

Resident involvement action plan 2015 -2017

April 2015

www.southwark.gov.uk

STRATEGIC FIT OF THE RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Housing and Community Service (HCS) Business plan 2015 -16

HCS business plan makes clear that ultimately our success or failure is measured by the satisfaction of our residents and to improve satisfaction levels we must ensure our residents have genuine opportunities to shape their services. This year HCS will increase its focus on the quality of the customer experience, and improving its relationship with residents. Resident involvement is the common theme that runs through all the priorities. The Resident Involvement Action Plan describes how Community Engagement will contribute to the delivery of Housing and Community Services business plan. To be truly inclusive we must understand that residents can be involved in many different aspects of our work, and we will reduce the burden on housing services by involving those who are keen to contribute.

SOUTHWARK'S RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

In March 2013, Southwark Council produced its new resident involvement strategy with the overarching objective that all residents are able to have a genuine say, and where appropriate, control over the services they receive. Central to our resident involvement strategy are five key aims:

- i. **We will engage with residents in achieving our key departmental objectives** – for example a key housing and community services department objective is to improve the council's repair service – as service users, residents are best placed to advise the council on such improvements and their input is crucial to the council's success.
- ii. **We will increase overall resident engagement** – the more residents who get involved the more we understand the different needs of our tenants and homeowners, and we can ensure the services the council provides meet those needs. This includes reaching and actively engaging our residents across the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.
- iii. **We will introduce new ways for residents to engage** – the council has a strong formal consultation structure but one size does not fit all. While one resident may prefer to make their views known to the council via a formal meeting another may rather take part in a short online survey or mystery shopping exercise. It is important that we broaden the menu of engagement options to reach out to our increasingly diverse residents.
- iv. **We will deliver better quality engagement** – both by making sure residents have the tools they may need to hold the council to account - such as training or peer support - but also by ensuring a consistent quality of consultation and engagement across the council as a whole.
- v. **We will demonstrate the value of our engagement** - by working more in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, by attracting external funding and supporting tenant and homeowner groups to do also, as well as ensuring ongoing assessment and reflection of all our resident involvement activities. We will seek to show not just the financial value of our work but also the social.

This strategy will form the framework for the action plan over the next two years.

WHO DELIVERS THE ACTION PLAN

There are a number of teams in Community Engagement that are responsible for the delivery of the action plan. These are mainly:

- I. Tenant and Resident Organization team – responsible for providing advice and support to Tenant and Resident Associations (TRA), attending TRA AGMs and supporting their registration as well as facilitating Tenant Council.
- II. Capacity and Partnership team - responsible for resident training, supporting residents build new TRAs, troubleshooting with TRAs where there are issues, facilitating resource centres, and supporting the delivery of tenant conference.
- III. Resident Participation team – responsible for bringing council wide consultations to residents, widening and increasing participation, developing new ways to engage, and supporting residents get involved with service improvement.
- IV. Tenant Management Initiative team – responsible for the development of Tenant Management Organizations (TMOs) and greater resident control of a range of housing services.
- V. Homeowner Support and Facilitation team – responsible for coordinating Homeowner Council and homeowner engagement.

These teams work with the Voluntary Sector Commissioning team that manage the Joint Security Initiative (JSI) fund and Tenant Fund, the Premises team that manage TRA halls, and the Development team (inclusion).

In addition the work of involving residents is a core part of many officer's jobs not just the role of those who work in community engagement. Through this collective approach we will improve our relationship with residents and drive up standards of service delivery. Other staff that have a key role to play in engaging residents are:

- Resident Services Officers and Managers
- Major Works officers and their contractors
- Repairs staff and their contractors
- Direct delivery team
- Community Safety teams

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED IN FIRST YEAR?

The first action plan was agreed in January 2014: below are some of the highlights of the achievements during the year.

- I. **Improved relations between council officers and tenant and leaseholder representatives**, e.g. improved satisfaction with Tenant Council, collaborative projects with Southwark Group of Tenant Organizations (SGTO) e.g. our youth participation event and Tenant Fund Management Committee funding and support for digital inclusion work
- II. **The Future Steering Board (FSB)** – combines tenant and leaseholder representatives and began its work as a consultative body during the Housing Commission consultation in 2013. It has been re-launched with revised terms of reference to work in partnership with the council to develop the investment plan and delivery model for 11,000 new homes.
- III. **Support for TRAs** - There are at present 126 organizations registered on our database. We have worked closely with residents over the last year to provide a revised constitution for organizations that should simplify their management. Consultation has commenced on five new associations in areas where such organizations have become dormant in recent years. The sheltered housing units in the borough are being encouraged to form organizations that reflect their capacity and wishes. This has resulted in two new resident organizations
- IV. **Training for involved residents** – we have developed on-line training for TRA's and an accredited training programme to support halls management e.g. First Aid, Health & safety (run by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health). 10 in-house courses will also be accredited. There is also a bespoke training programme run by Community Matters covering operational issues of halls management. The TMI team delivers the 'In the driving seat' training in partnership with 3 local authorities for TMO committee members.
- V. **Consultation** – we received responses from over 2000 residents on the Charter of Principles for future engagement on 11,000 new council homes. Almost 700 said they wished to remain involved, adding to the 200 identified in the Housing Commission consultation in 2013.
- VI. **Engagement with Sheltered Housing Units** –190 residents living in council Sheltered Housing Units (SHU) completed surveys about their satisfaction with the new service and their appetite to get involved, many were engaged for the first time. A "Together We Can" event was held in April 2014 to share information about the services and activities available in the borough for older people to get involved in decisions about their homes and improve their wellbeing. A further 100 older people were engaged in this event.
- VII. **Engagement with New Tenants** – a Welcome Event for new tenants was held in September 2014 which aimed to make new tenants feel part of the Southwark community, and also raise awareness of their rights and responsibilities as tenants. We have also delivered two workshops to residents in temporary accommodation on the same basis reaching 250 soon to be residents.
- VIII. **Data-collection** – we have an on-going resident involvement survey which is being used at festivals, estate action days and other outreach opportunities to enable us to identify new ways to get tenants and leaseholders involved in our work.

- IX. Social Media** – our Resident Involvement Facebook page has taken off. New content is posted several times a week and we currently have had 18,000 views of the page since its launch. We have improved our profile on twitter following our involvement in #HousingDay in November 2014, which was a national campaign to raise awareness of the positive value of social housing. The video clip we made of residents sharing their views has been watched over 300 times on YouTube and we are continuing to use it in our outreach.
- X. Resident Conferences** – we have successfully organized a tenant, a homeowner and a TMO conference this year; bringing together residents with shared interests and widening opportunities for participation and learning.
- XI. Engagement with young people** – we spoke to 468 young people over the summer and autumn to ask them about getting involved. Most said young people should be involved and they wanted to be engaged through their schools and social media. We have already started working with Bacons College to reach young people. In February we held a very successful youth engagement event called #Chatback; over 100 young residents took part in discussions about housing issues and shared their views on the council's commitment to building 11,000 new council homes.

HOW HAVE WE BUILT THE ACTION PLAN FOR 2015 – 2017?

The Resident Involvement action plan 2014 -2015 has proved a success in terms of coordinating the work across the teams and developing a coherent and balanced approach to supporting residents become involved.

The tasks outlined in the action plan have been identified in a number of ways:

- I. Embedding the work launched in the previous year such as working with young people.
- II. Carry forward work ongoing from the first action plan.
- III. Feed back received during the workshop at tenant conference.
- IV. Feed back received by officers informally and formally through their work with residents.
- V. Cabinet priorities such as increasing tenant and homeowner management of and involvement in council housing services.
- VI. Demand from service leads.
- VII. Tasks that support delivery of the community engagement strategy such as improving the information available to tenants and homeowners about taking part.

WHAT ARE THE KEY PIECES OF WORK FOR THE COMING YEAR?

The key priorities of the Resident Involvement Action Plan in the first year are as follows:

Objective	Project	Lead team
-----------	---------	-----------

Increasing overall engagement	Consultation on the delivery of 11,000 new council homes	Resident Participation team <i>- 11,000 homes</i>
Increasing overall engagement	Working with residents to explore the potential for greater local control of housing services and establishing pilot projects	Tenant Management Initiatives team
Better quality engagement	Strengthening the networking between TRAs and working with our partners SGTO to build TRA capacity	Tenant and Resident Organization team and Capacity and Partnership team
Better quality engagement	Developing the training offer to bring further benefit to TRAs and their members	Capacity and Partnership team
Increasing overall engagement	Improving engagement with homeowners	TBC pending report on homeowner engagement
Increasing overall resident engagement	Developing our work with young people	Resident Participation team
Introduce new ways for residents to engage	Tackling digital exclusion through the digital support of TRAs and development of digital champions on our estates	Development team (inclusion)

Projects in these priority areas are highlighted in bold in the following action plan.

Southwark's Resident Involvement Strategy Action Plan – April 2015 to March 2017

Objective	Action	Outcome	Council officer lead	Delivery partners	Target time for completion
1 - We will engage with residents in achieving our key departmental objectives					
We will place residents at the heart of our work to drive up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will seek to set up a focus group with new tenants to seek their views of the 	Increased satisfaction services	Housing options service	Resident Participation	April 2017

Objective	Action	Outcome	Council officer lead	Delivery partners	Target time for completion
standards in service delivery, by involving them in key service reviews.	<p>lettings process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will consult residents on the proposed further changes to the allocations policy following the work that has been done by the task and finish group 	Residents inform the review of the changes to the allocations policy	Housing options service	Resident Participation team	December 2015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will review the voids process and use the information for further service improvements. 	Increased satisfaction with services	Voids Service	Resident Participation team	June 2015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to support mystery shopping of council services. 	Increased satisfaction/ decrease in complaints in service 'mystery shopped'	Customer Experience team	Resident Participation team/ Capacity and partnerships team	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of a review of our antisocial behavior (ASB) services, we will undertake a one off consultation with residents regarding their experience of accessing the service. 	<p>Increase satisfaction/ decrease in complaints regarding ASB service.</p> <p>Increase in number of council services involving residents in service design and review</p>	Community Safety team	Resident Participation team	May 2015
Work at a strategic level with residents on delivery of 11,000 homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to support and actively engage with FSB in a co-productive approach to delivery of 11,000 homes 	Resident support for the delivery mechanisms for 11,000 homes	SMT	Resident Participation Coordinator - 11,000 homes	Ongoing review February 2016
2. We will increase overall resident engagement					
We will make sure that every resident has access to clear information explaining the different ways they can get involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the divisional comms strategy We will develop promotional material advertising the different ways residents can 	Increase in residents' satisfaction with opportunities for involvement in decision making.	Community Engagement Division Resident Participation		<p>April 2017</p> <p>April 2016</p>

Objective	Action	Outcome	Council officer lead	Delivery partners	Target time for completion
	<p>get involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will review current resident involvement related content on the council's website. We will launch the citizen space consultation portal to improve access to our consultations We will continue with the workshops for residents waiting for an offer of permanent accommodation 	<p>Increase in number of tenants participating in engagement and/or consultation via either one off events or through membership of their local TRA.</p>	<p>Coordinator</p> <p>Service development Officer</p> <p>Community Participation Manager</p> <p>Resident Participation Coordinator</p>		<p>July 2015</p> <p>April 2015</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
We will develop new Tenant groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work to support the relaunch of TRAs and develop TRAs in areas where there are none. We will support the development of less formal resident groups in areas where there is reluctance to commit to more formal arrangements 	<p>Increase in the number of residents participating</p>	<p>Capacity and partnerships coordinator</p> <p>Tenant & resident organisation co-ordinator</p>	<p>Tenant Management Initiative team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
We will ensure that opportunities for involvement are open to all residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will undertake a detailed analysis of the demographics of all residents who get involved to ensure they mirror the demographics of the borough as a whole (according to 2011 Census data). Where any demographic is underrepresented, we will work in partnership with this group to remove the identified barriers to participation. We will compile a profile of our residents to 	<p>Involved residents reflect the people who live in our homes.</p> <p>Our use of engagement tools are appropriate</p>	<p>Service development Officer</p> <p>Resident Participation coordinator</p> <p>Service development Officer</p>	<p>Senior Development Officer (inclusion)</p>	<p>June 2015</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2016</p>

Objective	Action	Outcome	Council officer lead	Delivery partners	Target time for completion
	<p>develop better insight into their needs and ensure that our engagement practices are inclusive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will undertake a project that looks at the barriers to engagement for people with disabilities Following on from this we will incorporate recommendations into our future working practices We will continue to build on the work¹ with young people to embed on going engagement with residents under 25. 	<p>A wider range of people participate in our engagement activity</p> <p>A wider range of people participate in our engagement activity</p>	<p>Resident Participation Coordinator</p> <p>Resident Participation Coordinator</p>	<p>Senior Development Officer (inclusion)</p> <p>SGTO and TFMC</p>	<p>June 2016</p> <p>ongoing</p>
Improving the engagement of homeowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the review of our relationship with homeowners and the concerns they have expressed about their inclusion in council decision making processes we will work with homeowners and residents and those in council owned street properties to ensure they are fully engaged with us. 	<p>Greater satisfaction with the opportunities for involvement</p> <p>More homeowners engaged with the council</p>	Home Ownership Team	Resident Participation Coordinator	April 2017
We will contribute to a number of community conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with residents on Age-friendly Borough consultation & with partner agencies to promote befriending & reduce the number of older people experiencing isolation. Consult with residents on delivery of 11,000 homes 	<p>The action plan reflects views of older people and older people are involved in the monitoring of this plan</p> <p>Residents continue to be engaged in the discussions about new homes</p>	<p>Adult Social Care team</p> <p>Resident participation Coordinator – 11,000 homes</p>	<p>Resident Participation coordinator and Voluntary Sector Commissioning Team</p> <p>Direct</p>	<p>October 2015</p> <p>December 2015</p>

¹ Projects in bold are key priorities for 2015-2016

Objective	Action	Outcome	Council officer lead	Delivery partners	Target time for completion
				Delivery team	
We will explore the appetite of residents for playing a greater role in the management of their local housing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with colleagues in TMI services to develop local management pilot projects. 	Establishment of 3 pilots for local management.	TMI team	Resident Participation coordinator	April 2016
3 - We will introduce new ways for residents to engage					
We will improve the council's use of social media as means of providing information to, consulting, and engaging with, council tenants and homeowners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will ensure that @Chatbacksyp and chatback face book page has programme of information to ensure we are continuing to engage with young people We will develop a range of film material that we can use to promote engagement We will explore the potential of phone apps such as Voxup as a tool for residents to engage with councillors, other residents and the council 	Increase in residents' satisfaction with opportunities for involvement in decision making.	Resident Participation Coordinator Community Participation Manager Service development Officer	Capacity and partnerships coordinator Tenant & resident organisation co-ordinator	June 2015 Ongoing December 2015
We will increase the number of residents accessing council services including engagement digitally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the development of a number of pilot projects with our TRAs we will increase access to digital services We will train and support digital champions in these areas to support 	Improve access to services digitally	Senior Development Officer (inclusion)	Capacity and partnerships coordinator And TFMC	March 2016
We will identify other cost-effective methods to engage in addition to the formal consultation structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with residents we will research best practice and additional methods of engagement with a view to extending the menu of resident involvement options. We will explore the development of a team of resident repairs inspectors to support improvements in the repairs service 	Increase in residents' satisfaction with opportunities for involvement in decision making Improved service delivery through resident involvement	Service development Officer Capacity and partnerships Coordinator	Resident Participation Coordinator Repairs service	Ongoing/April 2017 April 2017

Objective	Action	Outcome	Council officer lead	Delivery partners	Target time for completion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will explore how partnership working with VCS community in the borough can add value and bring imaginative approaches to our engagement Encourage and support informal and fun events to bring residents together 	<p>Improved resident capacity for social action and community building</p> <p>Greater community cohesion</p>	<p>Resident Participation Coordinator</p> <p>Various</p>	<p>Commissioning and Voluntary Sector Team</p> <p>All CE and TFMC</p>	Ongoing
4 - We will deliver better quality engagement					
We will explore how the council can transform the way it consults with residents through formal structures, to improve the effectiveness of engagement from the perspective of both the council and residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring what 'good engagement' means to all stakeholders and placing this at the heart of our resident engagement approaches Being clear about the role of the structure in decision-making processes (informing, consulting, co-producing) Proposing new engagement methods and approaches to broaden and diversify our reach We will produce a guide for services on how to use the formal structures (Tenant Council, Homeowner Council and Area Housing Forums) for consultation and scrutiny of services. 	Increase in consultation structure participants' satisfaction.	Resident Participation Coordinator		April 2017
We will embed the Charter of Principles and the recommended changes to Putting Residents First to ensure there is consistent quality in our engagement with residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a consultation guide for staff working on direct delivery of 11,000 homes Recruit additional staffing resources for engagement on this programme. Review the operation of the 2 schemes Extend the putting residents first approach across all departments that carry out works on homes Develop a series of consultation templates to ensure a consistent quality to 	<p>Improved confidence by residents that they will be involved in the decisions we make on these programmes</p> <p>Consistent level of service no matter which team are working on our homes.</p>	<p>Resident Participation Coordinator – 11,000 homes</p> <p>Service Development Officer</p>		<p>April 2015</p> <p>May 2015</p> <p>February 2016</p> <p>November 2015</p>

Objective	Action	Outcome	Council officer lead	Delivery partners	Target time for completion
	consultations council wide				
We will prioritise the creation of a tenant compact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with tenant representatives, to produce a tenant compact 	<p>Increase in residents' satisfaction with opportunities for involvement in decision making.</p> <p>Increase in consultation structure participants' satisfaction.</p>	Resident Participation Coordinator	Capacity and partnerships team	December 2015
We will improve our communications with residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the actions identified in the comms strategy such as improvements in our web presence, establishing a consultation portal, producing leaflets for residents on getting involved and how to self organize. 	Improved quality of engagement	Community Engagement Division		April 2017
We will improve training available to council tenant and homeowners in response to resident feed back.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new approach, where we offer micro training with fewer class room hours but a much wider range of topics. In addition to the existing programme deliver additional training in areas such as equalities/diversity, conflict resolution, data protection and confidentiality, improving inter-personal skills, understanding repairs and anti social behaviour. 	Improved resident capacity to manage their halls, TRAs and have effective relationships with the Council and community	Capacity and partnerships coordinator Capacity and partnerships coordinator		April 2016
We will enhance estate inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will re launch our resident estate inspections and provide certified training to residents that participate 				
We will facilitate better networking and information sharing between resident representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will facilitate TRAs becoming mentors for estates without tenant representation when subject to major works. We will look at twinning TRAs to develop a culture of mutual support and learning. We will match different hall management 	Increase in peer to peer support provided by residents and tenants	Tenant & resident organisation co-ordinator	Capacity and partnerships coordinator/ Service development officer	April 2017

Objective	Action	Outcome	Council officer lead	Delivery partners	Target time for completion
	<p>committees to improve access to and management of this valuable resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work closely with SGTO to deliver better support for struggling TRAs. 				
5 – We will demonstrate the value of our engagement					
We will increase the number of residents who benefit from the tenant fund and/or joint security initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will review the funding requirements of TRAs to ensure the maximum financial support available. We will develop a small grants programme for tenants and homeowners to build their engagement and capacity 	Number of TRAs accessing funding.	Commissioning and voluntary sector manager.		April 2017
We will embed processes to ensure ongoing evaluation of our engagement and consultation work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will, where appropriate, evaluate the initiatives in this action plan through resident and internal feedback. We will use impact assessment measures to evaluate the difference our engagement has made to the outcome of a project and how residents feel. 	<p>Quantitative and qualitative information gathered via surveys/interviews</p> <p>Provided with a clear view of the impact of the work of the teams</p>	<p>Service Development Officer</p> <p>Resident Participation Coordinator</p>		Ongoing
We will work with partners to promote financial inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will support Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau and partners in the delivery of financial education training funded via a big Lottery grant (£960k over 5 years) in particular the financial champions. Support the delivery of an event that addresses food waste. 	Increase in numbers of social housing tenants receiving 121 or group support and accessing a credit union products.	Community engagement and housing operations	Southwark CAB, Housing Operations, VCS organizations	Ongoing