

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 15th September 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Review of the Resident Involvement strategy 2019 - 2022

Report summary:

This report outlines a process to review the Resident Involvement Strategy and scopes the key issues and considerations to ensure that we maintain a fit for purpose approach to engaging our tenants in the management and maintenance of their homes.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That the Housing Review Board note the report, agree and approve the scope and methodology proposed.

Reason for recommendation:

Consultation on the outline, scope and methodology of the review.

Officer: Yusef Masih – Interim Housing Services Manager. ymasih@eastdevon.gov.uk Sue Sanders Vice Chair of the Resident Involvement Management Group

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Medium Impact

The regulator requires EDDC to demonstrate the inclusivity of the diverse resident base in its engagement activities and how EDDC reaches out to those customers who do not engage.

EDDC are required to capture the diversity of its residents when recruiting to engagement activities, including diversity of property type and geography

An equality Impact assessment will be completed on development and delivery of the revised strategy.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: High Risk;

A key risk would be to fail to meet the regulators requirements and good governance principles regarding Governance and Consumer Regulation, in particular those on resident involvement and empowerment.

Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

The report will also be supported by a detailed presentation which members will be sent following the meeting

1. Background

1.1 The current Resident Involvement Strategy 2019 – 2022 (APPENDIX A) is due for review and this report outlines the scope of the review and the methodology we propose to use to ensure that we have a fit for purpose strategy going forward.

The strategy sets out our commitment to developing a range of ways and extent to which tenants and leaseholders can become involved in the housing service.

1.1.2 The Tenant involvement and empowerment standard

The current strategy sets out how we comply with the Social Housing Regulators Consumer standards that registered providers of social housing must meet. The tenant involvement and empowerment standard sets out the requirements for customer service, choice, complaints, involvement and empowerment and understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants.

1.2 The current strategy

1.2.1 The objectives of the current strategy have been to continue to improve our housing services for our residents with plans to:

- give everyone a chance to have a say
- building stronger, supportive, more connected communities through involvement
- work together to ensure the best service is provided
- work together to ensure services continue to improve, are effective and efficient

1.2.2 The strategy sets out the benefits of involving residents at different levels with the aim to ensure:

- we increase customer satisfaction
- policies and procedures that are fit for purpose
- continuous improvement in service delivery
- creating sustainable communities
- having a role in decision making, helping people gain a better understanding, why some changes are gradual and some happen overnight

1.2.3 The strategy outlines eight involvement principles:

- Open information
- Residents will decide their own depth and degree of involvement
- Everything in housing is open to influence
- Involvement is everyone's business
- Early enough influence
- Getting everyone involved
- Demonstrating that everyone's view have been taken into account and providing feedback
- Planning for successful involvement – keeping the plans on track

2. Key considerations for the revised strategy 2023 – 2025

The context for the review is based on government guidance; new legislation; the Social Housing Regulators' expectations; good practice, and tenants' expectations. It is timely to review our Strategy as the landscape has changed post Covid and we are keen to signal our intent to improve the ways in which we involve tenants in the delivery of the housing service, and influencing decisions that affect their homes. This will build on the work of the Housing Review Board and be undertaken in an open and transparent way, giving opportunity to contribute towards the emerging refreshed and revised strategy.

Our vision is that resident involvement involves all staff in the service and should be at the centre of service delivery and decision making. We will follow the Systems Thinking principles that considers What Matters to the customer and puts the service user first.

It is important that we review the current strategy and consider what has worked well; areas for improvement, and how we can build on our current strengths. We will need to consult with the current governance and involvement groups to ensure their views shape the revised strategy.

The review will also need to consider good governance; value for money; methods of communication, and the use of new technology.

2.1 The Charter for Social Housing Tenants: The Social Housing White Paper

In November 2020 the Government published the 'The Charter for Social Housing Tenants: The Social Housing White Paper' placing a renewed focus on engagement with customers and communities. The White paper has signalled changes to the way we are regulated and expectations on how we involve customers, implement customer feedback and involve customers in the development of services.

Our Regulator is clear it expects all landlords to act now and become compliant with these new expectations before they become law in the Social Housing Act 2023/24. There are tougher expectations on Boards to listen, understand and consider the voice of residents when reviewing Board direction and priorities. There is a particular emphasis on safety; listening; repairs; complaints, and respect. The Social Housing Act will bring a more proactive Consumer Regulator and Ofsted style inspections on consumer matters.

The strategy will need to capture the range of ways in which residents can influence the Housing Service and will support compliance with the SHWP when it becomes consumer regulation.

2.2 Impact of Covid 19 Pandemic

The Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown placed unprecedented pressures on individuals and communities. Community engagement, involvement and consultation was limited during lockdown and we are now commencing the journey of relaunching community

involvement. The strategy will need to consider the impact of Covid and the emerging issues around food, fuel poverty, mitigating social isolation and supporting vulnerable people. It will also need to consider the 'new norm' as people's behaviours and choices on how they wish to be involved may have changed.

2.3 The Communities Team

The pandemic and lockdown meant the closure of community facilities and greatly limited community development work. The review is timely as we are also now starting to emerge from the lockdown restrictions and can reengage with our communities.

Many providers are strengthening their community resources and teams in order to meet with expectations of the Social Housing White Paper and Consumer standards.

We have already responded to this by refreshing our Communities Team and the creation of a Communities Manager in order to ensure we have the focus, capacity and resources to deliver the regulator's requirements.

The Strategy will be led by the Communities team supporting teams across the service.

3. Objectives of the review and strategy

- Set out our vision for involving, consulting, empowering communities, hearing and listening to the voice of our residents.
- Review the current strategy ensuring it meets with the Consumer standards and Social Housing White Paper and anticipated regulatory standards
- Consider areas for improvement; successes, and learning from the current strategy
- Review the resources and budgets
- Review the current tenant involvement groups to ensure they are required; supported; receive appropriate training, and have a Terms of Reference
- Create a workplace culture where resident views are seen to be critical to service delivery and development
- Place resident influence at the heart of decision making
- Improve the communication of outcomes as a result of customer engagement
- Encourage residents to volunteer their opinions in a variety of ways to influence services and make improvements, through the "Resident Voice"
- Display a broad menu of engagement opportunities for residents to share their voice in a variety of ways, including digital feedback, surveys, resident research and meetings
- Ensure a clear voice is heard from residents
- Grow our pool of 'involved residents' improving succession
- Ensure that tenants are empowered by providing reliable, timely and understandable information to support effective scrutiny of our service delivery and performance.
- Develop resilient communities working in partnership with statutory and voluntary stakeholders, and delivering projects as needed to improve health, wellbeing, financial wellbeing, self-help, personal development and community cohesion.

4. The review process

The review will be led by the Interim Housing Services Manager and the project Group. We will produce terms of reference for the group based on this report, if the recommendations are agreed by the Board. The following elements will be covered as part of the review methodology:

4, 1 Timescales

Review / consultation / development	Sep 22 – Nov 22
Consultation on draft strategy	Dec / Jan 22
Draft strategy design and communication	Jan / Feb 23
Approval of draft strategy and implementation plan	March 23
Communicate and launch strategy	March / April 23

4.2 Project group

- Yusef Masih Interim Housing Services Manager
- Sue Saunders Vice Chair of the Resident Involvement Management Group
- To be appointed - Communities Manager

4.3 Consultation on the draft strategy

- Housing Review Board
- Tenants Involvement Forum
- Joint Community Action Panel (JCAP)
- Repairs and Maintenance Group
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- Designated Tenant Complaint Panel
- Conference Committee
- Editorial Group
- Wider Consultation – Focus Groups
- All Tenant and Residents Associations
- Housing Staff

4.4 Implementation and monitoring

The development and ongoing reporting of progress against the strategy plan:

- Quarterly to the Resident Involvement Management Group
- Six monthly to the Housing Review Board
- Reporting of value for money and impact
- Reporting of agreed key performance indicators

4.5 Key Links

- Housing Services Plan
- Corporate plan
- Self Assessment Social Housing White Paper
- Self assessment Housing Ombudsmen complaints handling code
- Self assessment Regulators Consumer standards

4.6 Communicating the strategy and creating an identity

Strategic communication including a clear identity is required to help connect tenants to the housing service and residents to each other. Our activities need to be recognisable by all residents and clearly communicated. As part of the review we will need to establish how we communicate

Residents need to be able to recognise and identify with our activities helping us to engage with all our stakeholders.

The strategy should seek to enhance the reputation of the Housing service and EDDC.

5. Key Risks

A key risk would be to fail to meet the regulators requirements and good governance principles regarding Governance and Consumer Regulation, in particular those on resident involvement and empowerment.

The strategy will support compliance with the current RSH Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and will be subject to annual self-assessment by the Board.

The strategy also supports compliance with current Consumer Regulation and the requirements of the Social Housing White Paper (SHWP). The SHWP will become the Social Housing Act in 2023/24, which brings with it tougher expectations on Boards to listen, understand and consider the voice of residents when reviewing Board direction and priorities, in particular on safety, listening, repair, complaints and respect. The Social

Housing Act will bring a more proactive Consumer Regulator and Ofsted style inspections on consumer matters.

6. Conclusion

That the strategy is reviewed in line with the contents of this report and feedback from the Housing Review Board.

The draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2023-2025 will be presented to the March Housing Review Board for adoption.

Financial implications:

There are no financial implications on which to comment at this stage.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications on which to comment