



RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Introduction

We are pleased to introduce our Resident Engagement Framework which signifies Stevenage Borough Council's (SBC) ambition to extend beyond our successful Co-operative Neighbourhoods model and transform the way we work in partnership with our residents of social housing. We are determined to ensure your 'tenant voice' is embedded across our landlord service, so that we can be held to account on our housing performance and that we keep our residents informed on what matters to them.

Our Resident Engagement Framework will evolve over time as we listen to feedback and identify emerging opportunities for residents to influence and shape our housing service. It will be brought to life by a suite of flexible engagement opportunities that we will continue to develop in partnership with our residents by ensuring we provide a range of different ways to interact with us in a way that suits both their time commitments and their preferences.

The principles of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard as outlined in the **Consumer Standards Code of Practice** are to:

Give genuine consideration of tenant's views and take steps to ensure that all tenants have an equitable opportunity to be involved in influencing and scrutinising strategies, policies and services and to foster a strong organisational culture of fairness, courtesy and respect where tenants are listened to and that they trust their landlord.

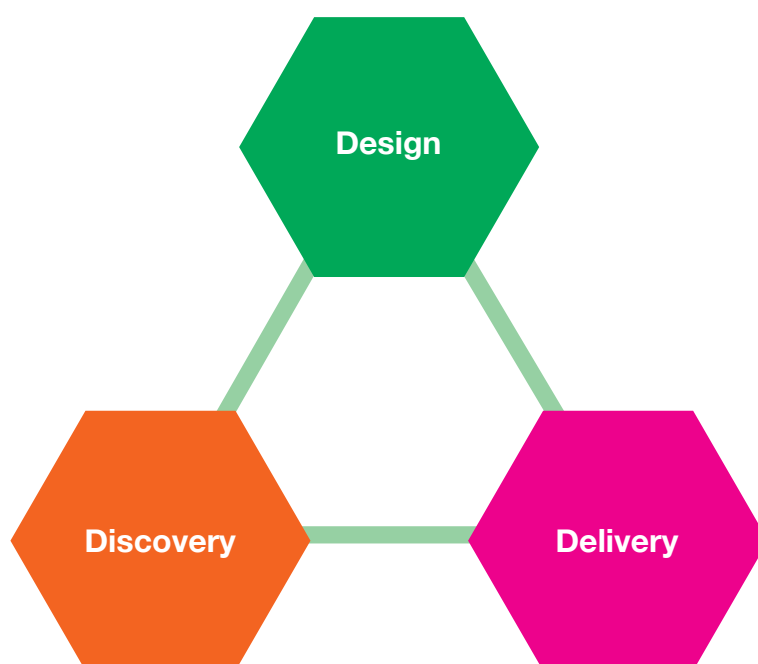


Housing or landlord related engagement and scrutiny has taken place within this wider co-operative approach often on a case-by-case basis with an emphasis on **‘engaging, listening and acting’**. We did this by the following methods:

- Traditional face to face engagement.
- Pop up consultations within wards.
- Attending events to engage with Stevenage residents and find out what is important to them.
- Providing an online engagement platform.
- Utilising community projects to engage with the residents within specific wards of Stevenage.
- Co-operative Neighbourhood teams working across Stevenage wards.

Given the important shifts nationally, this framework proposes that we commit greater focus and resource to evolve and strengthen specific engagement with residents who live within our social housing to ensure their influence can be demonstrated and measured.

The council has recently engaged TPAS (Tenants Participation Advisory Service), who are a nationally respected organisation that works with tenants and landlords across the country to improve resident engagement. They are helping the council to deliver a re-engineering project through a process of discovery, design, and delivery to build a new framework of engagement. Alongside this, and in response to recent changes in regulation and legislation, the council is also going through the process of adopting a new Resident Engagement Strategy which aims to bring a sharp focus to the landlord-tenant relationship that the council has with its residents.



3-D approach: Tpas 2020

Vision

Our vision for this Framework is to develop what we have discovered is needed for effective tenant influence in partnership with TPAS, tenants and council staff. Emerging themes from the re-engineering process are captured below.

	Tenants	Staff	Leaders
Leadership	<p>Tenants have opportunities to influence how leaders lead at Stevenage by working with staff via formal involvement opportunities.</p> <p>Tenants have active roles in staff recruitment and procurement of services.</p>	<p>Staff are confident. They understand what is expected of them and are held accountable for their areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Staff are empowered and encouraged to seek out tenant feedback. There are mechanisms for this feedback to be shared.</p>	<p>Leaders listen to staff and tenants. They use what they learn to improve services.</p> <p>Leaders set and drive a culture that reflects the value of hearing tenants' voices.</p> <p>Leaders ensure that tenant engagement and influencing activities are approached strategically and are properly resourced.</p>
Everyone	<p>There are both formal structures and informal influencing opportunities to maximise the ways in which a broad range of tenants can get involved and give feedback.</p>	<p>Actively looking for, hearing and acting on tenant feedback is an explicit part of everyone's job.</p> <p>Staff in non-tenant facing roles understand how they contribute to providing services for tenants.</p> <p>Staff have a clear route to share tenant feedback and know how they should respond to feedback received.</p>	<p>Leaders drive a culture that puts tenants at the heart of Stevenage's housing management service. ("No decision about me without me").</p> <p>Leaders and elected Members should expect evidence of a broad spectrum of tenant feedback to influence decisions.</p>

	Tenants	Staff	Leaders
Communication	<p>Tenants know what their opportunities and options are for engaging with Stevenage.</p> <p>Tenants have evidence that their voice has been heard and know how they have influenced services. It is easy for all tenants to contact Stevenage.</p> <p>Tenants know what to expect (<i>response times, service levels</i>) when they contact Stevenage.</p>	<p>Working structures and practices build in opportunities (and requirements) for staff to listen, act upon and feedback to tenants.</p> <p>Staff respond to contact from tenants within agreed timescales.</p> <p>Use “you said, we did” to provide feedback.</p>	<p>Leaders set and model the behaviours and standards for high-quality, effective communication between tenants and staff.</p> <p>Leaders provide resources for effective communication. E.g. newsletters or developing digital methods of communicating.</p>
Structure & Process	<p>All service delivery is underpinned by good processes and appropriate structures that include a requirement to hear the tenant voice.</p> <p>Structures & processes support both formal and informal tenant engagement influence. These are clearly communicated to tenants, along with evidence of the outcomes.</p> <p>Formal engagement structures facilitate tenants holding Stevenage to account.</p>	<p>Tenant influence (TI) is “baked in” to policy and service reviews so that TI is effective right from the start, not part-way through.</p> <p>Structures and processes facilitate and require staff to feedback to tenants as a matter of course.</p> <p>Staff understand how other teams work and link in with them to ensure seamless services for tenants.</p>	<p>Leaders ensure that appropriate and robust structures and processes are in place to ensure timely engagement, and that tenant feedback is acted upon.</p> <p>Resources are made available to enable and support agreed tenant engagement structures</p>

Resident Engagement

The majority of our residents feel that we treat them fairly and with respect but told us that they would like to be kept better informed in ways that suit them and that they wanted us to demonstrate that we listened and acted on what they said.

What we have done...

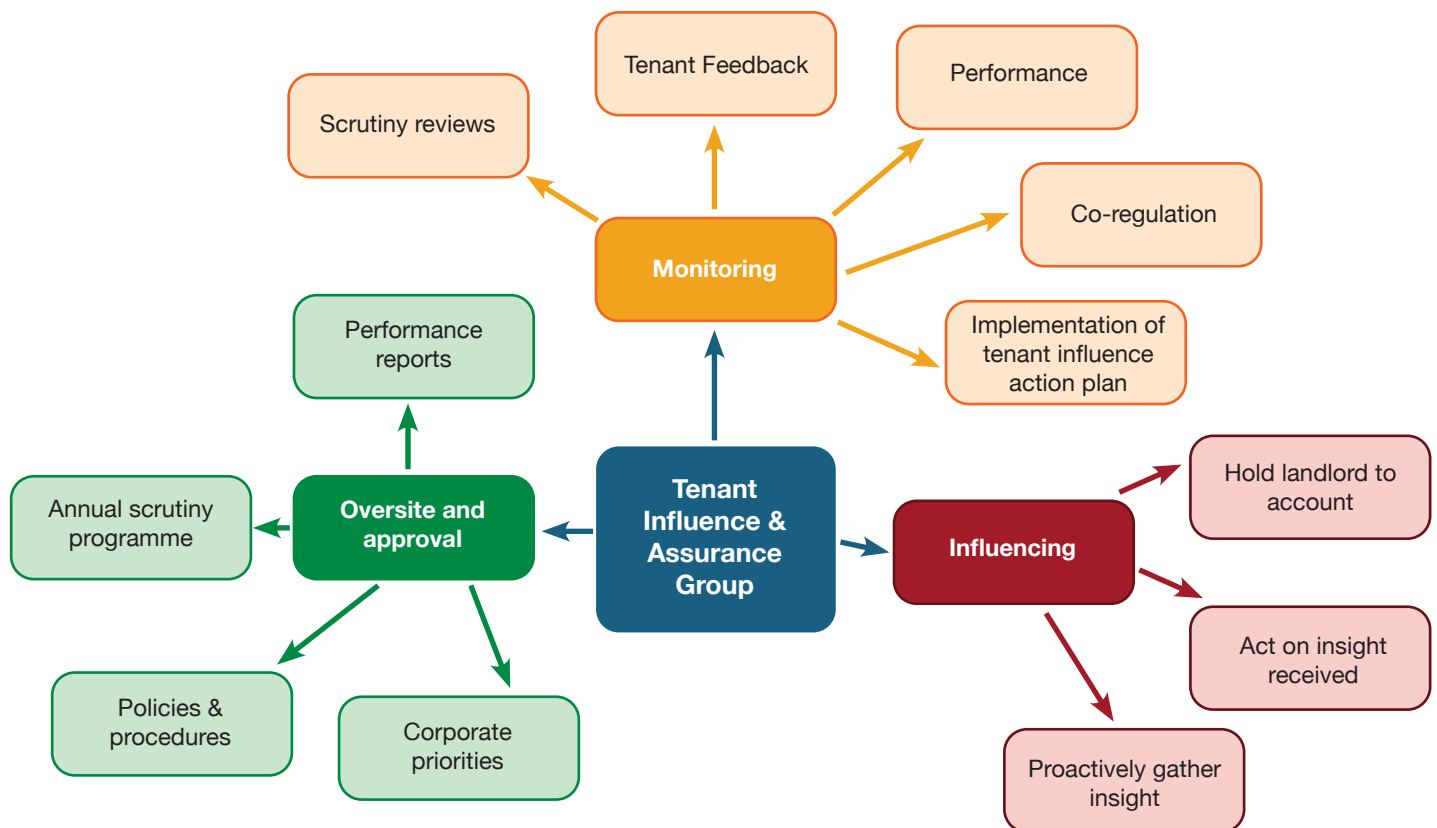
Engaged TPAS, the tenant engagement experts to re-view and help us re-engineer our engagement framework with residents through a process of discovery, design and delivery.	Development of a communications plan that will be consulted on by residents to keep them updated, informed and engaged.
Undertaken a review of resources to help us deliver our new Resident Engagement Strategy and implement a successful framework.	We commit to providing residents with an Annual Report and resident friendly Housing Strategy that sets out service improvement priorities based on what our residents have asked us to do and how we will meet regulatory requirements.
Delivered garden improvements in three sheltered schemes that were co-designed by residents.	Introduced transaction surveys for repairs, ASB, domestic abuse and complaint handling to provide real feedback at point of contact that can directly impact how we deliver services more quickly.



How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Create a Resident Influence and Assurance Group (RIAG) to drive and improve resident influence across all areas of social housing services within Stevenage that will be led by residents and feed into the **Executive Housing Working Group (EHWG)**.
- The RIAG will:
 - Hold SBC to account, ensuring that the range of resident's experiences are influencing strategic decisions, service design and delivery.
 - Focus on key areas of resident concerns as highlighted by influencing processes. These might include service quality or health and safety, for example.
 - Act on insight it might receive through formal channels and other mechanisms to provide evidence -based challenge and ensure the residents voice is heard.
 - Proactively monitor and manage progress with implementing a rolling Resident Influence Action Plan.



How will we achieve resident influence?



A collection of activities in which residents can take part that will positively influence and, therefore, improve services.

The influencing activities in the pyramid are not necessarily inter-dependant or sequential.

The diminishing size of the segments reflects that fewer tenants will be involved in activities such as leading and collaborating.

However, all activities are valuable. The overall value of influence derived from each activity may be similar – if proper attention is paid to the greater volume of tenants influencing through, for example, “be aware” and “opt in.”



Driving Membership

Promotion of the various types of engagement will be driven by a wide range of activities, for instance:

- Encouraging further sign ups to the existing online customer pool
- Re-contacting previous participants of the Resident & STAR surveys, TPAS design and discovery sessions and any resident who has asked to be included in future consultation as well as asking when we conduct TSM's.
- Through Co-operative Neighbourhoods Activities, such as:
 - Community engagement events
 - Focus groups, events, and webinars
 - Residents' meetings
 - Estate walk-about
- Specific recruitment campaigns to proactively promote engagement opportunities and ask residents if they would like to partake
- Utilising the GovDelivery digital engagement and news platform

Menu of possible Engagement Opportunities and how they promote proactive resident influence:

Example Roles	Role Description	Commitment
Lead: Resident Influence & Assurance Group Member	Make decisions on what will be scrutinised – work with key SBC officers on holding them to account. Lead scrutiny activities and attend EHWG and Community Select Committee as a resident representative.	Will vary dependent on the nature and topic of scrutiny and role. For instance, Chair/Vice Chair/board members will meet more often – but there will also be opportunities for more flexible scrutiny involvement
Co-create: Armchair Reviewer/Assessor	Review draft policies and help shape services from the comfort of your own sofa	Dependent on the size and frequency of the policies no more than half a day a month
Co-create: Resident Writer	Review communications before they are issued to wider audiences, suggest content for publications or even write content on specific topics.	One day every two months (can be split).

Example Roles	Role Description	Commitment
Co-create: Resident Investigator	Interview council officers on services and policies to influence change.	No more than half a day a month to work alongside armchair reviewer.
Co-create: Resident Inspector/Assessor	Work with the Co-operative Neighbourhood Teams to be the 'eyes and ears' of local communities from a residents' perspective.	In line with the proposed two x scrutiny panels per year, to feedback within panels. Two full days per year.
Co-create: Mystery Shopper	Be an 'undercover agent, reporting back on services for the council or the Scrutiny Panel.	As and when using the service. Running alongside the Scrutiny Panels. Can also be used when implementing new practice/policy.
Chip in: Community Participator	Attend pop up consultations on specific topics within the community. Get involved with Participatory Budgeting activities to make financial decisions and shape services. Take part in pulse and transactional surveys.	To run alongside housing visioning workshops and pop ups. Detailed within the timetable for consultation and engagement activities.
Chip in: Chatty Rooms	Attend online forums and webinars on a given topic. Get involved with digital consultations.	As determined by engagement schedule/scrutiny programme.
Co-create: Housing Visioning Workshops	Attend bespoke sessions with council teams to investigate specific issues and be involved in shaping services or policy development.	To run alongside scrutiny and in line with Co-operative neighbourhood visioning panels through the year.
Chip in: Housing Engagement Pop-ups	Attend established events and locations and directly engage with the council sharing their priorities.	Primarily in key engagement window between May-August of each year, in line with Co-operative Neighbourhoods Engagement Cycle.

Example Roles	Role Description	Commitment
Co-create: Resident Recruiter	<p>Support recruitment process of council staff. Specifically, around the values-based element of the recruitment process.</p> <p>This needn't be the formal interview itself, but could be an exercise for certain, customer facing roles to be vetted by tenants.</p>	External to formal scrutiny Panels, would need to be arranged ahead of time, but would require no other formal commitment.
Opt in: Flexible engagement	Add name to customer pool and be willing to take part in surveys/consultations when interested in a topic or have the time.	Flexible
Be aware: Subscribe to newsletters and digital platforms	Subscribe to GovDelivery newsletters, share and comment on social media, receives regular updates and communication from housing services.	Flexible

Developing Successful Scrutiny

Working with TPAS, the council is establishing a new robust scrutiny panel and processes that will evidence outcomes and impact. This will include development of a toolkit to support successful scrutiny and recruitment to the panel following the four principles of our vision for this Framework:

- Effective **leadership** - essential in instilling a set of values that drive a culture at Stevenage that looks for, values and acts upon tenant feedback.
- Good **communication** – listening and feedback – are essential in building trust and giving tenants evidence that it is worthwhile engaging with Stevenage.
- Tenants are at the heart of services, and **everyone** working in housing knows that and acts upon it.
- New engagement **structures & processes** bring a range of formal and informal influencing opportunities for tenants.

TPAS will undertake a final review with the new Scrutiny Panel and its' individuals to reflect on the first scrutiny undertaken, identify learning and any personal development requirements to enable the council to continue to deliver scrutiny without external support.

The Resident Engagement Framework will be underpinned by a communications plan that will keep residents who do not wish to be directly involved in influencing and shaping services, updated and informed of how we are delivering and performing across our housing services.



How will we know we have been successful?

The Resident Engagement Strategy and Engagement Framework will be supported by an action plan that will be co-produced with the Resident Influence and Assurance Group. A quarterly update will be provided to the Executive Housing Working Group as well as the Residents Groups and progress will also be provided within an Annual Housing Performance Report.

Below is an indicative set of key performance measures that we will implement and track.

Number of residents engaged in involvement activity	% satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
Number of feedback responses received to influence and shape housing services	% satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
Number of scrutiny of service reviews completed	% agreement that the landlord treats tenants with fairness and respect
Involved residents are representative of our resident profile	% residents satisfied with the neighbourhood where they live
% of residents satisfied with involvement opportunities and support	% of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage one
% residents satisfied with the influence and impact they have been able to have	% of tenants satisfied with how their complaint was handled at stage two



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