table 8: Engagement is positively related to satisfaction

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A: Satisfaction index			
Engagement	4.60 ^{***} (0.156)	4.15 ^{***} (0.158)	4.34 ^{***} (0.172)
Demographic covariates	No	Yes	Yes
Geographic covariates	No	No	Yes
N	2394	2394	2091
R ²	0.246	0.303	0.312
Panel B: Repairs and maintenance score			
Engagement	1.13 ^{***} (0.06)	1.06 ^{***} (0.06)	1.12 ^{***} (0.07)
Demographic covariates	No	Yes	Yes
Geographic covariates	No	No	Yes
N	2394	2394	2091
Pseudo R ²	0.127	0.157	0.169
Panel C: Recommend as landlord			
Engagement	1.16 ^{***} (0.08)	1.07 ^{***} (0.08)	1.09 ^{***} (0.09)
Demographic covariates	No	Yes	Yes
Geographic covariates	No	No	Yes
N	2394	2394	2091
R ²	0.099	0.172	0.160

Notes: Column 1 presents bivariate regression, column 2 includes demographic characteristics, and column 3 further includes ward and multiple deprivation data. Panel A applies OLS and panels B and C apply probit regressions. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance testing: *** denotes $p < 0.00$, ** $p < 0.01$ and * $p < 0.05$.

³² In these robustness checks, satisfaction is significantly associated with categories scoring engagement as very dissatisfied, fairly satisfied and very satisfied.

b. Regression analysis: How do local characteristics affect engagement and customer satisfaction?

The statistical model is run for each respondent sub-group separately, and coefficients are compared as measures of the strength of the relationship. A larger coefficient indicates engagement is more strongly related to the overall satisfaction index.

Table 9: The Engagement-Satisfaction Relationship Across Sub-Groups					
	Sub-group	Coefficient (Std Err)		N	R ²
Gender	Male	4.23 ^{***}	(0.24)	636	0.291
	Female	4.32 ^{***}	(0.25)	912	0.351
Age	18-34	4.82 ^{***}	(0.50)	248	0.301
	35-50	4.04 ^{***}	(0.32)	654	0.256
	51-64	4.56 ^{***}	(0.37)	392	0.348
	> 65	3.54 ^{***}	(0.43)	233	0.400
Ethnicity	White	3.40 ^{***}	(0.27)	686	0.337
	Black	5.20 ^{***}	(0.36)	491	0.363
	Asian	4.70 ^{***}	(0.67)	148	0.274
Tenancy Type	Council leaseholder	4.22 ^{***}	(0.30)	856	0.195
	Council tenant	4.66 ^{***}	(0.23)	922	0.330
	TMO leaseholder	2.66 ^{***}	(0.67)	193	0.139
	TMO tenant	3.86 ^{***}	(0.78)	120	0.257
Disability	No	3.93 ^{***}	(0.24)	1137	0.305
	Yes	4.85 ^{***}	(0.38)	341	0.385
IMD Rank	Low	4.32 ^{***}	(0.24)	1054	0.343
	High	4.40 ^{***}	(0.25)	1037	0.290

*Notes: Satisfaction measured as overall index, engagement as binary variable. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance testing: *** denotes $p < 0.00$, ** $p < 0.01$ and * $p < 0.05$. Demographic and geographic covariates included.*

This analysis indicates:

- Engagement has a stronger association with satisfaction among women.
- The relationship varies with age, with the weakest relationship amongst respondents over 65 years.
- The relationship varies with ethnicity, being weakest amongst white respondents and strongest amongst black respondents.
- Engagement is more strongly associated with satisfaction among Council leaseholders and tenants (relative to TMO).
- The relationship is stronger amongst those with a disability.
- There is no meaningful effect from local deprivation on the engagement-satisfaction nexus.

Table 10 shows that the strength of the association between engagement and satisfaction with repairs and maintenance once again varies by individual characteristics:

- A small gender-differential is apparent in the engagement-satisfaction relationship, with engagement being slightly less important for women.
- Engagement is most strongly associated with satisfaction for the youngest age group (18-34 years).

- Modest differences are apparent across ethnic groups, with black respondents showing a stronger association between engagement and satisfaction.
- Leaseholders in general, and TMO leaseholders in particular, show weaker associations between engagement and satisfaction.
- The engagement-satisfaction relationship is more pronounced for those reporting a disability or health problem.
- No differences are apparent across areas above and below the median deprivation score.

Table 10: The Engagement-Satisfaction Relationship Across Sub-Groups

	Sub-group	Coefficient (Std Err)	N	Pseudo-R ²
Gender	Male	0.453 ^{***} (0.04)	636	0.177
	Female	0.438 ^{***} (0.03)	912	0.195
Age	18-34	0.523 ^{***} (0.07)	248	0.199
	35-50	0.394 ^{***} (0.04)	654	0.144
	51-64	0.466 ^{***} (0.05)	392	0.212
	> 65	0.472 ^{***} (0.06)	225	0.231
Ethnicity	White	0.424 ^{***} (0.04)	686	0.179
	Black	0.456 ^{***} (0.04)	491	0.181
	Asian	0.425 ^{***} (0.09)	145	0.161
Tenancy Type	Council leaseholder	0.356 ^{***} (0.04)	856	0.122
	Council tenant	0.459 ^{***} (0.03)	922	0.167
	TMO leaseholder	0.321 ^{**} (0.10)	185	0.117
	TMO tenant	0.411 ^{***} (0.10)	117	0.166
Disability	No	0.412 ^{***} (0.03)	1137	0.159
	Yes	0.552 ^{***} (0.05)	341	0.265
IMD Rank	Low	0.423 ^{***} (0.03)	1054	0.183
	High	0.423 ^{***} (0.03)	1037	0.159

*Notes: Satisfaction measured as binary variable in relation to repairs and maintenance, engagement as binary variable. Robust standard errors clustered at individual level in parentheses. Significance testing: *** denotes $p < 0.00$, ** $p < 0.01$ and * $p < 0.05$. Demographic and geographic covariates included, but only the engagement coefficient is reported for brevity.*

Statistical appendix

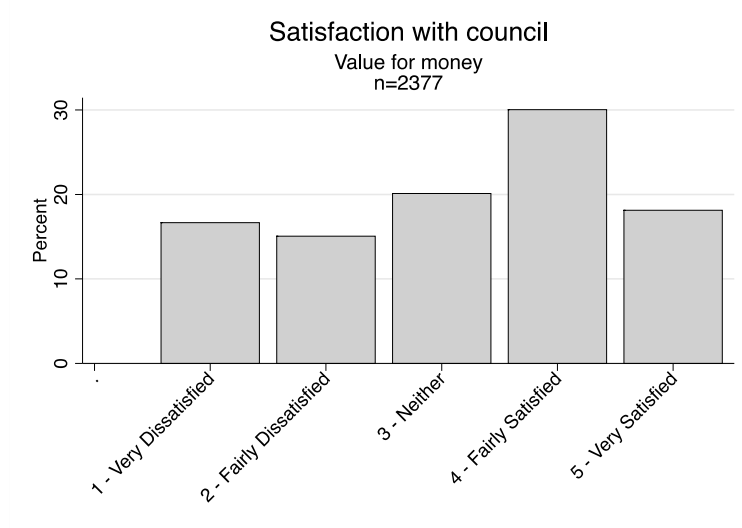
Sample size

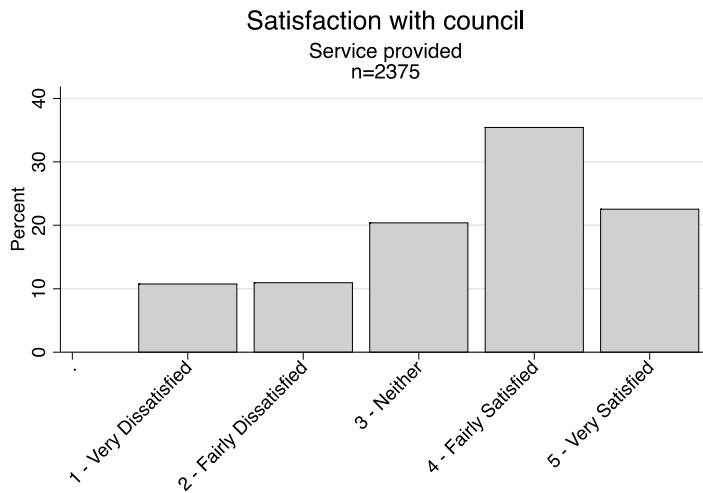
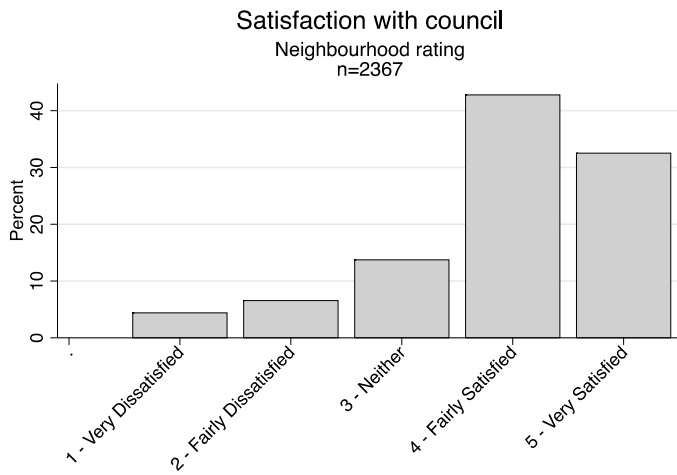
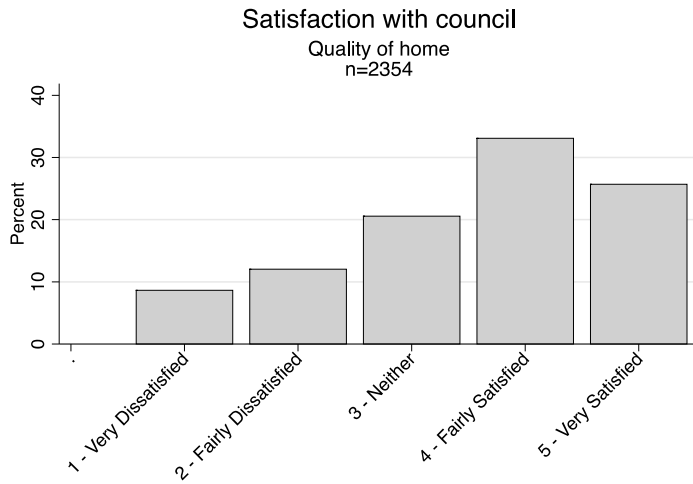
The original STAR dataset contained 2,462 observations. 47 properties were found to have been surveyed more than once (with some properties up to 6 times). Repeat surveys were dropped from the analysis, with the general rule being to keep the first survey response. However, where it was evident that a fault in the phone connection may have caused the survey to be repeated, the second survey was included. This applied to a small number of cases where the repeat survey was minutes after the original, and the original contained no data. With 78 repeat surveys deleted, the effective sample size was 2,384. Baseline survey data (for example Table 1) is reported on this sample for demographic characteristics. Baseline and outcome variables registered missing data, so some graphs may give different sample sizes.

For geographic data, properties were matched through their property reference number (PRN) to a unique property reference number (UPRN) using data provided by Southwark. This matching exercise was successful for 2,099 observations. UPRNs were then matched to local super output areas (LSOAs) in order to identify the multiple deprivation score for that local area. This matching exercise was successful for 2,091 observations. Geographical coverage (Table 2) and regression analysis using IMD data therefore report a smaller sample.

Satisfaction measures (STAR)

The graphs below provide further detail on how the council was rated on value for money, neighbourhood quality, quality of home, services provided, and repairs and maintenance using the 5-point Likert scale.





Engagement measures (Residents Survey)

Who agrees the council is engaged?				
Residents Survey (n=1065)			STAR Survey (n=984)	
June and September 2016			June, July, August, September 2016	
Gender	Men	42%	Men	30%
	Women	39%	Women	40%
Age	16-24	33%	18-34	34%
	25-34	37%	-	-
	35-44	46%	35-50	33%
	45-59	40%	-	-
	60+	40%	65+	49%
Ethnicity	White	40%	White	35%
	BME	41%	Black and Asian	39%
Housing type	Social housing	41%	Lease and tenant	35%
	Home owner	41%	-	-
	Private tenant	42%	-	-
Disability	Yes	34%	Yes	40%
	No	41%	No	34%

Notes: Resident Survey demographic characteristics from Southwark, aggregated at wave level. Data on waves 11 and 12 assumed to refer to June 2016 and September 2016 respectively, based on wave 10 being March 2016.

Statistical model on engagement and satisfaction

The statistical model underlying the regression analysis takes the following form:

$$\text{Satisfaction} = \alpha + \beta.\text{engagement} + X + \xi$$

Where:

- Satisfaction is measured through the overall satisfaction index, the repairs and maintenance satisfaction binary variable, and the binary variable on recommending Southwark as a landlord.
- Engagement is proxied by the variable 'how well the council listens to the views of residents'. This is measured as a binary variable (positive response) and robustness checks also measured it as a categorical variable (with all 5 Likert responses).
- Coefficient β tells us the sign, size and statistical significance of the relationship between engagement and satisfaction.
- Covariates X measure demographic characteristics and geographic variables. Demographic characteristics include age, gender, ethnicity, self-reported disability or health issues, and tenancy type. Geography is captured by the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) rank, based on local super output area.
- Robustness tests including ward as an additional geographic variable showed the variable adds little explanatory value (R-squared), and the estimates do not change (coefficient β does not change its value or significance). It is not included in the headline models reported in the paper.
- OLS regression is used to estimate β where the satisfaction index is used, and Probit regression where a binary variable is used to measure satisfaction.
- Robust standard errors are clustered at the individual level.

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Limitations of the analysis

The cross-sectional STAR dataset cannot be used to ascribe cause and effect. Regression analysis points to a positive and significant relationship between engagement scores and satisfaction scores, but cannot say whether one caused the other. Sub-group analysis, similarly, shows associations only and not causal effect.

The analysis has made operational choices in order to model engagement, using the proxy variable described above. This was the only feasible way of measuring engagement using the STAR dataset. Future analysis may want to capture engagement through alternative means, and triangulate with the proxy used here. For example, to nuance this analysis in future, an alternative definition of engagement could be agreed ahead of data collection, which might measure 'resident engagement' through their observed actions (such as civic action and awareness), and 'council engagement' through their observed actions (if these actions offer variation across the borough or in comparison with other boroughs). These alternative measures could be analysed alongside 'perceived engagement of the council', which is the distinct measure taken from the STAR data.

Significance tests did not correct for multiple hypotheses testing, and the higher risk of false discovery should be noted.

Table 4 presented a count of missing data across satisfaction ratings, which ranged from 0.8% (on service provided) to 2.4% (on repairs and maintenance). This level of missing data is judged unlikely to affect the validity of the statistical exercise. In creating binary variables for satisfaction, the analysis codes respondents with no outcome data as 'not satisfied', to preserve sample size. Robustness checks using the categorical satisfaction variables (with 5 categories to represent satisfaction outcomes, not 2 categories as with the binary variable) and excluding missing outcomes suggest no change to the overall findings between satisfaction and engagement.

The triangulation of STAR findings with the Residents Survey is necessarily limited by the fact they drew on different samples. The Residents Survey included 33% homeowners, for example, while the STAR survey was targeted at tenants and leaseholders. In future, to offer more robust comparisons across the datasets, Residents Survey data could be provided with responses disaggregated to the individual level and tagged with UPRNs and demographic characteristics. This would allow for closer comparison between STAR and the Residents Survey to corroborate findings by respondent sub-groups.

Data sources

STAR and Residents Survey datasets from Southwark Council. IMD data from London datastore (2015) <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/indices-of-deprivation-2015> accessed May 2017.

Appendix C - Benchmarking Report

There is limited publicly available benchmarking evidence which allows us to compare Southwark's performance and financial investment in tenant engagement with other providers. The limited information which has been gathered suggests that Southwark's satisfaction rates (for both housing overall and the ability of tenants and leaseholder to have a say) are well below average and that while spend is well above average this is due to the large numbers of properties in Southwark's housing stock. Spend on engagement on a per household basis is in line with average. The data demonstrates that while there is a strong link between overall satisfaction with housing services and residents feeling that they are listened to and their views acted upon. There is no correlation between how much is spent on engagement and how well residents feel listened to – suggesting it is not how much that is spent, but how the investment in tenant engagement is used which is more important.

1. Method

Social Engine searched 21 different housing provider websites, and contacted 15 different housing providers to access benchmarking data on satisfaction and level of spend relating to tenant and leaseholder engagement.

Housing providers were asked to share the following information:

1. Satisfaction with the housing service (ideally the STAR survey measure (Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by [your social housing provider]?), or another similar measure)
2. Influence (ideally the STAR survey measure (How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that [your social housing provider] listens to your views and acts upon them?))
3. Total number of properties (including both tenants and leaseholders)
4. Total spend on tenant and leaseholder engagement
5. Of engagement spend, the total spent on staff
6. Of engagement spend, the total spent on grants available for TRAs/leaseholders
7. Of engagement spend, the total spent on training for tenants/leaseholders

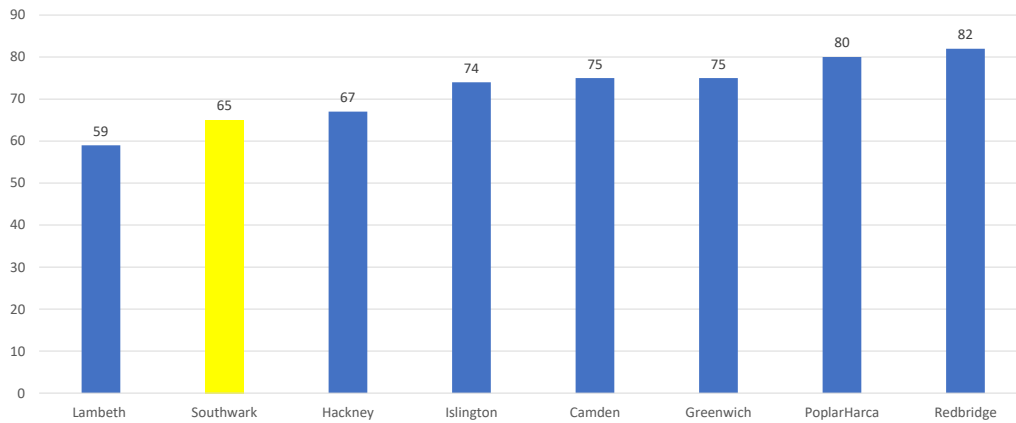
Using both direct contact and website searches we were only able to identify survey satisfaction data (questions 1 and 2 above) for 7 providers and financial comparison data was shared by 4 providers.

2. Findings

The chart below shows that of the housing providers where we were able to access STAR survey data Southwark's overall satisfaction rates with housing provision are among the lowest³³.

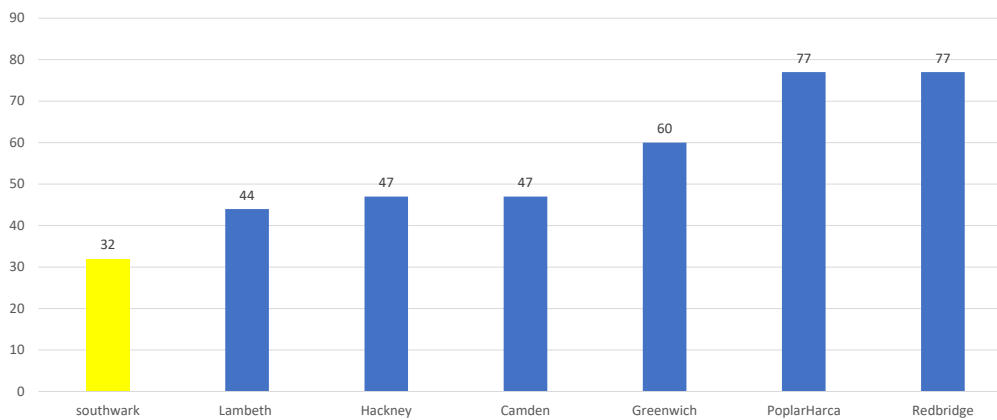
³³ Please note that the benchmark survey data was from across 2015-17 so years are not strictly comparable.
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Satisfaction with housing service overall

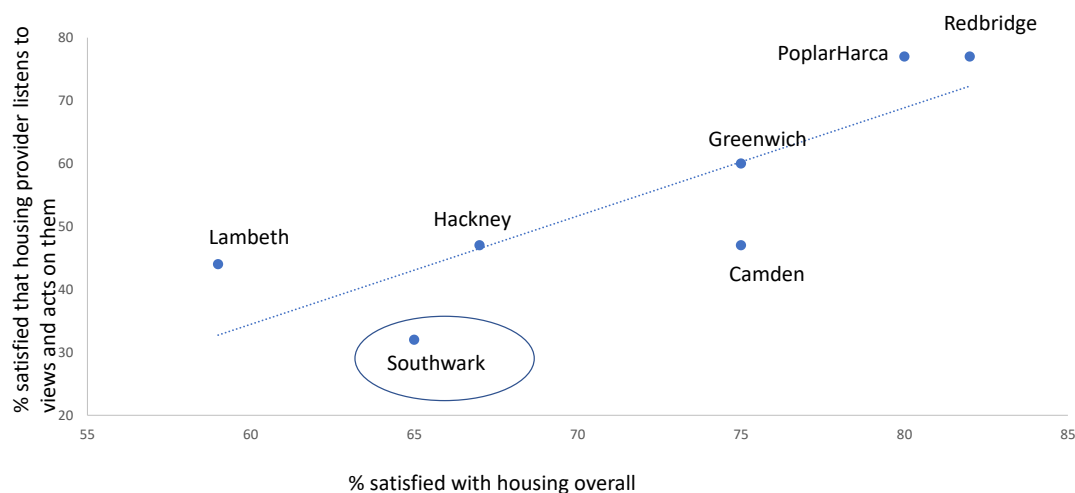


The chart below shows that the proportion of Southwark's leaseholders and tenants who are satisfied that their housing provider listens to their views and acts on them is some way below other peer authorities.

Satisfaction that housing provider listens to your views and acts on them



Overall satisfaction vs. feeling listened to



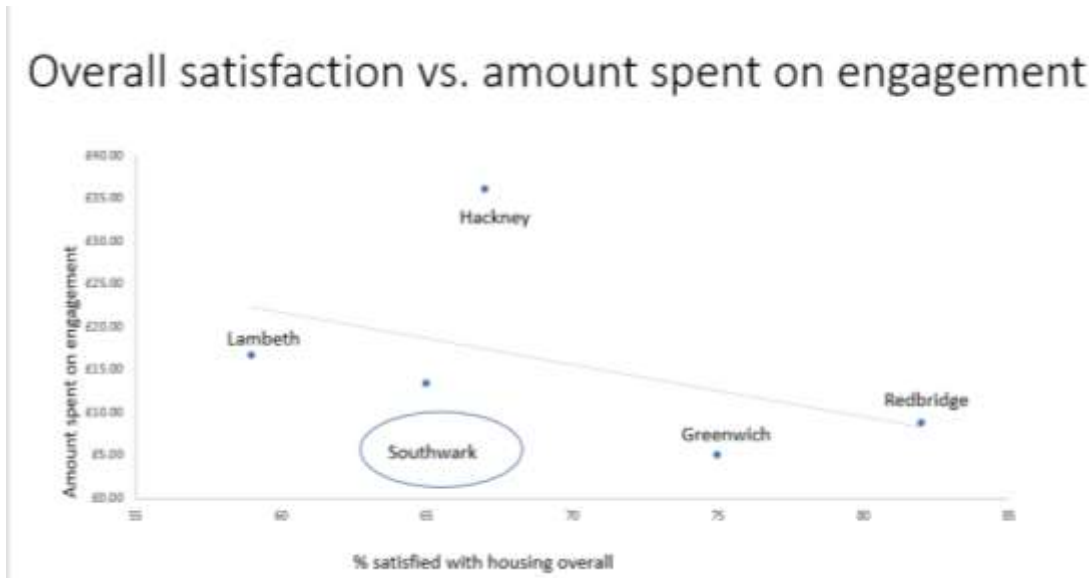
The chart above plots overall satisfaction against feeling listened to. It demonstrates an overall positive correlation; that is, authorities with higher levels of overall satisfaction with the housing service also record higher levels of satisfaction that the housing provider is listening to and acting on residents views. Authorities that are on the line (Hackney and Southwark) perform in line with what might be expected, that is, for the level of tenant satisfaction with engagement, the overall satisfaction level is statistically where you would expect it to be. Organisations above the line (Lambeth, PoplarHarca and Redbridge) have higher levels of satisfaction with engagement than you might expect given their levels of overall satisfaction, while organisations below the line (Southwark and Camden) are more satisfied overall than you might expect given their levels of satisfaction with engagement.

3. Financial benchmarking

How different housing providers finance and allocate money to their engagement structures has been difficult to ascertain. There is no consistency to data collection or analysis and we would caveat strongly the data which has been collected as different housing providers include very different things within the different headings. For example, Hackney's staffing cost includes an estimate of the proportion of time general housing staff spend on engagement in addition to housing engagement specialists; whereas we believe the Redbridge figures are likely to be an under-estimate.

	Hackney	Lambeth	Redbridge	Greenwich	Southwark
3. Total number of properties (tenants & l/holders)	30,892	35744	6929	21332	55000
4. Total spend on tenant & leaseholder engagement	£1,111,250	£593,000	£60,000	£105,489	£736,747
5. Of engagement spend, the total spent on staff	£604,455	£313,000	£51,500	£104,805	£198,759
5a. % spend on staff	54.40%	52.80%	85.80%	99.40%	27.00%
6. Of engagement spend, total spent on grants	£150,193	£210,000	£400	£684	£435,770
6a. % spend on grants to TRAs/leaseholders	13.52%	35.40%	0.70%	0.60%	59.10%
7. Of engagement spend, the total spent on training	DK	£70,000	£250	£0	£102,218
7a % spend on training	DK	11.80%	0.40%	0.00	13.90%
Amount spent per household on engagement	£35.97	£16.59	£8.66	£4.95	£13.40

Finally, the chart below shows that from the very limited benchmarking data we have been able to gather that there is a very weak negative relationship between the amount spent on engagement and how satisfied tenants and leaseholders are (that is organisations that spend more on engagement actually yield slightly lower overall satisfaction rates).



Appendix D - Southwark Young Advisors: Improving Tenant and Homeowner Engagement in Southwark Consultation

Southwark Young Advisors



'The voices of today making changes for tomorrow'

Founded in 2007, the Southwark Young Advisors sit within Southwark Council's Regulatory Services Team and are a diverse group of 20 young, trained professionals aged 16 to 23 years old - all sharing one aspiration - to create change within their local community. The team work locally, pan London and nationally (Under the National Young Advisors Charity) to share good practice and to learn from others. Southwark Young Advisors are locally recruited and have participated in extensive training which is an important part of equipping them with skills to work as young consultants/mentors.

Street and Community Engagement



As part of the consultation the young advisors carried out street engagement with young people aged 10 to 24 years old. The team asked the 9 questions to 130 young people. These young people were consulted as individuals as well as in groups at shopping centres, in parks, on estates/street.

Consultation Questions

1. Do you think young people's views (as tenants/homeowners or as part of a tenancy/property) are heard by the London Borough Southwark?

Yes

No

Reasons:

Feedback Question 1

A large majority of the young people engaged did not feel that the London Borough of Southwark took views of young people into account as tenants/homeowners or as part of a household within the Borough. The young people were quite vocal in relation to this question with a strong opinion that their views "did not matter". Some of the feedback included:

"We are never asked for our views /asked anything"

"Our views are often dismissed"

"No one listens"

" there are not many young homeowners our opinions don't matter"

"Youth are not heard"

"Our views are not valued"

"Young people's views are not valid to the older generation"

Those who did feel the local authority did engage well with young people felt:

"Southwark does listen as we are the next generation of homeowners and tenants"

"We can see the changes they are making"

2. How do you think the London Borough Southwark could improve the way in which they engage with young people? (e.g. different ways that they communicate with residents)

Examples:

Feedback Question 2

When asked how the London Borough of Southwark could improve the way they engaged with young people the young people came up with the following:

- Use social media - twitter, Facebook, Instagram
- Websites
 - Young person's website – including everything that matters to a young people/future generation not just focus on young people's activities/events.
 - YouTube - spread message via video's etc.
 - Update Southwark's website so it is 'youth proofed' and appeals to the younger person
- Use young people for example the young advisors to communicate messages via their street engagement work
- Knock on doors and get to know the younger generation

- Visit schools/colleges
- Youth based magazine
- Engage with young people at times when they are to be around on the street/in parks etc.
- Listen to a young person's views and implement the changes
- Youth events, consultations, seminars and meetings
- Appeal to the younger generation.



- 3. How much do you know about the different ways that young people can get involved and give their views on how the services from London Borough Southwark are provided? [e.g. Tenants and Residents Association's, Area Forums, Tenants Council, Homeowner Council]**

Examples:

Feedback Question 3

Many of the young people spoken to were not aware of the variety of ways that they as young people could get involved and give their views. Those who did know spoke of tenants and residents associations and the tenant's council. Many advised the team that they were aware of these through their parents/family and from literature they see around their estates or put through their doors. The young people spoke about this information not appealing to the younger members of their communities. Many young people felt that the local tenants and residents associations could do more to appeal to younger members of the community and in turn this would lead to them having more of a voice/view on their local areas. Some felt that when they had attended these types of meetings, they were not made to feel welcome and that their voices would not be heard.

- 4. Given the opportunity would you like to get more involved in giving your views from a young person's perspective (for example attending Tenants and Residents Association meetings, forums etc.)?**

Feedback Question 4

This question was more half and half – some extremely keen to be involved and some completely adamant that they would never be involved. Some stated that being involved “sounded interesting”, and that the local authority/tenants and residents associations needed to carry out a survey/questionnaires with local young people to tell them more and to encourage them to be involved. Many of the young people felt that lots could be done to engage young people into such forums including events, seminars and meetings aimed at young people and run by young people.



5. What things would be barriers/get in the way of you as a young person getting more involved?

Example:

Feedback Question 5

The young people engaged were very vocal on Question 5. They were very aware of what barriers there were and what would get in the way of a young person being involved:

- Their opinions would not be heard
- Peer pressure
- Lack of interest
- Lack of knowledge - around what the meetings were about, why they should get involved etc. - **“if we don’t understand we won’t be interested”**.
- Stereotypes of young people – the feeling that the older generation sees the younger generation as negative
- Communication barriers between young and old
- Not appealing to young people
- Not made to feel welcome - **“make young people feel more comfortable”**
- Nothing seems to change/happen

- Flexibility re: times/places where meetings are held

6. Would you know how to go about finding out how you could get involved more?

Yes

No

Reasons:

Feedback Question 6

This was a mixed bag. Some chose not to answer this question possibly through lack of knowledge. The following are examples of how they might be able to find out about how to get involved:

- Internet – general (Google, Siri, twitter)
- Council website
- One stop shop – many were aware of the one stop shop as they had been to one with their parents/family.

Again the young people voiced their concerns that even if they could find the information out this would not be aimed at young people of ‘call out’ to young people getting involved.

7. Have you heard of the tenants or homeowners fund?

Definitely

Possibly

No

What do you think should be the main priority for these funds? (E.g. Improvement to local area, Social/community events, Support or training for Tenants & Residents Association’s, support for local projects (please give examples i.e. getting people online, more for young people etc.), Meetings and conferences)

Please give details:

Feedback Question 7

A majority of the young people did not know what the ‘Tenants and Homeowners Fund’ was. They were unaware that there was money available to such forums like the T&RA’s to spend on making changes within their communities. They were aware that events, trips etc. were run however were unaware that they could have a voice on how money was spent within their community and on their streets/estates. The young people stressed that they felt that a lot of young people would not be aware of this and if they were then would be more inclined to get involved and speak out for the younger generation about what matters to them in their local areas. The young people felt that **tenants and residents associations/and those who run such forums needed better advice/training on how to engage young people**. They also felt that the **local authority needed to review/youth proof their resources** so that these were specifically aimed at engaging young people. One young person felt that the above were what were needed to **“make a lasting impact with young people”**.

8. What does it mean to be an active resident/tenant/homeowner? What types of activities does this include? How would you define it?

Please give details:

Feedback Question 8

Some of the young people chose not to answer this however a majority were fully aware of what it meant to them to be an active resident, tenant or homeowner. Most came up with the following:

- Volunteering at a local/community event
- Helping out within the local community
- Looking after the area where you live
- Attending meetings
- Being an active citizen
- Community cohesion

Southwark Young Advisor Focus Group

A team of 10 young advisors met prior to the street engagement to discuss and explore the questions and to come up with what could be done to improve tenant and homeowner engagement.

The team started the focus group by amending the original survey questions to appeal more to young people. The amended version is highlighted above under 'street and community engagement'. The team decided that the best places to focus the street engagement on would be:

- Street
- Estates
- Parks
- Shopping centres – with a focus on places where young people would go i.e. McDonalds, bowling and shops specifically aimed at young people/or where young people would go i.e. sports/clothing outlets.

The team felt that the best age group to focus the consultation on would be aged 10+ as age 10 is the age of criminal responsibility. They felt that young people would have an understanding of the questions and also would be aware of forums such as Tenants and residents associations etc. through their families/parents.

1. How much do you know about the different ways that tenants and homeowners can get involved and give their views on how the service from Southwark Council is provided? [e.g.: TRAs, Area Forums, Tenants Council, Homeowner Council]

AS a team the Southwark Young Advisors are more aware of the different ways that tenants and homeowners can get involved and give their views on how services are provided by the local authority as their host organisation is the local authority and has been since the scheme/national charity started back in 2007. Southwark has sat within the local authority's community safety/regulatory services team since 2007 and work very closely with teams and key partners/stakeholders. In addition the team work very closely with tenants and residents associations / area forums as they are commissioned to run projects for them within their local

areas. The team however are only aware of the tenants / homeowner fund through the engagement they do with the tenants and residents associations who sometime contribute towards events/trips etc.

2. Do you think the current structures work well? How do you think they could be improved?

The team have worked closely with a number of tenants and residents associations and feel that there could be some improvements. The team feel that not all the community are often represented especially young people. The team are able to engage young people where they are running projects however can often be discouraged due to issues that sometimes arise at meetings that they themselves have attended and would understand why young people may not be understood or welcomed into such meetings. The team feel that things could be improved by:

- The community as a whole should be represented and steps should be taken to try to get a group together that represents that community.
- All should have a voice whether they attend the meetings or not – the views of the whole community should be taken into account. For example. If a play park/ball court is to be built then all the community should be consulted in a door to door survey where someone speaks directly to each individual or through a freepost returnable survey.
- The team have limited information about the structures however are aware that there are chairs, vice chairs, secretary's and treasurers etc. They are also aware that minutes have to be taken as with most meetings. **The team wondered if minutes from meetings are distributed to the whole community.** As they felt this would be a good way to encourage others to get involved.

3. What could be done to improve the way that Southwark Council engages with Tenants and Homeowners? (e.g. different ways the Council communicates to residents)

The team felt the local authority in general engages well with the local community however feel that they could better engage with young people. As young people they who live within the Borough they themselves feel that their views are not always taken into account. The team felt that London Borough Southwark could do the following to better engage their tenants/homeowners:

- Door to door canvassing – face to face discussions with tenants and homeowners about the various forums/meetings
- Educate and engage the community through these door to door canvassing sessions. This in turn would assist with engaging the more hard to reach community members including young people
- Make meetings less formal where possible
- Making the community feel as though they would be made to feel welcome – this could form part of a code of conduct by members i.e. views of all are encouraged and will be heard etc.
- Social media – better information being put out on the Southwark social media/website. Tenants and resident associations to be encouraged to use

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social media especially twitter to keep up to date with things happening in their area's so this can be promoted to the community. Young people's website/social media so that it encourages young people to get involved. This should be youth proofed/run by young people.

- Estate and community engagement events. Educational and fun and aimed at all age groups.
- Visits to schools/colleges to engage young people
- Key speakers – visits from organisations/partners that have something to discuss with the whole community for example: London Fire Brigade to educate re: home fire safety visits for the elderly/vulnerable – this could then encourage more members of the community to attend who may then attend future meetings.
- Times of meetings need to be varied/changed to ensure all community members can have a voice and not just held in the evenings.

4. Would you like to be more involved as a Tenant or Homeowner, and if so why? (what things could be motivators – link to list from the individual questionnaire)

Generally time doesn't allow for individuals to be more active within their local communities as meetings are often held at times when people are generally unavailable. For example: single mums/dads may not be available on an evening due to settling their children and young people not available in the day due to college/school commitments followed by homework commitments in the evenings. As a team we do attend tenants and residents meetings however these are often linked to commissioned projects we are running. Due to the times we are often running projects of an evening. However where possible the team do try to attend within their local areas and through this project have been more encouraged to do so to have a voice for the young people within their communities. The team feel that there could be more motivation if some of the meetings were youth focused. For example: having a consultation meeting with the young people on the estate/from the area if their opinion is needed on a play park/youth project/trip etc.

5. What things would be barriers/get in the way of getting more involved as an active Tenant or Homeowner?

The team felt that the following could be barriers taking into account that they have sat in meetings/forums:

- Being made to feel unwelcome and that your voice is not being heard
- Being listened to – often there are more confident people at such meetings/forums and the less confident could be overwhelmed/discouraged from speaking out
- Too formal – meetings should have a less formal feel to them where possible
- Time / commitments – more consideration needs to be taken into account regarding meetings. Most Tenants and residents meetings the team have attended are in the evening which would prevent many from attending. Consideration needs to be had about holding meetings at weekends or have meetings but advertise outcomes via newsletters, minutes, emails, conversations with the whole community/area.

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- Appeal to all – ensure advertising is aimed at the whole community and that face to face discussions are had so people are educated/informed.

6. Have you heard of the tenants or homeowners fund?

The team have awareness of the tenants and homeowners funds through the work they do with the tenants and residents associations. They are aware that these forums have money to use on things that are needed within the local community/area and that people can express an interest in how money is spent.

What do you think should be the main priority for these funds? (E.g. Improvement to local area, Social/community events, Support or training for TRA's, Support for local projects (e.g. helping people get online), Meetings and conferences)

The team felt that overall the money was given to the local tenants and residents associations for improvements to their local area however are aware that funds are spent on trips and community events. **The team felt this needed to be more widely advertised so more community members had a view on how the money was spent. This should include voting by the whole community even if they do not participate/can attend meetings/forums.**

7. What does it mean to be an active resident/tenant/homeowner? What types of activities does this include? How would you define it?

- Help/volunteer with community events and action days for example: litter cleanups, community engagement/educational events – ensuring these are for the whole community
- Look out for your neighbours – in emergencies and in times of need for example: loss of power, cold weather ...
- Get involved with meetings/forums – have a voice / voice opinion
- Register to vote/take part in elections
- Respond to consultations by the community and the local authority
- Join a neighbourhood watch
- Report crime and anti social behaviour
- Attend ward panel meetings

We would define an active resident/tenant/homeowner – an individual or a group of people who actively work together to make positive changes within their local area to benefit the whole community ensuring everyone's voices are heard.

Overall the team felt that the London Borough of Southwark does a lot to encourage people of all ages to be active citizens within the Borough. They felt the consultation itself would go towards encouraging people to play a more active role within their community. The team felt that more work was required to encourage the next generation to be involved although more importantly that the more hard to reach next generation needed to be engaged/have a voice.

Southwark Young Advisors

Improving Tenant and Homeowner Engagement in Southwark
Consultation

May 2017

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Appendix E - Tenant and homeowner engagement survey

1 Do you live in Southwark? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

2 How long have you lived here?

Please select only one item

- less than a year
- between 1 and 3 years
- between 4 and 6 years
- between 7 and 10 years
- between 11 and 20 years
- over 21 years

3 Are you

Please select only one item

- a council tenant?
- a council leaseholder or homeowner?
- a private tenant living in a council home or former council home?
- a tenant or homeowner living in Housing Association or private home?

4 Do you think Southwark is a good place to live?

Please provide a score between 1 and 10 where one is terrible and ten is great.

5 What are the main concerns you have about your area or estate?

6 How much do you agree that people have a responsibility to do their bit to improve their neighbourhoods and communities?

Please select only one item

- Very much so
- To some extent
- Not much
- Not at all

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- I don't have an opinion

7 How well informed do you feel you are about the opportunities to have your say on the services we provide to council tenants and homeowners?

Please select only one item

- Very
- Quite
- A little
- Not really
- Not at all

8 How much do you know about the following?

A lot Some A bit Not Much Nothing

The Tenants and Residents Association on your estate

Please select only one item

What to do if you have a complaint

Please select only one item

Local Volunteering opportunities

Please select only one item

Training for tenants and TRAs

Please select only one item

9 How much do you know about Area Housing Forums and Tenant and Homeowner Councils?

A lot Some A bit Not much Nothing

Area Housing Forums

Please select only one item

A lot

Some

A bit

Not much

Nothing

Tenant and Homeowner
Councils

Please select only one item

10How well do you think Area Housing Forums and Tenant and Homeowner Councils keep tenants and homeowners informed and involved and make sure TRA views are heard?

Please select only one item

- Very well
- well
- Neither
- Poorly
- Very Poorly
- I don't know

Would you like to add any comments about Area Housing Forums or Tenant and Homeowner Councils?

11Part of the rent you pay or your management fee to the council is set aside to fund and support tenants and leaseholder engagement and to provide grants to TRAs. How much do you know about the Tenants' Fund or Homeowners' Fund?

Please select only one item

- A lot
- Some
- Not much
- Nothing at all

12What would be your priorities for spending from these funds?

Please select all that apply

- Improvements to your area
- Social or community events
- Support or training for TRAs
- Training for residents
- Support for local projects (such as helping people get online)

- Meetings and conferences

Do you have any other ideas about how the funds should be spent?

13 How would you like

	The council to keep in contact with you?	You to keep in touch with the council?
By letter	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
By email	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Through the website	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
By text	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Through social media such as Facebook and Twitter	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Face to Face	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Through meetings	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
By phone	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Are there any other ways you would like us to keep you informed

14 What do you think the role of your local TRA should be?

Please select all that apply

- Improving the local area or estate
- Putting on social and community events
- Representing your views about housing services and the area to the council
- Running activities for residents in the area
- Creating opportunities for people to get involved

Are there other things you would like your local TRA to do?

15 What are your ideas about how to improve your TRA?

16 How do you think tenant and homeowner engagement can be improved?

17 Would you like to find out more about how to get involved?

Please select only one item

- Definitely
- Possibly
- No thanks

18 If you would like to be kept informed about this consultation or getting more involved please let us know us your contact details.

Name

Email

Telephone

Address

Post code

19 What might make you want to get more involved?

Please select all that apply

- To feel more a part of my community
- I want to make a difference
- To improve my job prospects
- To increase my confidence
- To gain a qualification
- To learn new skills
- To improve my health
- Because of incentives provided by the council
- To improve my local environment
- To influence how the council delivers services
- Because I care about my area
- To make things better for my family

Are there any other reasons you would like to be involved?

20 What might get in the way of you being more involved?

Please select all that apply

- Lack of time
- Lack of interest
- I don't think it will make a difference
- Lack of confidence
- I don't know how
- Attitude of professionals
- Worried about what other people would think
- I don't like meetings
- Timing of meetings
- Cost of taking part (e.g. childcare or travel)

Are there any other barriers to taking part?

21 Is there anything else you would like to say about tenant and homeowner engagement?

Improving tenant and homeowner engagement in Southwark – a review

To help us make sure we are reaching all of our communities, please complete the equalities information below. Completing this section is optional.

Why do we ask this information? It is important to us that we speak to as many people as we can that reflect the diverse communities in Southwark. This will ensure that everyone's needs are addressed through the plans we develop as a result of this survey.

22Age

Please select only one item

- Under 16
- 16 - 17
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 - 94
- 95+

23Disability and health

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Please select only one item

- Yes, limited a little
- Yes, limited a lot
- No, not limited

Please tick the box or boxes below that best describe the nature of your impairment(s):

Please select all that apply

- Hearing / Vision (e.g. deaf, partially deaf or hard of hearing; blind or partial sight)
- Physical / Mobility (e.g. wheelchair user, arthritis, multiple sclerosis etc.)
- Mental health (lasting more than a year. e.g. severe depression, schizophrenia etc.)
- Learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia etc.)
- Memory problems (e.g. alzheimer's etc.)

If you wish to specify your impairment, please do so here:

24What do you consider to be your ethnicity?

Please select only one item

- White British

- English
- Scottish
- Welsh
- Northern Irish
- Irish
- Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller
- Other European
- Other White
- Black British
- Caribbean
- Nigerian
- Ghanaian
- Sierra Leonean
- Somali
- Other African
- Other Black
- Asian British
- Indian
- Bengali
- Chinese
- Pakistani
- Vietnamese
- Filipino
- Any other Asian
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Other mixed background
- Arab
- Latin American
- Any other ethnicity

Please specify further if you wish:

25 Religion or belief

Please select only one item

- Christian
- Sikh
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Buddhist
- No religion
- Other

If you selected Other, please specify if you wish:

26Sex*Please select only one item*

- Male
- Female

27Sexual orientation*Please select all that apply*

- Hetrosexual/straight
- Lesbian/Gay woman
- Gay man
- Bi-sexual

If you prefer to use your own term, please specify if you wish:

28Do you have any dependent children living with you?*Please select only one item*

- Yes
- No

29Which of these best describes what you are doing at present?*Please select only one item*

- Full time work
- Part time work
- Retired
- On a Government supported training programme
- A full time student
- Looking after the home
- Unemployed and available for work
- Doing something else
- Prefer not to say

Appendix F - Promoting the opportunity to participate in the review

Tenants and homeowners were invited to participate through a wide-range of marketing – using both digital and printed communication channels.

These included:

- Email to all TRAs with a request to promote
- Email to Area Housing Forums / Tenants Council / Homeowners Council / Tenant Management Organisations
- Posters sent to all TRAs (see below) to go up on noticeboards
- Posters sent to libraries, service points, housing offices, leisure centres and key partners
- Regular tweets from Southwark’s twitter account
- Housing e-news to 20,000 email addresses
- Southwark Life e-newsletter to 45,000 addresses
- A link to the survey included in Southwark housing staff email signatures
- Contact centre recorded message to callers promoting the survey
- Promotion through community council mailing lists
- Ward councillors contacted with a request to promote
- Front page of www.southwark.gov.uk

Join our
COMMUNITY
CONVERSATION

**Let's talk about...
 getting involved**

Have your say on tenant and homeowner engagement.

We want everyone who lives in Southwark to have a say in their home borough. If you are a Southwark resident living in one of our estates or properties we would love to hear from you. Your views will help us to develop ideas about how we can do better and make it easier for more people to be involved in making their estates even better places to live.

Visit southwark.gov.uk/gettinginvolved by 19 May 2017, to share your views on tenant and homeowner engagement in Southwark and how it can be improved.

@S_southwark
 facebook.com/southwarkcouncil



SOUTHWARK GROUP of Tenants Organisations

Tenants Engagement Review Scrutiny Report from SGTO

11th June, 2017

This is an extract from the 126 pages review. This section is specifically about SGTO and our worth as an organisation.

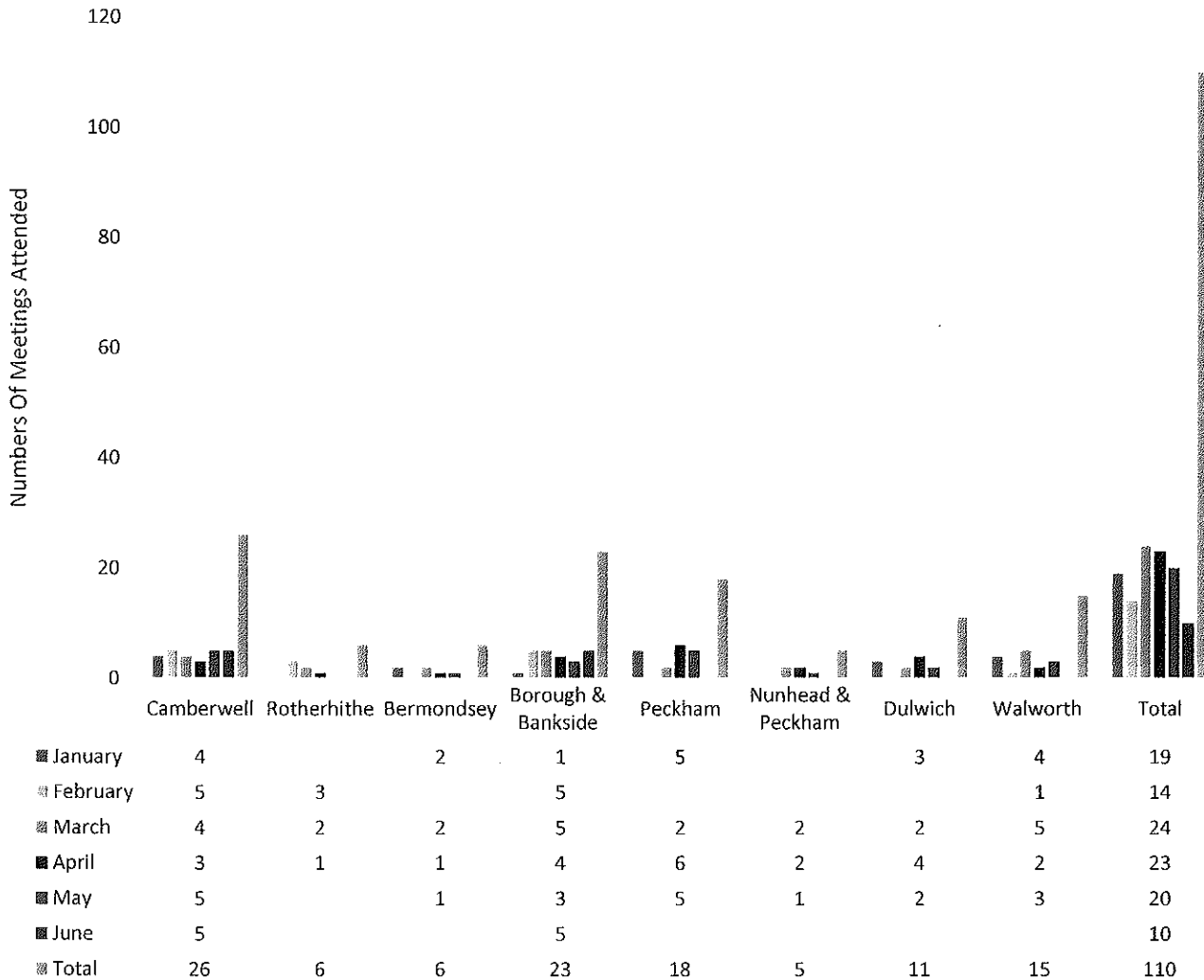
1. SGTO employs five staff. It is not clear from our research whether or not this represents good value for money.

The Council recognises and respects the independence and values of the third sector but also has a responsibility to ensure that organisations which receive funding continue to achieve certain levels of effective management and financial practices and use the funding they receive for the purposes it was granted. The Conditions of Grant Funding sets out the broad framework and requirements and what may happen if they are not met.

2. Evidence of impact is extremely limited and awareness among tenants is low.

The staff team is small, but despite the size we ensure that our tenants and residents officers are physically present across the borough. We build links amongst TRAs and other voluntary and statutory organisations in Southwark. The SGTO is an important and integral part of the community of Southwark. We have officers providing support in Rotherhithe and Camberwell, Borough & Bankside & Bermondsey, as well as the South, covering Walworth, Peckham, Nunhead and Peckham Rye and Dulwich, with increasing participation in TRAs and wider tenants movement, capacity building, information, support and guidance on relevant matters.

TRA MEETINGS ATTENDED BOROUGHWIDE JANUARY – JUNE 2017



3. There is evidence of duplication with organisations with overlapping or related interests.

It is not clear how these organisations offer similar services to the SGTO. TPAS is a commercial organisation that provides training and advice on improving consultation. The National Tenants Organisation is an umbrella body that contains TPAS. Civic Voice is similarly a national umbrella organisation for civil society groups that makes 'places more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive' and has no clear comparison with the SGTOs services whatsoever.

4. Whilst there are advantages to locally operating support providers, it is not clear that all the functions and activities which SGTO undertake are necessarily better able to deliver improved outcomes.

My team are very committed to their role as well as using its varied skills and experiences in working with our members and stakeholders. The SGTO is well known for verifying TRA accounts free of charge as part of our services, for which TRAs are greatly appreciative as it saves them a lot of money. Various equipment's are also made available for hirer to aid tenants events as and when needed provided it is available.

TRA Accounts Verification

Month	Borough Wide
January	5
February	5
March	5
April	5
May	5
June	5
Total	30

Note: Total number of accounts verified for TRAs between January and June 2017, is 30, saving the TRAs a total of £10,500 with the consideration that accountants charges £350 per account.

SGTO represents tenants' interests on a number of Council Committees in the Borough and other external tenants' bodies and groups. This is to ensure that TRAs are advised and supported in local decision making processes and enhance cohesiveness needed to achieve result.

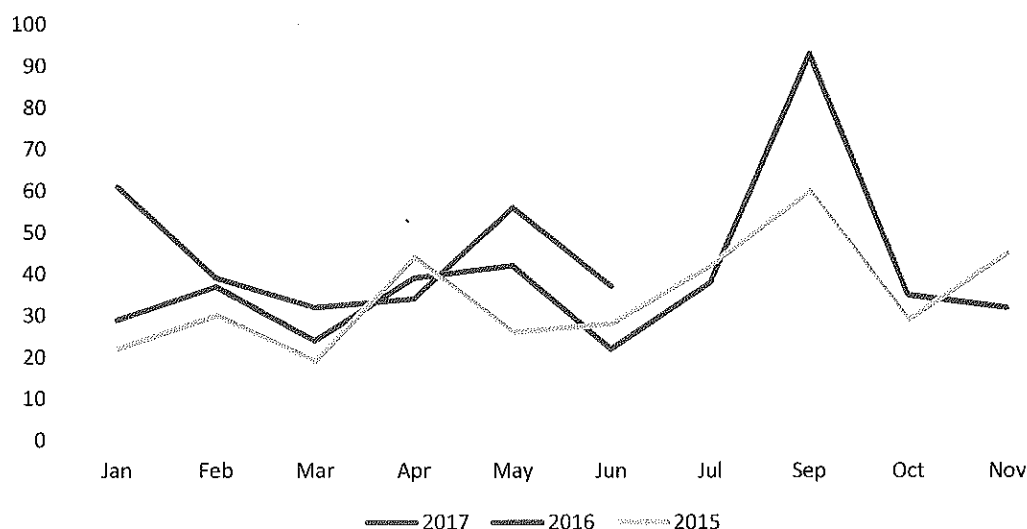
The SGTO also supports tenants and residents by acting as a campaigning organisation, both on local and national issues. For example, the SGTO recently worked alongside local councillors and MPs to campaign against the Housing and Planning Act 2016, and produced evidence to illustrate tenant's opposition to the 'pay to stay' provisions of the Act, which were later dropped.

Locally, the SGTO has coordinated campaigns around issues from housing management and disrepair to the provision of youth and mental health services in Southwark. Through the promotion and dissemination of consultations the SGTO also fights to ensure that tenants and residents' voices are heard in local decision making.

Our Campaign and Research team are always on hand to ensure that Council tenants in Southwark are informed about government policies and its implications. This is in conjunction with developing Campaign's positions on areas of government policy relevant to social housing. We carry out consultations and surveys with tenants on topical issues and satisfaction levels with housing services so as to provide evidence based support.

SGTO monthly meetings allow TRAs delegates to facilitate discussion and interaction in a face-to-face manner. It provides a platform for delegates to network and share common problems in a manner that allows for brainstorming towards achieving common goals.

SGTO Group Meeting Attendance



SGTO monthly newsletter is another platform that creates an impact and awareness amongst tenants groups in the Borough. The focus is on housing related information, national housing policies affecting tenants locally and general information provided to empower tenants and residents on Council estates in their dealings with the Council.

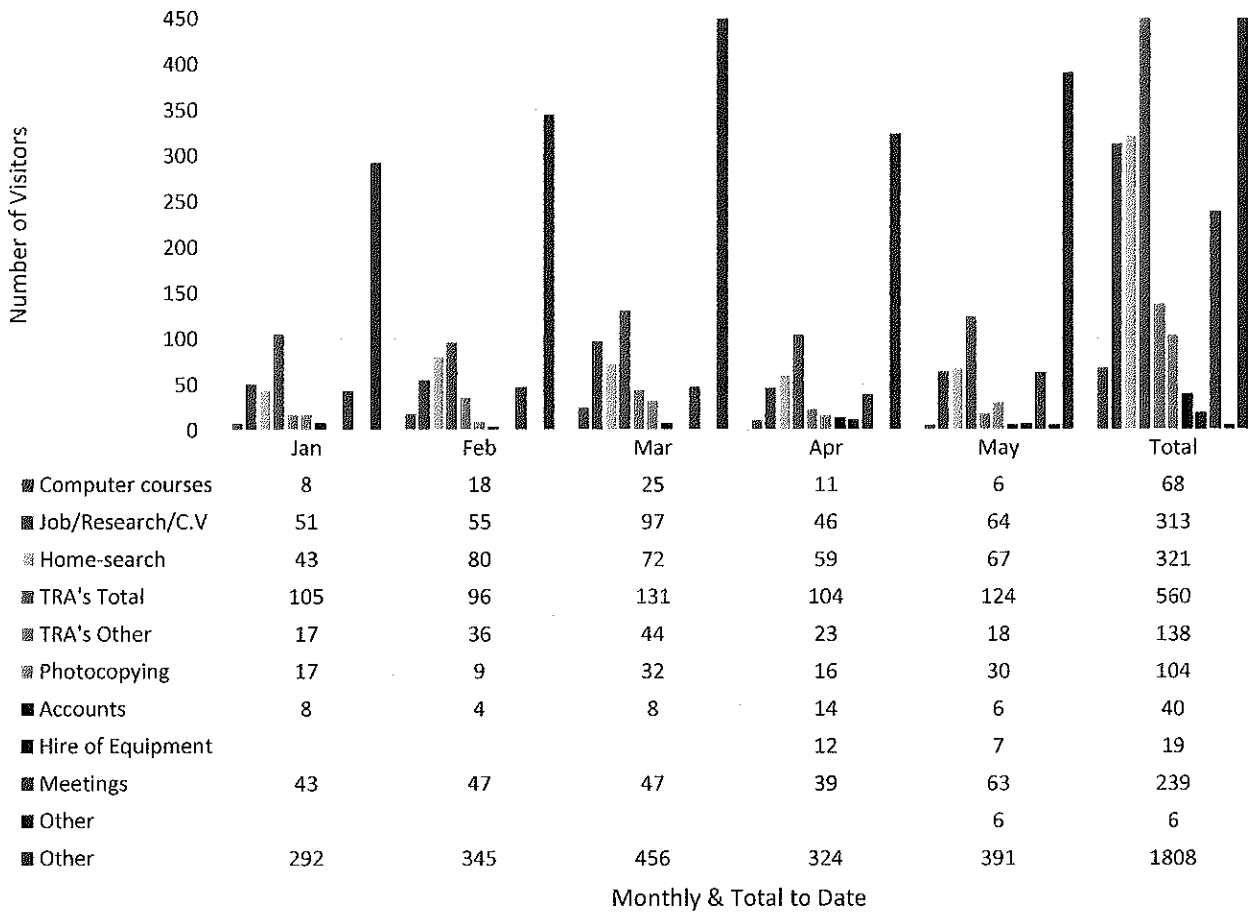
5. There also appears to be an overlap between SGTO and Council support staff – particularly in the provision of training support to tenants. SGTO offers a range of training services which are in addition to two Community Training Officers in the Council’s Tenant & Homeowner Involvement Team which are funded through an allocation from the Tenant Fund budget. Whilst there are potential benefits to having an independent source of support for tenants, it is not clear whether there is any particular benefit accrued from the current arrangements, particularly in the provision of supporting training.

Tenants using the SGTO for training opportunities have expressed that they prefer the less formal environment of the Community Centre and that they are more comfortable than when using Council or government services such as the library or jobcentre. Over the past years we have expanded our training range to incorporate accredited training programs and relevant capacity building courses that would benefit Council tenants and residents in the Borough. Some of the trainings currently on offer are as follows:

- *Basic IT skills through Learn My Way programme with Entry level 3 qualification*
- *Customer Service – Online*
- *English Functional Skills – online*
- *First Aid (Awareness) –online*
- *Health and Safety – online*
- *Fire Safety – online*
- *Food & Hygiene, level 2*

The aim of these courses is to support our tenants and residents in meeting their compliance requirements and achieve independence through training.

SGTO Visitors Jan-May 2017



■ Computer courses ■ Job/Research/C.V ■ Home-search ■ TRA's Total
 ■ TRA's Other ■ Photocopying ■ Accounts ■ Hire of Equipment
 ■ Meetings ■ Other ■ Other

With regards to the provision of supported training, the SGTO recently applied for a grant funding of £1,500 towards financial inclusion specialist Network, in partnership with Lloyds Bank Group. This is an opportunity to enhance the work we are already doing through our resource room, engaging and supporting people to complete financial inclusion courses on Learn My Way: Keeping your personal information secure online, online and mobile banking and make money work. This is towards supporting individuals in the community to develop their digital and financial literacy skills. I am delighted to inform you that the application has been successful and the feedback from Good Things Foundation regarding the funding was that the standard of applications was very high. The programme time frame: 1st June 2017 - 31st December 2017.

The SGTO is also working in partnership with the London Institute of Banking & Finance to prepare our tenants and residents for life in modern Britain. "Lessons in Financial Education" (LIFE) is aimed at enhancing the financial skills and capability in the wider community. Lessons in Financial Education (LIFE) is an online self-study programme that provides learners with a strong basic understanding of money and finance, and develops their confidence and capability in managing their own money.

The course requires minimal supervision and will be run initially from Bells Gardens Community Centre with the possibility of being rolled out to digital hubs, TRA's and other community organisations. The course costs £10 per user plus another £10 to take an exam at the end of the course. Successful completion of the course and exam will earn the learner a level 1 qualification from the London Institute of Banking and Finance, a recognised university provider.

A bid was submitted to TFMC for £2000 to run a pilot on the LIFE course for 100 learners (£20 per head) from April to October. Another £3000 will be funded if the pilot proves successful to run the programme on an ongoing basis. The SGTO resource center will be the registered center where learners can enroll and access the course. While the course can be completed independently, staff will always be on hand to provide any necessary supervision and guidance.

6. A far greater emphasis on outcomes – rather than outputs – would improve the ability to determine whether funds were delivering improvements that represented value for money. Addressing apparent duplication in services within SGTO (and Council staff) to ensure funds were being spent as effective as possible.

There is no mention of the various key services which the SGTO offers to all the TRAs in the whole of Southwark, such as free printing, photocopying, equipment's hire, account verification and more. It should also be mentioned that the SGTO supports the provision of services which have seemingly been discontinued by the Council, namely HomeSearch and bidding support. There is also no mention of the SGTO's role as a Campaigning Organisation and the role it plays in increasing residents input in local decision-making by providing policy information and research to tenants and residents.

Tenants Council

Interim response to the independent research entitled 'Improving tenant and homeowner engagement in Southwark – a review.

This report is prepared on behalf of the Tenants Council as an interim response to the Housing and Community Safety Sub – committee and we would see it as a precursor of more detailed discussions on the recommendations contained within the report and whether those recommendations are feasible and capable of implementation.

I attended the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-committee on the 7th February this year at the invitation of the Chair to discuss Resident Involvement. I was here in my role as Vice-chair to represent the Tenants Council.

I raised the problem that to all intents tenant's involvement was none existent and support and servicing and structures that were in place to allow tenants aspirations and voices to be heard are ignored. I pointed out that this was not a new problem and was increasingly becoming more acute as the Council and its officers became less and less engaged. The Council should be aware that the requirement to consult is set out in statute.

I pointed out that the Director of Housing had not attended Tenants Council for over two years. The Cabinet Member, unlike her predecessor who regularly attended Tenants Council, has attended once in the year. That is a situation that has not improved and whilst Councillor Cryan agreed that she would meet with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Tenants Council on a six weekly cycle following the meeting of the Tenants Council to review the recommendations and resolve how to take them forward and action them; this hasn't happened. Indeed the only issues she has discussed with us recently was her concerns that sandwiches was provided to delegates and others attending meetings of Tenants Council and that the Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations, in line with the arrangements in place in the Council, was providing taxis for disabled and vulnerable attendees at their meetings. I remember with some amusement and distaste the machinations of Officers when asked if the wellbeing and safety of tenants was less important than those Council users of the taxi services.

At a recent chaotic meeting at the Old Kent Road Fire Station, Cllr Cryan was asked why she didn't attend Tenants Council. Her response was that she was busy in her Ward. I include this response to illustrate the reluctance to engage with us. I also point out that our recommendations are ignored and the Senior Officer responsible for progressing displays no enthusiasm to do so. In fact, he gives the impression that, like his boss, he would rather we didn't have a voice at all.

Let me come now to the report itself and how it came to be drafted.

On 7th February, I suggested a Working Party be set up of Councillors, Officers and Residents to examine the issues and suggest solutions.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, like a rabbit out of a hat, made an offer of £50,000 to fund an independent review of tenant involvement. I was somewhat surprised by this offer from a cash strapped Council who intends to pass on the high costs of calls on the 0300 line to the Call Centre to save the Council an anticipated £65,000.

I attended, again on behalf of the Tenants Council, the meeting to interview and select a contractor to undertake the research. I can report that the successful contractor was not my preference. There were two others that displayed far better understanding of tenant structures and involvement. When I raised this, it was pointed out that I was there in an advisory capacity and officers would have the final say.

I do love being patronised!

So, what does the report say and purport to achieve?

It would appear to further diminish the role of tenant participation and reduce impact from the Tenants Movement. It displays a high level of officer involvement and takes upon the authors the role of proposing remedies that were not discussed or trusted.

The report comments on the effectiveness of the Tenants Fund and the SGTO. The views in the report were never discussed or tested with the Tenants Fund Management Committee. As far as I can ascertain the SGTO were not consulted before the report was compiled. I, and other tenants here tonight, are of the opinion that these are the views of officers rather than the views of tenants.

The 126 pages of the well-padded report has the effect of widening the gap between the aspirations of tenants and senior officers who indicate they would rather not participate with us despite their statutory requirement to do so. It widens the gap between us rather than closes it.

The two main recommendations, but not the only recommendations, are that the Tenants and Homeowners Council should merge. The information I have is that the Homeowners Council recent meetings have been inquorate and the organisation is largely dominated by absentee landlords, some of whom are large stockholders of dwellings that were previously in Council management.

It should be noted that the aims and aspirations of the Tenants Council and the Homeowners Council are often diametrically opposed and this is particularly exacerbated by the role and aspirations of absentee landlords whose occupants are often seen as responsible for some of the occupancy problems that are in effect caused by the lack of effective management.

However those are the kinds of problems that will render this kind of merger unworkable.

I have tried to envisage how the recommendation that the Area Housing Forums and the Neighbourhood Councils merge will work. I cannot imagine how this could happen. The function of the Area Housing Forums is to discuss and monitor at local level services and management of the housing stock in their areas of benefit and to receive reports from, and make recommendations to the Tenants Council. I formed the opinion that the proposers of this have very little understanding of Resident Involvement and have made very little effort to research the outcomes of their recommendations.

I attended three of the interview sessions and I have discussed with several tenants who have attended other interviews and all are of the opinion that they had very little to do with resident involvement. I can report that at one session the researcher was more concerned to advise us on how to set up and run a tenants association. When we pointed out we knew how to do that the interview sort of fizzled out.

The report leans very heavily in favour of the views and recommendations of the officers and indeed congratulates them on their involvement but makes no mention of the contribution by tenants and residents. The authors of the report in their introduction deal with the Council's failure to honour its side of the agreement to develop, support, and foster resident involvement and participation. Dare I say that officers have little understanding or will to involve themselves in it.

At a time when the effects of not listening to the voice of tenants is manifest in the tragic fire in Grenfell Tower. The intention to widen the gap further between the Council and the residents of its housing stock when all the evidence is to the contrary needs to be carefully considered. In the borough, that had the fire in Lakanal House, tenants have raised concerns about the fire safety, integrity and structure of the four tower blocks on Ledbury Estate. This has resulted in the blocks being patrolled by Fire Wardens and have officers based in the Tenants Hall on the estate. It has heightened the fear factor. It is significant that these are not problems that the Council were unaware of, the residents have been raising the problems with Council for years and were ignored. It was only after they had consulted with the London Fire Brigade and with advice from the SGTO on how they should organise and the threat to seek support from the media to highlight their problems and get the Council to listen and act that things started to happen. Until this happened the Council, and in particular the Housing Department, despite being aware of the problems for years had ignored them.

This is not participation this is the Council reacting with its arm twisted up its back.

I have highlighted this case to illustrate the effect and cost of not listening. The problems of Ledbury Estate could have been resolved far earlier and much more cheaply if only the residents had been listened to.

We urge Scrutiny not to rush to judgement on the implementation of this report. It should be held in abeyance to allow detailed consideration and discussions to take place. Whilst the authors have been empowered to take it upon themselves to indicate what the Council should implement and what to dismantle it seems to display a degree of researcher arrogance and it is largely unworkable. It is time for us to sit round the table and resolve the issues of how there is an effective voice for tenants and residents. Ignoring and marginalising us has in some instances devastating and costly consequences.

Ian Ritchie
Vice Chair
Tenants Council

Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Work Programme 2017-18

Date of Meeting	Agenda item	Presenter
Tuesday 11 th July 2017	1. Resident Involvement Review 2. Work Programme	Toby Blume Members discussion
Wednesday 6 th September 2017		
Monday 30 th October 2017	Borough Commander (Police) Interview	Simon Messinger
Monday 4 th December 2017	Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety Interview	Councillor Barrie Hargrove Strategic Director for Environment & Social Regeneration Deborah Collins
Wednesday 31 st January 2018	Cabinet Member for Housing Interview	Councillor Stephanie Cryan Strategic Director for Housing & Modernisation Gerri Scott

Work Programme 2017-18

Resident Involvement Review

Knife Crime

Borough Commander (Police) Simon Messinger Email: simon.messinger@met.pnn.police.uk & Holly.C.Gowers@met.pnn.police.uk

Borough Commander (Fire Brigade) Richard Welch Tel: 020 8555 1200 extension 36519 Email: southeastareasupportteam@london-fire.gov.uk

HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017-18

AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)

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Cris Claridge (Tenants' Council)	1		
		Total: 14	
		Dated: June 2017	