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| Item No. 9. | Classification: Open | Date: 6 February 2018 | Meeting Name: Cabinet |
| Report title: | | Review of Resident Engagement – Report from the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee | |
| Ward(s) or groups affected: | | All | |
| From: | | Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee | |

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the cabinet notes the findings of the research exercise into resident engagement.
2. That the cabinet asks the strategic director of housing and modernisation to report back within 8 weeks with proposals on how to involve residents in developing this work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Housing and community safety scrutiny committee conducted a review of resident engagement as part of their annual work programme. As part of this work, the sub-committee 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, tenant and residents associations 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.
4. On 7 February 2017, having heard the evidence presented, the housing and community safety scrutiny sub-committee 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 sub-committee to support recommendations to the council's cabinet on improvements to how the council engages with residents.
5. 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.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Aims and key research questions

6. 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.
7. 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?

Review findings

8. The full report is attached at Appendix A. It 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.
9. The key recommendation is that in response to the evidence presented by the review, and the options for change that it sets out, a collaborative co-design process should now be established 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.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

| Background Papers | Held At | Contact |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Agenda and minutes of housing and community safety scrutiny sub-committee | 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH | Shelley Burke 020 7525 7344 |
| Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=381 | | |

APPENDICES

| No. | Title |
|------------|---|
| Appendix A | Improving Tenant and Homeowner Engagement in Southwark – A Review (Carried out by Kaizen and Social Engine) (circulated separately) |

AUDIT TRAIL

| | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| Lead Officer | Shelley Burke, Head of Overview and Scrutiny | |
| Report Author | Nick Wolff, Principal Strategy Officer, Chief Executive's office Shelley Burke, Head of Overview and Scrutiny | |
| Version | Final | |
| Dated | 25 January 2018 | |
| Key Decision? | No | |
| CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER | | |
| Officer Title | Comments Sought | Comments included |
| Director of Law and Democracy | No | No |
| Strategic Director of Finance and Governance | No | No |
| Chief Officers | No | No |
| Cabinet Member | No | No |
| Date final report sent to Constitutional Team | 25 January 2018 | |