

INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION

Council Housing Tenant Voice Strategy, and Resident Engagement Strategy: Building Safety

Report of Chief Officer Housing and Property

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To seek approval of the Council Housing Tenant Voice Strategy and the Resident Engagement: Building Safety Strategy as the key documents setting out the service's approach to resident engagement in general, and in relation to building safety more specifically.			
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/a		
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Council Housing Tenant Voice Strategy 2024-27 be approved as the key document setting out the Council Housing Service's approach to resident engagement.
- (2) That the Council Housing Building Safety Strategy 2024 be approved as the key document setting out the Council Housing Service's approach to resident engagement with regard to building safety in Council Housing dwelling blocks.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has given the Regulator of Social Housing new powers to regulate landlords against a newly developed set of four Consumer Standards from April 2024¹:

- The Safety and Quality Standard;
- The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard;
- The Neighbourhood and Community Standard;
- The Tenancy Standard.

1.2 Under these new standards there are key requirements for all social housing providers to ensure tenants are safe in their homes; listen to tenants'

¹ Regulatory standards for landlords: [Regulatory standards for landlords - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

complaints and respond promptly to put things right; know more about the condition of every home and the needs of people who live in them; and collect and use data effectively across a range of areas, including repairs.

1.3 In addition, following the Hackett review into the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, a range of new statutory requirements are now required to be met by social landlords in relation to building safety. These are included within:

- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022

1.4 The Tenant Voice and Building Safety Strategies proposed here are key documents which set out the approach of the Council Housing service in meeting aspects of the consumer standards, in particular the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and the Safety and Quality Standard, and the statutory requirements noted above (1.3).

2.0 Proposal Details: Tenant Voice Strategy

2.1 The Council Housing service is committed to ensuring tenants feel listened to and can see the difference their involvement makes. The Tenant Voice Strategy 2024-27 aims to strengthen the tenants voice within housing service delivery to ensure meaningful engagement is embedded in service delivery.

2.2 The strategy outlines 5 key objectives which will drive delivery of resident engagement within the service:

- i) Maximise engagement with council tenants
- ii) Use feedback to shape services provided by the council
- iii) Increase the skills of tenants
- iv) Develop strong and vibrant communities
- v) Develop social and financial inclusion strategies to reduce loneliness across our estates

2.3 A detailed action plan within the strategy sets out key actions which will contribute to the delivery of these objectives. The actions will be delivered to meet specific aims within each objective and will be monitored through the service's established action planning process.

2.4 The Tenants' Voice (the tenant-led district wide engagement platform for tenants and residents) will also review and refer to the strategy as a key document which underpins their involvement and influence on service delivery.

3.0 Proposal details: Engagement Strategy: Building Safety

3.1 The Council Housing Service is committed to ensuring that it's multi occupied/multi storey residential buildings are safe and secure places to live, and that residents feel safe in their homes.

- 3.2 This strategy document meets the regulatory requirement that all that social landlords should have such a strategy in place. It also aims to ensure residents:
- Know who they can speak to about their safety, and the strategy sets out the responsibilities between the landlord (Lancaster City Council) and residents.
 - Have a variety of opportunities to speak to staff about any concerns or issues.
 - Feel confident to hold Lancaster City Council to account and understand any communications sent to them relating to building safety.
- 3.3 Delivery and monitoring of this strategy is overseen by the Building Safety Panel: a group made up of residents and supported by key Officers with responsibility for housing management and building safety and compliance. It is also supported by a range of additional publications and clear methods for tenant communication around all building safety matters.

4.0 Details of Consultation

- 4.1 Tenants and residents have been consulted and played a key role in developing both the Tenant Voice Strategy and the Resident Engagement: Building Safety Strategy.
- 4.2 For the Tenant Voice Strategy consultation took place through:
- Summer events and estate walkabouts in the community, through discussion and surveys.
 - The Tenant Voice steering group: the group of key involved residents who set the content and direction for the Tenant Voice meeting.
 - Residents group meetings.
 - In discussion with local community centres.
- 4.3 The foundations of this document, including the agreed objectives and actions, are based on resident input. The Tenant Voice will keep the strategy under review to ensure delivery and to build in any future changes or amendments.
- 4.4 For the Building Safety Strategy residents were consulted through a number of pop-up events in the Mainway area. The strategy was then reviewed and discussed at a meeting of the Tenant Voice, and by the Building Safety Panel group – the group of engaged residents with particular interest in building safety.
- 4.5 Moving forward, a member of the Building Safety Panel will attend the Tenant Voice to ensure oversight and review of effective delivery of the strategy.

5.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: To approve the Tenant Voice and Building Safety Strategies.	Option 2: Do not approve both strategies presented in this report	Option 3: Approve only one of the two strategies.
Advantages	These documents, which have had significant tenant and Officer input, will provide a clear strategic basis for the Council Housing Service to deliver its obligations in these two areas.	None	This would provide a clear strategic basis for the Council Housing Service to deliver its obligations in one of these two areas.
Disadvantages	None	This option would leave the Council without adequate reassurance in these two areas and failing against its statutory and regulatory obligations. Alternative proposals would need to be drafted for consideration	This option would leave the Council without adequate reassurance in one of these two areas and failing against its statutory and/or regulatory obligations. Alternative proposals would need to be drafted for consideration.
Risks	None	That the Council fails to meet its statutory and regulatory obligations.	That the Council fails to meet its statutory and/or regulatory obligations.

6.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

6.1 Option 1 is the officer preferred option.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Resident engagement is a key activity which, in line with the Consumer Standards, underpins all service delivery carried out by the Council Housing team. By developing agreed objectives and actions with residents the service has set out a clear direction for this area of work and a method for meaningful influence and scrutiny.

7.2 Building Safety has been subject to significant national scrutiny in recent years. A considerable amount of work has taken place in recent years within the Council Housing Service to ensure the continued safety of council homes, and to develop the way the service engages with residents on this subject. This strategy builds on that work to create a clear line of engagement to ensure residents are increasingly part of this area of work moving forward.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Clear links with both strategies to Council priorities: 'Cooperative, Kind and Responsible Council' and 'Healthy and Happy Communities'

These strategies also deliver key outcomes within the Council Housing Service Improvement Plan (SIP) 2024-26 and contribute significantly to compliance against the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, particularly the Safety and Quality Standards and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Both strategies include key elements which ensure delivery of accessible services which meet the diverse needs of tenants and residents.

These include, for example:

- Consideration of building safety in relation to vulnerability, disability, or other characteristics which should be taken into account when ensuring provision of safe buildings.
- Delivery of engagement activities which ensure opportunities to impact service delivery are not limited due to the characteristics of individuals or groups of individuals. These include groups for specific groups: older people, young people. The LGBTQ+ community, people with disability.

Neither strategy is assessed to discriminate or limit opportunity to any specific groups or individuals. Delivery of these strategies will be monitored regularly to ensure the impact on groups or individuals is understood and adjusted as required. These policies should be read in conjunction with the [Council Housing Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#).

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Strategies aimed at tackling building and fire safety with tenant engagement will help the Council meet its statutory and regulatory obligations. These are important obligations that must be met.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The process of adopting and implementing the strategies can be resourced from within existing budgets

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Tenant Voice Strategy

Resident Engagement Strategy: Building
Safety

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