

Item No. 12.	Classification: Open	Date: 18 June 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Resident Involvement Review Recommendations	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Kieron Williams, Housing Management and Modernisation	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR KIERON WILLIAMS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MODERNISATION

Ensuring our council tenants and homeowners have a strong voice in shaping our housing services and the support they need to improve their estates and communities is a key priority for the council. This paper sets out proposals to strengthen the way we do this and our plans to consult residents and homeowners on them.

We want all of our homes and estates to be great places to live. Making that happen is a joint endeavor between the council and our tenants and homeowners. Only by working together can we ensure our housing services and investment are both high quality and focused on the things that matter most. We also know the success of our homes and estates is about more than the buildings and council services. Ensuring our residents have the support they need to improve their neighborhoods and communities is equally important.

Southwark has a long and proud history of tenants and residents working together to improve the homes and lives of the people in our housing. Our tenants and residents associations (TRAs) have always been central to this. The approach set out on the following pages aims to strengthen this vital part of the community infrastructure of our borough, maximizing the support, training and funding available to TRAs and further strengthening the relationship between tenants and residents and their councillors.

The approach set out here also seeks to ensure the full diversity of our tenants and homeowners have the opportunity to be involved. Less than 0.5% of our residents in council homes are currently engage with the council through the existing formal tenants' involvement structures and only 60% of our council homes are currently covered by a TRA. By providing a range of options for people to get involved - at an estate, neighborhood, ward or borough wide level as well as online - these recommendations seek to ensure we are listening to and working with a full range of the people who live in and own our homes.

These proposals are based on substantial engagement with tenants and leaseholders over the past two years, as described on the following pages. To ensure we get these changes right we will undertake a further round of extensive consultation on these proposals over the next few months with the aim of implementing a new framework later this year.

In making these changes our aim is to ensure a growing number of our tenants and homeowners are able to shape our housing services and investment and to take action to improve their estates and communities, so together we can ensure our homes, estates and borough are great places to live.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the cabinet:

1. Notes the recommendations of the Resident Involvement Co-design Panel and subsequent consultation feedback in relation to the council's housing engagement and involvement framework.
2. Notes the council's proposals for a new framework that takes into account the panel's recommendations and consultation feedback:
 - a) That Tenants & Residents Associations remain fundamental to the structure providing both scrutiny and community development functions for tenants and homeowners.
 - b) That the functions of the existing 12 Area Housing Forums in terms of discussing local housing issues, are incorporated into the newly established Empowering Communities Programme which will bring residents and local councillors together to discuss housing and other local issues either on a ward or multi-ward basis.
 - c) That Tenant Council and Homeowner Council are replaced by one Tenants and Homeowners Forum.
 - d) That the Chair, Deputy-Chair and one other member of the proposed Tenants and Homeowners Forum are co-opted to the Housing Scrutiny Commission, a sub-committee of the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - e) That an online panel of tenants and homeowners is established to provide an additional way to regularly seek the views of a wider range of residents through polls and longer consultation exercises.
 - f) That the council will support Tenants and Homeowners to arrange an annual conference.
 - g) That a new Resident Involvement Fund replaces existing separate funds which currently exist for Tenant Council and Homeowners Council.
3. Agrees a further round of consultation on the proposals to take place between July and September 2019.

That the Leader of the Council:

4. Instructs officers to report back to the cabinet member for housing management & modernisation by October 2019 on the outcome of the consultation.
5. Delegates the approval of final proposals for a new Resident Involvement Framework to the cabinet member for housing management & modernisation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. Southwark Council is one of the largest landlords in the country with around 55,000 council homes across the borough. The council's relationship with its tenants and homeowners is especially important and is governed by statute requiring the council to consult its tenants on matters of housing management.
7. The council values the input of and engagement with those who live in council homes and it is committed to finding better ways to listen and respond to all our residents

about the things that matter most to them. If residents, staff and councillors work together in partnership we will be successful in delivering the right services and building stronger and more resilient communities.

8. In 2018 the council made eight new commitments aimed at making Southwark a fairer place to live where all residents have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Theme 1 is “A place to call home” and includes a commitment to work with tenants, residents and homeowner groups to find new ways to engage so that more people can have their say.
9. The current housing engagement structure has been in place for many years despite considerable changes to the way housing services are delivered and in the way that residents tell us they want to be involved. The current formal hierarchy has Tenants & Residents Associations (TRAs) selecting members of their Area Housing Forum (AHF), which elect the members of Tenants and Homeowner councils. This pyramid of representation has achieved much in the past; however it also excludes a large number of residents, such as those living in the near 40% of council homes which are not covered by a TRA.
10. In 2017, following a scrutiny review of resident involvement, the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee commissioned an independent review of the housing engagement structure (the Kaizen/Social Engine Report). The review identified a number of fundamental challenges including the limited coverage of TRAs, how to engage with residents across the borough’s diverse population, the lack of diversity among members of Area Housing Forums, Tenants and Homeowner councils, low awareness of residents of the resources available and a preference for funding to be directed towards estate-based/local community projects.
11. The review also noted that Tenants Council and Homeowners Council meetings don’t contribute to strategic decision making about the housing services. Based on the evidence presented in the review and the identified options for change, Kaizen/Social Engine recommended that the council establish a collaborative co-design process in which the council was a participant alongside residents to develop proposals for reform.
12. On 26 June 2018 cabinet agreed proposals presented following agreement by the Scrutiny Committee to set up an independently chaired panel of residents to review the housing engagement and involvement structures and make recommendations on changes where these were needed. The aim was to broaden and deepen involvement with our residents as far as possible. The panel’s findings were published in January 2019.
13. This report presents proposals for resident involvement which take into account all the consultation the council has carried out to date as set out above.
14. The reform of the resident involvement structure is also informed by changes to wider community engagement with the replacement of community councils with the establishment of the Empowering Communities Programme and a combination of Ward Forums and a Democracy Fund, designed to strengthen the link between local councillors and their constituents.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Scrutiny Review of Resident Engagement

15. The 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 Management and Modernisation 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.
16. 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 residents in council homes currently engage with the council through the existing formal routes.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. 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 2017, 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 who were also invited to send a representative to participate in the process.
20. 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.
21. The full report made 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.
22. The key recommendation was that in response to the evidence presented by the review, and the options for change that it set out, a collaborative co-design process should be established in which the council would be a participant alongside residents. Such an approach was recommended to develop a shared plan for change in

response to the review, which was owned by all stakeholders and built on the widespread participation achieved during the review itself.

23. On 26 June 2018 the scrutiny review was responded to by cabinet. The report noted that the challenge for the council is to create efficient, effective and inclusive engagement structures, processes and culture fit for the 21st century that provides significantly more and convenient ways for people to have their say, leading to greater confidence in and satisfaction with the council's decisions.
24. It also noted that the needs and methods of engagement are constantly changing, for example the requirement to undertake regeneration ballots. This requires the council to develop innovative ways to contact and involve borough residents, groups and organisations and to demonstrate the impact their views have on decision making.
25. The Southwark Conversation was one of the largest consultation exercises ever undertaken by the council. Though a quarter of those taking part in the Southwark Conversation identified as already active in their community, there was significant demand for the council to make better use of community groups, for better coordination of activities, more and different types of consultation or engagement including greater use of digital tools as one method of engagement.
26. The Kaizen/Social Engine report demonstrated that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive review of the housing engagement structure to ensure that all LBS tenants and homeowners can access the structure, to empower TRAs, allow for more efficient and accountable use of residents funds and assets (Tenants Fund, Homeowners Fund, TRA halls) and ensure that there is effective resident involvement in the housing management service.
27. In addition to the exclusionary effects of the current structure, there is a lack of clarity around roles and functions, which has led to significant dissatisfaction amongst both active residents and council officers. This means that while a review would be widely welcomed, how this is undertaken has to be both effective and credible.
28. Cabinet concluded that a Co-Design Panel of Residents should be constituted to involve a representative sample of both established housing representatives and residents currently not actively involved, along with council officers and chaired by an independent expert who could manage an extensive agenda and ensured the effective inclusion of a wide range of views. The Co-Design Panel was modelled on the Fire Safety Residents Scrutiny Panel established in 2017 which was widely acknowledged as an effective way of engaging people.
29. In line with the recommendation of the Kaizen/Social Engine report, the Panel began with adopting a set of principles to guide its discussions and develop a vision of what the housing engagement structure should look like and do.
30. The methods and order by which the Panel considered the various elements of its agenda were decided by the Panel itself, but cabinet agreed they should include:
 - How residents want to be involved and ensuring that the council's consultation and engagement is representative of the diversity of the population of Southwark
 - Review of the coverage, function and support for TRAs and how they can best be supported to improve their community role and reach and improve their neighbourhoods
 - The role and format of area based housing forums

- The role, rules, format and servicing of borough-wide housing bodies.
 - The use and management of the Tenants Fund and Homeowners Fund.
 - The role of resident support bodies such as Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO).
31. The aim with the recruitment of the Panel was to ensure a diversity of membership in terms of housing tenure, geography and demographics. The Panel was serviced by the Communities Division and completed its work by the end of 2018.
 32. The Panel also considered the views of diverse groups of other residents in making its recommendations.

The Co-Design Panel

33. The co-design process required the creation of a panel of residents and officers to look in detail at the resident involvement structure and make recommendations about how it could become more inclusive and effective. In the resident membership of the panel, balance was sought between experienced representatives and residents previously not involved, but who were keen to engage. At the same time, the work of the panel was to be fair and transparent, under the leadership of an experienced, independent chair and all documents made public.
34. Tenants Council (TC), Homeowner Council (HoC) and the MySouthwark Homeowners Board (MSHB) were all offered a seat at the panel. TC voted to boycott the process and declined to send a representative.
35. Over 5,000 residents were invited to apply to be on the panel. 98 applied and seven (+ two reserves) were selected by the independent chair ensuring good location, age, gender and ethnic balance. The panel members were of mixed backgrounds and the majority had not previously been involved in existing formal engagement structures.
36. The panel also included three council officers and the independent chair. It met eight times over four months. To ensure openness and transparency, all papers and minutes have been published on a dedicated webpage on the council's website. A sounding board of around 80 residents (those who applied the panel but were not appointed) were also given a chance to comment and input into the report. The co-design process was open to everyone who wished to contribute their experiences, insights, ideas or suggestions.
37. The panel received evidence in the form of written submissions from existing bodies, residents involved in current structures officers of the council, as well as papers prepared by the independent chair. The panel also spoke with resident representatives and council managers.
38. The panel published its findings in January 2019, an executive summary can be found in appendix 1 and the full report can be found online on the council's website. A four week consultation period followed, the salient points from this consultation can be found within this report.

Proposals for resident involvement

39. One of the key findings arising from both the Kaizen/Social Engine review and the co-design panel was that the current formal engagement structures are not as inclusive as they might be and that those who do not participate in these structures are more

likely to feel that their voices are not heard. Whilst all of the previous work undertaken on the review acknowledges the considerable investment that the current active volunteers make there should be more work to increase the opportunities that our residents have to have their voices heard.

40. The council proposals for consultation contained in this report seek to increase the number of tenants and homeowners actively involved in scrutinising housing services as well as taking part in their local community. They embrace new ways of sharing information and consultation, developing structures at the local level and strengthening the connection between residents and ward councillors. The proposals, which build on the panel recommendations and consultation feedback, are:
- Inclusive by giving residents more choice of how and when to engage, and the possibility to have local issues based meetings where no TRAs exist
 - Modern by making use of technology and other innovative ways of engagement
 - Strengthen the link between residents and councillors
 - Moves away from the pyramid hierarchical set up and transcends tenure divide
 - More efficient and transparent use of resident involvement funds

Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs)

41. Two in three of the over 1,000 respondents to the Kaizen/Social Engine consultation said that they knew about their TRA. 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 their local area and half saying the TRA should be representing tenant views about services to the Council. The report also recommended that the council should review the approach and provision of training and support for tenants and TRAs.
42. The co-design panel made a number of recommendations in respect of grass roots resident involvement:
- Continue to support the work of TRAs and their development as community organisation
 - Hold annual resident involvement events where there is no TRA
 - Raise awareness of opportunities for further involvement – local level, strategic levels, pool of active residents, etc.
 - Provide grassroots resident groups (whether TRAs or not) with opportunities to apply to the proposed Communities Fund
 - Relevant training and support services to resident groups
43. The council agrees that TRAs should remain the basis of the structure of engagement and community development with tenants and homeowners. The council will seek to establish and re-establish TRAs in those areas where none currently exist and will:
- Identify non-TRA areas and work proactively with tenants and residents in those areas to support them in establishing TRAs where they wish to do so
 - Review the existing TRA model constitution, with a view to simplifying it, ensuring it is in plain English (with less bureaucratic jargon)
 - Review the existing training offer for residents to ensure that it is fit for purpose, offers value for money, and widens the pool of digitally-included residents.
 - Provide specialist support for TRAs in respect of financial management and governance to increase transparency and accountability
 - Increase the level of funding available to TRAs, paid for by efficiencies made in the way the current funds are allocated and administered.

- Arrange free full fibre broadband connections to TRA halls
 - Explore how libraries across the borough can be used as resource centres for TRAs for accessing IT facilities, holding meetings where TRA facilities don't exist, training, etc.
44. The previous reviews noted that there was a general reliance on representative structures rather than participation. This is particularly acute where there is no TRA in place (approximately 40% of council homes) where there was no opportunity for residents to get involved with a TRA and then be delegated to an Area Housing Forum and on to either Tenants or Homeowners Council making it more difficult for these voices to be heard.
45. During the consultation following the publication of the panel's recommendations, 74 respondents (93.67%) agreed or partially agreed (79.75% and 13.92% respectively) to ensure that tenants and homeowners have local opportunities to have their voices heard where there is no TRA. Of those who offered an explanation on this question (56), the majority (31) expressed that it was positive to have alternative avenues of engagement and other ways to have their voices heard, specially where TRAs existed but were not effective or representative (10 people made this point). 16 respondents explained that they felt the council should do more to establish and support TRAs.

Ward Forums

46. 52% of respondents to the Kaizen/Social Engine consultation said that they knew nothing about the Tenants Council, Homeowners Council and Area Housing Forums. 57% said they knew nothing about Area Housing Forums. It was also highlighted that Area Housing Forums do not match with the housing management 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.
47. Kaizen/Social Engine also noted that the formal engagement structures of TRAs, Area Housing Forums and Tenants and Home Owners Council all operate mainly through meetings and with regularity that significantly reduces participation.
48. The review concluded that like the Homeowners and Tenants Councils, Area Housing Forums and Community Councils are not sensible to maintain as distinct structures. They saw 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. The reviewers considered 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.
49. The co-design panel recommended that the current Area Housing Forums (AHF) be replaced by new Housing Forums, open to all council tenants and homeowners in their respective area. These should have a clearly defined role and a standard agenda developed with residents, including housing service performance and would provide a mechanism to highlight and escalate systemic concerns.
50. Over 84% of respondents to the co-design panel report consultation agreed or partially agreed that these meetings should be open to everyone in the area, with 89% agreed

that they should provide meaningful resident scrutiny of housing services, as well as support grassroots resident initiatives.

51. The above suggestions would be met by the new Ward Forums. As part of the Council's Empowering Communities reform the Council Assembly has recently approved the creation of Ward Forums that will replace the existing Community Councils with a more flexible structure. These forums will bring together local residents and councillors, to discuss local issues including council housing related matters. They will have the freedom to meet on a single or multiple ward basis. All local residents will be welcome to attend and participate in these meetings regardless of whether they have a TRA in their area or not. Tenants and homeowners living in street properties and freeholders will also be welcomed. A local councillor would be the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Forum, with a member of the public taking the other position.
52. Ward Forums would annually nominate representatives to the Tenant and Homeowners Forum. The ballot would be open to council tenants and homeowners only.
53. Ward and multi-ward Forum meetings will be promoted as widely as possible in order to encourage attendance.
54. Ward Forums will meet on an annual cycle that includes funding and election meetings. Attendees would be asked to fill in equalities and diversity monitoring data so that the council can assess the level of engagement from our diverse communities and take action where this is not being achieved across the board.

Tenants and Homeowners Forum (THF)

55. The Kaizen/Social Engine review recommended merging the Homeowners Council and Tenants Council. 56.7% of respondents said they knew nothing about the Tenants Council. Young people in particular felt that the formal structures of engagement were not appealing to them.
56. The review 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 it was acknowledged 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. The reviewers believed it would be more productive and more efficient – financially and socially – to bring these two together into a single body.
57. The process would have to be carefully managed and will provide a much more efficient structure for engagement. Whilst Kaizen/Social Engine did not advocate the abolition of a distinct Borough-wide housing engagement structure in favour of a generic body, they did believe that greater connection with other related policy priorities and services would be beneficial. There was evidence both from the Rapid Evidence Assessment that included looking at other providers 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 conducted also demonstrated that the views of tenants and homeowners were broadly aligned on the vast majority of issues.
58. The co-design panel recommended that the council sets out reasonable expectations for any strategic group for tenants or homeowners, including:

- That it should be accountable
 - It should be clear who was a member of the body
 - That it should represent homeowner/tenant views and concerns
 - It would receive input from homeowners/tenants
 - That there should be a code of conduct
 - Members should seek out the views of peers
 - To ensure robust governance there should be an annual review
 - That time limits be set on membership
 - That there is no more than one strategic body for homeowners.
 - That the structure for strategic engagement includes both coverage of cross tenure strategic issues and there be coverage of single tenure issues.
59. The panel also suggested that the council consults on options for strategic bodies and on how tenants and homeowners are selected to such bodies.
60. The co-design panel report consultation showed that 42 respondents (53.16%) agreed that the strategic body should be cross tenure. 34 respondents (43.04%) agreed there should be two tenure specific bodies. 45 respondents (56.96%) felt that resident to the strategic body should be a mixture of selected and elected. 25 respondents (31.65%) felt they should be elected and 8 (10.13%) selected.
61. Council tenants and homeowners live in close proximity to each other. On many of our existing estates council tenants, leaseholders, and private renters all live in the same block. As a result, there is a need for council services and communities to work together to ensure our services meet the needs of all our residents and that we all take pride and responsibility in homes and the local area.
62. However the majority of homeowners who took part in the most recent consultation stated that they felt their satisfaction levels were lower than those of tenants. They also felt that they faced some specific issues which they felt warranted a homeowner specific body, particularly to focus on value for money and the quality of the repairs and major works.
63. It is therefore proposed that voices of tenants and homeowners will be brought together in one Tenants and Homeowners Forum (THF) with a total of 47 members: 32 tenant representatives (to represent each of the wards in Southwark, each ward that has more than 2,000 tenants Newington, Old Kent Road, Peckham, Chaucer, South Bermondsey, Faraday, Camberwell Green, North Bermondsey, Nunhead and Queens Road will have two representatives) and 15 homeowners (three per new Empowering Communities Community Champion area). To help maximise the diversity of people represented on THF it is proposed that for those wards with two representatives there would be no more than one representative per estate and that there would be a gender balance between the two representatives.
64. The forum would have a Chair appointed for a term not exceeding four continuous years. The Chair and Deputy Chair would be one tenant and one leaseholder. Members would receive training and support from officers around their roles. The Chair and Deputy Chair would meet with the Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Modernisation between each meeting on issues arising from the Group and jointly agree agendas.
65. The roles of this group would be as follows:

- Effective scrutiny of the management of the council's housing stock receiving good quality management information from officers and where necessary referring this to the council scrutiny commission.
- A forum for dialogue on strategic housing issues with an experienced and informed group of residents that supplements wider consultation
- Oversight of how the council engages with tenants and homeowners
- Receiving feedback from other parts of the consultation and engagement structure and wider consultations to supplement these and ensure they are effective.

Housing Scrutiny Commission

66. The council has an established committee structure through which elected members scrutinise the delivery of council (and wider) services. This includes an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and for subcommittees, including a Housing Scrutiny Commission.
67. It is proposed that the Chair, Deputy Chair and one other member of the Tenants and Homeowners Forum would be co-opted members of any Housing Scrutiny Commission and would have a right to fully participate in the meetings and deliberations of that Commission.
68. The Tenants and Homeowners Forum would have the right to select one subject per year for consideration by the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

Tenants and homeowners online panel

69. The overall conclusion of the Kaizen/Social Engine review was that the default method of engagement had become meetings. It was recommended that the way to increase participation was to offer a range of ways to get engaged and to increase the pool of those engaged. This included a recommendation on making more effective use of digital tools based on two way engagement.
70. Kaizen/Social Engine noted 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 was not that online engagement 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 needed to be accompanied by a level of sophistication, engagement expertise and leadership in order to make it 'live' and relevant.
71. The review particularly noted that young people were more likely to embrace digital platforms. New technology presented 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.
72. It is therefore proposed that alongside all of the structures will be a new flexible online presence to provide a one-stop information portal. In addition, the council will endeavour to recruit up to 1,000 tenants and homeowners to a panel of active residents who can be invited to give their views or take part in service improvement initiatives, such as Task & Finish groups. The membership of the panel would be a

cross section of our communities, encompassing a geographical, age, gender and ethnicity mix.

73. This arrangement is working well in a number of other local authority areas. Southampton City Council for example, has a People's Panel which is a group of residents who take part in surveys and other opportunities to express their views on council services and living in the city. It provides a good opportunity to influence how services are delivered, highlight issues, and help shape public services in the community. Run by Southampton City Council and with support from the University of Southampton, the People's Panel has been active since 2015 and the results from surveys have been used to inform a large number of decisions and service changes.
74. Members of the Southampton People's Panel are sent either a poll or survey around once every 2-4 weeks. The polls are typically quick to complete and are around 1 - 3 questions long. The surveys are generally a little longer to help them get more detail on a topic. Individuals are free to choose how many of these polls and surveys they complete.
75. In Southampton from time to time, there are also opportunities to be involved in other activities like focus groups to get more detailed thoughts on a certain topic. In the past Southampton have also had People's Panel members test concepts and proposals, such as new features on the council website. Anyone can join and the aim is to get a diverse panel that reflects the people of Southampton.
76. Southwark Council recognises that not all residents are digitally included and the consultation feedback showed concern that greater use of IT should not exclude residents due to lack of access to or experience of using modern technology and tools. At the same time, digital means of engagement are increasing in importance as a means of involving a wider pool of residents and would remain one of a number of ways in which residents can engage with the council so that it does not exclude anyone who wants to have a say. The proposed structure would retain face-to-face meetings for those residents who favour this way of engagement through TRAs, ward forums and the THF and also offer digital means of engagement for those who prefer it.

Resident Involvement Fund (RIF)

77. There are currently three separate funds:
 - Tenants Fund (£521,000 per annum approx.), overseen by the Tenants Fund Management Committee
 - Homeowners Fund (£155,000 per annum approx.) overseen by the Homeowners Fund Management Committee
 - Tenants & Residents Social Improvements Grants (TRSIG) £184,000 overseen through a Grants Panel made up from Area Housing Forums representatives.
78. The Tenant Fund was set up in 1990 as part of a reasonable rent charge to tenants under s.24 of the Housing Act 1985. There is no legal requirement for the tenant fund to exist as a ring fenced element in the HRA. The TF currently covers the cost of:
 - Annual grant to the Southwark Group of Tenants' Organisations (SGTO)
 - TRA annual grants
 - Annual Tenants' Conference
 - Officers' salary contributions

- Training for TRAs
 - Sundry cost such as taxis and catering for meetings.
79. The Homeowners Fund (HF) is an allocation of £10 per leaseholder, part of the housing management service charges. The HF currently covers:
- 27 % contribution to TRA annual grants
 - Homeowners' Conferences
 - Officers' salary contributions – staff that administer grant funding, provide training to and advice on the start-up and running of TRAs
 - Grant to Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for independent leaseholders advice service
 - Sundry cost such as taxis and catering for meetings.
80. The Kaizen/Social Engine review discovered that over two thirds (64%) of respondents said they knew nothing about the Tenants and Homeowners Funds. Respondents expressed a clear preference for spending to be allocated to activity which directly and demonstrably benefited their communities: Improvements to the area, social and community events, activities for young people and support for local projects. The review noted that this appeared disconnected with the current allocation of funds. It was also noted that there was an over-reliance on outputs rather than delivering outcomes and opportunities that benefit local communities.
81. The co-design panel recommended that there should be a Communities Fund and that it should include the following:
- There should be clear objectives and outcomes for the Fund and accountability for delivering those outcomes
 - TRAs, TMOs, resident groups and community organisations (with clear support from the community) would be eligible to bid for funds
 - The council should support applications from looser groups without a TRA or a bank account.
82. The panel's recommended specific objectives for the Fund were:
- There should be an open and thorough process for communicating about this fund stating the purpose, how to apply, what requirements there were and the importance of impact from what the fund supported
 - There should be a group consisting of councillors, officers and residents that would assess applications based on a transparent process as well as the precise criteria to be used. This group would review impact annually and apply learning for future Fund objectives and criteria
 - That there should be a borough-wide fund or funds. This should include the following:
 - There should be clear objectives and outcomes for the fund(s)
 - That those objectives include advice and support for tenants and homeowners including working groups
 - That there is accountability for all receiving funding for delivery of objectives and outcomes
 - That there are appropriate and applied mechanisms for dealing with conflicts of interest
 - That there is efficient decision making with other parallel funding processes

- That strategic body or bodies working with the council sets the objectives, decides upon applications, review impact annually and apply learning for future fund objectives and criteria
83. Taking into account the above, a new Resident Involvement Fund (RIF) would replace existing separate funds for tenants and homeowners. The RIF will be calculated using the same formulas currently in place giving an approximate annual budget of £676,000.
 84. The new RIF would fund the TRA annual grants (circa £178,000), officers' salary contributions (circa £132,000) and TRAs training budget (circa £30,000). The remainder (circa £364,000) would be split in two halves. One half of the combined fund would be devolved to Ward Forums on a formula basis reflecting the number of tenants and homeowners in the ward, to be agreed by ward councillors and spent in accordance with borough-wide objectives on council estates and residential properties. This would be added to the TRSIG funding divided by ward. The aim is that the distribution of these funds is equitable across the borough. The council will consult on the proposed formula for allocating this fund as part of the wider consultation on these changes.
 85. Ward councillors would be expected to work with local tenants and homeowners in agreeing local spending which would be determined at the same time as other ward-based funding decisions.
 86. The other half of the fund would be for agreed strategic objectives and subject to decision by the Cabinet member on advice from the Tenants and Homeowners Forum. Strategic spending would be expected to deliver identifiable and measurable outcomes for tenants and homeowners. The council will support Tenants and Homeowners to arrange an annual Tenants and Homeowners conference.
 87. It will be a Cabinet Member for Housing decision, taking on advice from the Tenants and Homeowners Forum, to decide what funding is allocated to third party organisations and whether this is allocated via grants or contract.

Democracy Fund

88. The establishment of the Democracy Fund, as part of the replacement of Community Councils, will also provide the opportunity for residents to initiate multi-ward meetings involving local councillors. Proposals to the Fund will be decided upon by Community Champions (councillors appointed by Council Assembly).

My Southwark Homeowner Board

89. As part of Southwark Council's commitment to the independence of the MySouthwark Homeowners Agency an independent Board was established in 2017 to examine the performance of Southwark Council's housing related services for homeowners and to identify opportunities to improve service delivery to homeowners. My Southwark Homeowners Board would remain in its current form and have a direct link to the proposed Tenants and Homeowners Forum.

Southwark Tenant Management Organisations Committee (STMOC)

90. A TMO Liaison Committee meets every two months to discuss issues affecting all TMOs across the borough. The Committee is made up of two representatives from each of the TMOs, as well as councilors and council officers. STMOC will remain in its current form and continue to carry out its role identifying opportunities to improve the

partnership working between the council and TMOs and identify improvements to services in areas under TMO management for the benefit of residents.

Policy implications

91. Homes England took over responsibility for the regulation of social housing providers in January 2018. It works with social housing landlords and tenants to improve the standard of services for tenants and residents. It took over responsibility for the regulation of social housing providers and monitors their performance. This includes a standard on tenant involvement and empowerment.
92. Local authorities also have a statutory requirement under s.105 of the Housing Act 1985 to put in place arrangements for consulting tenants on matters of housing management.
93. The council's Fairer Future Vision and the current Council Plan set the context for a relationship with residents based on trust, openness and transparency. The vision and plan describe a new relationship with citizens and customers that make more of the council's community leadership role. Part of this role is encouraging others to come together to do more, looking to the community to work with the council to provide solutions to the issues we face together.
94. In September 2017 the council adopted a Social Regeneration Framework for 'ensuring that the places where people live, now and in the future, create new opportunities, promote wellbeing and reduce inequalities so people have better lives, in stronger communities, and achieve their potential'.
95. The proposals outlined in this paper also connect council housing involvement with wider community engagement by integrating with structures replacing Community Councils.
96. In this context it is important that the council clearly states its commitment to effective engagement between the council and residents living in council homes and ensuring this is fit for purpose and reaches a broad and diverse range of our residents.

Community impact statement

97. The next steps set out in this report aim to enable the council to carry out more effective community engagement. It is intended that this will lead to improved engagement with all sections of the community. This is about improving the way we support strong, active and inclusive communities that are informed and involved in decision making and enable us to improve public services for everyone in the borough.
98. The approach proposed in this report recognises the diversity of our communities, the importance of community capacity building and the need to provide better and wider opportunities for communities to participate to influence service delivery, decision making and policy development in ways that suit them.
99. Whilst the council doesn't currently collect demographic data of those currently engaged in its consultation structures, anecdotal evidence shows that they are not representative of our resident demographics. It is proposed that the new resident involvement framework will routinely ask participants to voluntarily fill in demographic data so that going forward the council can assess how representative the mechanisms are and take action where they aren't.

100. An equalities analysis has been completed addressing both the proposals outlined in this paper and the next stage of consultation. While both elements comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, it is clear that council does not hold comprehensive equalities data about all residents living in council housing. In implementing the new structure, the council will introduce systems for capturing equalities data so as to be able to authoritatively report on the success of the new structure in reaching out to all members of the communities.
101. In addition the Southwark Equalities and Humans Right Panel considered the report and made comments which have been incorporated into the equality analysis and the recommendations found in this report.

Resource implications

102. The above resident involvement framework changes can be delivered within existing budgets however no savings are anticipated. It is likely that a reorganisation of the resident involvement business unit staffing structure would be required in order to implement the above proposals.

Consultation

103. Between 2011 and 2013 the council undertook an Independent Housing Commission chaired by Jan Luba QC. It produced a report which challenged the council to think about the future of its housing stock. The council then embarked upon a wide ranging public engagement exercise, with dozens of events and multiple opportunities for everyone in the borough to get involved and to be heard.
104. The report stated that more effort should be made to change the “provider-user” culture that pervaded council housing in Southwark. It added that this could be partly achieved by actively seeking to engage residents more with housing management and setting local housing standards.
105. An independent review into resident involvement undertaken by The Kaizen/Social Engine then followed between April and May 2017 and included 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.
106. In addition as stated above, a four week consultation period was carried out following the publication of the panel report and the feedback received has been incorporated in the proposals. The Tenant Council also produced a written submission which can be seen in appendix 2.
107. On 23 April 2019, the Housing Commission of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee questioned the Cabinet Member for Housing and Modernisation and the Director of Communities about the consultation process to date.
108. It is recommended to have one further round of consultation for the proposals contained within this report. It is proposed that the consultation reaches out to a wider

range of residents over and above those already engaged in existing resident involvement structures. To that effect officers will put together a comprehensive consultation communications plan for activity to be delivered between July to September 2019 for a final report back to Cabinet Member for Housing and Modernisation by October. The aim is to ensure that this consultation reaches out as widely as possible and is representative of the diversity of the populations that live in council housing.

109. The cabinet member and officers will also meet with representatives of the existing consultation bodies – TC, HoC, AHFs, and STMOC to feed in their views to the consultation and discuss the way forward.
110. The further round of consultation will present the detailed proposals for the new resident involvement framework contained in this report in an easy to understand format. A questionnaire will be made available, both in printed copies and an online version will be available in order to offer a chance to as many residents as possible to share their views on the proposals so that residents' feedback can be captured and reported back.
111. The aim will be to use a wide range of consultation methods to reach as representative a sample of residents living in council homes whether renting or homeowners. This will include face to face consultation at key locations throughout the borough, door knocking on estates and council owned street properties, use of existing resident involvement structures and the new ward forums, engagement with all tenants and residents associations and TMOs. Responses will be monitored as the consultation progresses to identify and target any under-represented groups. A communications plan will ensure active promotion of the consultation as it progresses. This will take place in July to September 2019.
112. This further round of consultation should result in an increase on the number of residents who participate in shaping resident involvement.
113. The consultation on the council proposals contained in this report will encompass a variety of engagement mechanisms in order to ensure it is representative.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

114. The report recommends that cabinet note the proposals for a new framework for resident involvement and seeks approval to consult on the specific proposals.
115. The current framework forms part of the council's arrangements to discharge its statutory obligation to consult with its secure and introductory tenants under Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 (secure tenants) and similar provision in Section 137 of the Housing Act 1996 in respect of introductory tenants. Specifically, the council is required to maintain such arrangements as it considers appropriate to enable tenants who are likely to be substantially affected by a matter of 'housing management' to be informed of any proposals and to make their views known. Any representations need to be considered in accordance with those arrangements. 'Housing management' for this purpose includes the management, maintenance, improvement or demolition of homes and the provision of services and amenities (but not including matters relating to rent or charges for services). Although not required by statute to consult on changes to rent and other charges, the council has, under paragraph 6e in the conditions of tenancy with council tenants undertaken to consult with Tenant's Council before

seeking to make such changes.

116. There is no similar general statutory provision in relation to the council's long leaseholders although principles of fairness may require consultation be carried out in certain circumstances and there are specific consultation duties as to charges for works under Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 which engage when 'qualifying works' are undertaken; for example, major works.
117. Local housing authorities in England are also regulated as "registered providers of housing" by the Regulator of Social Housing under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. It is a requirement that local housing authorities comply with principles and standards applied by the Regulator. Among the "regulatory standards" is the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard (July 2017). The standard includes a requirement that registered providers ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the formulation of policies and strategic priorities; making decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards; scrutinising performance; managing their homes; and managing repair and maintenance services.
118. In the exercise of its housing management functions, a local authority is also required by the Local Government Act 1999 to achieve "best value"; in other words, to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". The council, in deciding how to fulfil this duty, must consult representatives of a wide range of local people, including representatives of council tax payers, those who use or are likely to use services provided by the authority, and those appearing to the authority to have an interest in the local area.
119. The report sets out the consultation that has taken place to date and the outcome of that consultation. It is proposed that further consultation take place on the specific proposals set out in this report. Cabinet should note that consultation undertaken by the council must meet a minimum standard of fairness if it is to be considered lawful. In order to ensure any consultation is fair, the law requires that consultation should happen when the proposals are still at a formative stage; sufficient information should be given to enable the proposal to be intelligently considered; adequate time for responses should be given; and decision makers must conscientiously take into account responses to consultation when the ultimate decision is taken. These principles should be applied at all stages of the consultation process.
120. Cabinet is also reminded that the council, in the exercise of all its functions, must have due regard to the public sector equality duty in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Specifically to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, (b) to advance equality of opportunity and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. The relevant protected characteristics for this purpose are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. Where any disproportionate effects are anticipated, the council should seek to mitigate where possible. It should also be noted that the duty is a continuing one and the impact of the proposals should be kept under review during the further consultation and during formulation of the recommendations for final decision.
121. The report recommends that certain members of the proposed Tenants and Homeowners Board are co-opted to the Housing Scrutiny Commission. As noted in the report the Housing and Environmental Commission is a sub-committee of the council's

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). The council's scrutiny function provides a challenge to the delivery of public services in Southwark and forms part of the council's decision making structure governed by the Council's constitution.

122. Paragraph 4 of the OSC procedure rules in the constitution allow OSC and its sub-committees to appoint a number of people as non-voting co-optees, with the approval of the chair and vice chair of the OSC, who may be appointed to service for the full year or the duration of a specific task or review.
123. The proposal to change the way in which various 'resident's funds' are administered will be subject to the rules relating to the keeping of the Housing Revenue Account under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and officers will need to work with the council's finance team in developing the proposal.
124. As to the proposal to devolve part of the proposed Resident Involvement Fund (RIF) to Ward Forums, this would effectively devolve decision making on use of the fund to ward councillors. This is permissible under Section 236 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 but may require changes to the council's constitution which can only be approved by council assembly and will require the prior consideration of the proposal by the constitutional steering panel.

Strategic Director of Finance & Governance (FC019/005)

125. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance notes the proposals for a new resident engagement and involvement framework, subject to a further round of consultation. This involves the amalgamation and rationalisation of existing funding streams comprising the Tenant Fund, Homeowners Fund and Tenants & Residents Social Improvement Grants as set out in the report. Given the proposed changes, some restructuring of the existing Resident Involvement team will be required to address the revised arrangements, but it is anticipated that this will be achieved within the existing budgeted resources within the HRA.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Agenda and minutes of housing and community safety scrutiny subcommittee)	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Shelley Burke 020 7525 7344
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=381		
Review of Resident Engagement - Report from the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Stephen Douglass 020 7525 7344
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=5755&Ver=4		
Improving tenant and homeowner engagement in Southwark – a review Carried out by Kaizen and Social Engine	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Stephen Douglass 020 7525 7344
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s73753/Appendix%20A%20Improving%20Tenant%20and%20Homeowner%20Engagement%20in%20Southwark%20A%20Review%20Carried%20out%20by%20Kaizen.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Co-design panel report (circulated separately)
Appendix 2	Response to co-design panel report from Tenant Council (circulated separately)

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Kieron Williams, Housing Management And Modernisation		
Lead Officer	Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation		
Report Author	Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities Eva Gomez, Resident Involvement Manager		
Version	Final		
Dated	6 June 2019		
Key Decision?	Yes		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included	
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes	
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes	
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			6 June 2019