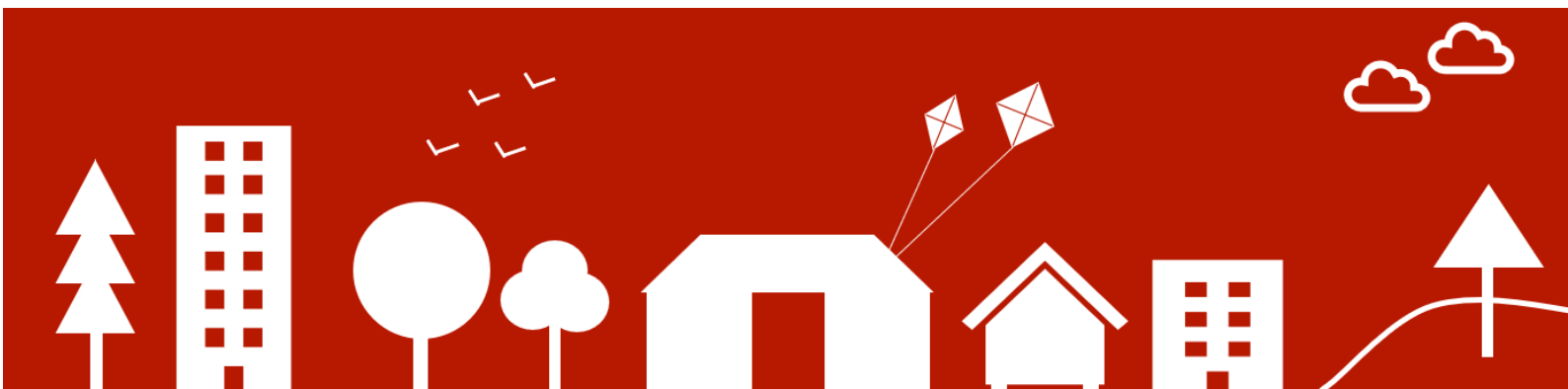




WOKING
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Housing Resident Engagement Strategy 2025 - 2028



Housing Services

Signed off by Resident and Landlord Partnership (RLP) on 8th January 2025.

Signed off by Full Council on 27th February 2025

IMPLEMENTED: 3rd March 2025



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Introduction

Resident is used throughout this strategy to refer to tenants, leaseholders, shared owners, licence holders of Woking Borough Council Housing Service. This also covers other residents who have received a service from Woking Borough Council Housing Service. This strategy sets out the Council's approach to Resident Engagement within the Housing Service.

The Housing Resident Engagement Strategy has been co-created with Residents through workshops and focus groups. Volunteers from the Resident and Landlord Partnership (RLP) have provided an introduction:

"Thank you for taking the time to read the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy.

As residents (tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and licence holders), our quality of life is directly impacted by the service provided by our landlord and our living standards. Therefore, this Housing Resident Engagement Strategy is very important in setting the scene for how we, as residents, can work in partnership with our landlord, Woking Borough Council.

We believe the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy provides a clear understanding for how Resident voice can assist our landlord in improving and achieving more. For us, this strategy calls for mutual respect between all stakeholders and a key focus on empowering residents to influence decision-making.

Whether we have been involved in volunteering for one month or ten years, the resident engagement opportunities we have experienced have already had a positive impact on us.

*This was discussed greatly at our most recent workshop. We want to ensure that all residents can **BE INFORMED** by providing feedback of their experiences with the Housing Service, **BE HEARD** with actions taken and **BE EMPOWERED** through formal engagement groups that scrutinise performance.*

Housing Resident Engagement makes us feel valued, provides a voice for each of our communities and helps us to gain knowledge in topics of interest. There are positive social, health and wellbeing value when getting involved. This strategy provides an opportunity for residents to gain knowledge and learn from others, building a supportive community of volunteers.

It has been enjoyable co-creating the strategy with the Resident Engagement Team, formalising what we are currently doing and what we aim to achieve next. We are excited for the next three years and what this strategy aims to achieve.

We would like to thank other residents, council staff, councillors and other stakeholders for supporting our work. We hope to work much more closely with stakeholders throughout the duration of this strategy to achieve improvements and solutions for the Woking Borough Council Housing Service.

We encourage other residents to get involved!"



^Collage of stock images and AI generated images to represent Housing Resident Engagement.

What do we mean by Housing Resident Engagement?

Housing Resident Engagement is about how the Housing Service interacts and engages with residents. Resident Engagement is important in understanding how services are being delivered, gaining a resident point of view and ensuring that feedback is able to influence the Housing Service.

Housing Resident Engagement is:



1. Any interaction or feedback with the service that informs on the landlord's performance.



2. Providing opportunities for resident voice to be heard.



3. Supporting residents to hold their landlord to account, influence decision making and improve services.

Housing Resident Engagement Strategy must be supported by all Woking Borough Council Housing staff and those working on behalf of the council, such as contractors, to ensure continued improvement.

As a landlord, the Council has a responsibility to provide meaningful opportunities for engagement. This is outlined in the national and local context.

National Context

There are legal obligations of local housing authority landlords to consult tenants on housing management matters in the Housing Act 1985 (Section 105). With focuses in the Housing sector on Health & Safety, following the Grenfell Tower disaster, further powers to the Housing Ombudsman and widespread media coverage on the standard of social housing homes, there has been an increased focus on Resident Engagement to ensure that residents have a voice.

Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020)

The charter was published in November 2020 and builds on the proposals of the social housing green paper. The Charter sets out what every resident should be able to expect from their landlord:

1. To be safe in your home.
2. To know how your landlord is performing.
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.
4. To be treated with respect.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership.

The charter is clear that landlords should monitor and track engagement, ensuring that this is improved over time, and provide engagement opportunities that promote resident empowerment. It also emphasises how resident experiences should be embedded across policies, plans and services.

You can find out more about the [Charter for Social Housing Residents](#) online.

Regulatory standards for Landlords: Consumer Standards (2024)

The Regulatory Standards are set by the Regulator of Social Housing (using powers under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008) and explain the outcomes that social landlords in England must deliver. There are two overall standards:

- Consumer Standards
- Economic Standards

For the purpose of the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy, the Consumer Standards will be most relevant. The Consumer Standards were updated in April 2024 and include the following:

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

It is required for landlords to provide opportunities for tenant engagement which takes into account resident views to influence decision-making and scrutinise strategies, policies and the services delivered by the landlord. It is also required that information about landlord services and performance information is communicated with residents to provide meaningful opportunities for consultation.

Landlords must be able to evidence how they meet each standard. The Regulator of Social Housing is auditing landlords and publishing their consumer standard grading.

You can find out more about the [Regulatory standards for landlords](#) online.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (2023)

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard also includes the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) which were implemented in April 2023. The Tenant Satisfaction Measures are split into two aspects of data:

- Data collected from Tenant Perception Surveys
- Data generated from management information

It's required that the Tenant Survey is carried out annually, alongside gathering of generated management information. Results must be communicated and published to residents and reported back to the Regulator of Social Housing.

You can find out more about the [Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#) online.

Local Context

Housing Strategy (2021 - 2026)

The Woking Borough Council Housing Strategy was implemented in 2021 to identify objectives and strategic priorities to meet the current and future needs of the local population. There has been a considerable amount of change in a national context since the implementation. The Strategic priorities remain as:

1. To provide well-designed, high-quality homes that are affordable and meet local needs.
2. To prevent homelessness and help those in housing need.
3. To help people to achieve independence and wellbeing.
4. To deliver an improved housing service to our tenants and leaseholders.
5. To enhance choice, standards and quality within the private rented sector

Strategic priority 4 commits to ensuring residents are involved in delivery of the housing service, creating more opportunities for residents to get involved and improving the services through resident feedback. The Housing Strategy also mentions the need to produce a new Resident Engagement Strategy to ensure that engagement is formalised.

You can find out more about the [Housing Strategy](#) online.

Woking For All (2024)

The Woking For All Corporate strategy for Woking Borough Council was adopted in February 2024. The vision for the strategy is, “a financially and environmentally sustainable council delivering services that residents value in every part of the borough.”

The mission statement includes:

- A trusted and transparent council that lives within its means.
- Focuses its energy on services that make a difference to people in the borough.
- Works in partnership with all communities to deliver positive outcomes.
- Continually engages with residents to design more efficient and effective services.
- Invests in talent to deliver for Woking’s future.

The implementation of this Housing Resident Engagement Strategy is supporting a number of the mission statements in the Woking For All Strategy. It also supports the Improvement and Recovery Plan of which Housing has its own programme. Within the Housing Improvement Programme is the Resident Engagement and Consultation workstream. This workstream has a number of activities, including the need to produce the Resident Engagement Strategy.

You can find out more about the [Woking For All Strategy](#) and the [Improvement and Recovery Plan](#) online.

The Resident Engagement Strategy 2025-2028

Vision



Our vision is for all residents to feel respected and listened to through providing meaningful opportunities for residents to make their voice count and influence service improvements that result in positive change.



Objectives

To deliver the vision for the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy, several objectives have been developed through resident workshops. These have been raised as three priority areas by residents:



1. Communications



2. Accountability



3. Culture

Objectives

How will these be achieved?

Communications



Ensure resident's needs, vulnerabilities and communication preferences are known to the service.

Improve communications with residents to ensure residents are informed and consulted on projects occurring.

Embrace innovative engagement techniques to increase accessibility and diversify the resident voice.

ACTION: Consult on and implement Housing Service Standards.

Accountability



Establish a wealth of opportunities for residents to co-regulate and hold their landlord's performance to account.

Support opportunities where residents can get involved based on their own interests, development opportunities and time commitments.

Ensure that engagement success is monitored and engagement is continuously improved.

ACTION: Establish a structure of Resident Engagement opportunities.

Culture



Develop a collaborative resident engagement culture in housing across all teams.

Embed the resident voice across all areas of the housing service, ensuring that feedback leads to action.

Challenge social housing stigma to ensure that all residents feel respected and listened to.

ACTION: Support the national Social Housing Stigma Campaign and create a local campaign.

ACTION: Work with Residents to self-assess against the TPAS National Engagement Standards 2024

How will we achieve these objectives?

To achieve these objectives and the vision for the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy, the council will:

- **Strategic:** Work with residents to self-assess against the TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) National Engagement Standards 2024. This will result in an action plan.
- **Communications:** Consult on and implement Housing Service Standards. This will also establish timescales and expectations for Housing Communications.
- **Accountability:** Establish a structure of Resident Engagement opportunities. This will ensure that the Resident and Landlord Partnership (RLP) is within the hierarchy of decision making for the Housing Service. This will support the setting up of additional Resident Engagement Opportunities and resident groups to provide opportunities for resident voice.
- **Culture:** Support the national Social Housing Stigma Campaign, and work with residents to create a local Woking Borough Council campaign for residents, staff and contractors.

The self-assessment against the TPAS standards will provide a wide-ranging action plan that will sit alongside the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy and take into consideration the vision and objectives communicated.

Monitoring the Strategy

The Resident Engagement Team, within the housing service, have the day-to-day responsibility of supporting, promoting and delivering the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy. Monitoring will be undertaken by the Resident and Landlord Partnership (RLP) and will provide an opportunity for residents to scrutinise progress of the strategy.

The Resident and Landlord Partnership will provide an annual report to the Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee which will report on progress and projects undertaken.

Residents will also be updated on progress through communications such as the council website and Woking@Home Newsletter.

A full review of the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy will be completed in 2027 with the residents. The Housing Resident Engagement Strategy will be amended in the meantime as, and when required, prior to the review.

Engagement Opportunities

The resident workshops identified a number of ways that Woking Borough Council Housing Service is currently engaging with residents, however, it also identified a number of engagement opportunities that they would like developed over the course of this strategy.

These opportunities have been categorised into three main types of engagement:



Be Informed



Be Heard



Be Empowered

Be Informed

Residents are able to engage with the housing service by informing of their experience and being kept updated on service changes.

Current Opportunities Available

Be Informed



1.1 Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey

1.2 Woking@Home Tenant Newsletter and E-Newsletter

1.3 Transactional Surveys

Proposed Opportunities to develop

2.1 Benchmarking of Tenant Satisfaction Survey and annual report to residents

2.2 Increase numbers signed up for digital communications/E-Newsletter

2.3 Suite of transactional surveys improved across the housing service

2.4 Resident Engagement webpages developed

2.5 Housing Service Standards

2.6 Landlord Performance dashboards


Be Heard

Residents are heard and listened to by the service, this is usually in a community setting. Residents can have opportunities to explain their feedback, raise concerns and provide more context based on their responses under the 'be informed' category.

Current Opportunities Available		Proposed Opportunities to develop
	1.4 Focus Groups	2.7 Focus Groups improved
	1.5 Community Events	2.8 Community Events and drop-ins increased
	1.6 Neighbourhood Walkabouts	2.9 Neighbourhood Walkabout procedure to be improved
		2.10 Online Housing Reading Panel set up
		2.11 Housing Service Consultation Process

Be Empowered

Residents have a formal opportunity to review the feedback from 'be informed' and 'be heard' categories. Residents will be able to scrutinise performance and influence decision-making.

Current Opportunities Available		Proposed Opportunities to develop
	1.7 Resident and Landlord Partnership Panel (RLP)	2.12 Housing Resident Engagement Opportunities Structure Chart
	1.8 Ad-hoc Key Focus Meetings	2.13 Housing Communications Group
		2.14 Housing Neighbourhoods Group
		2.15 Task and Finish Project Groups

Proposed Projects

When consulting with residents across the 2024 focus groups and in workshops about this strategy, there are several key focuses that the residents would like to investigate and prioritise. Due to project scope, it may be unachievable to complete all key focuses within the timescale of this strategy, however, it is important that the areas are noted as potential key focus projects to allow for review at the end of the strategy period.

These include:

- Social Housing Stigma
- Housing Communications and Accessibility
- Contract Procurement and monitoring
- Diversifying volunteering
- Social Value projects with contractors and partners
- Independent Living Engagement
- Housing Allocations and downsizing
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Sustainability and Neighbourhood Improvement

More proposed projects may be added in line with Tenant Satisfaction Measure results, resident feedback and the TPAS standards self-assessment.



^Collage of Resident Engagement opportunities which have been occurring between February 2024 and December 2024.

Equality and Diversity

The Council will seek to ensure that this strategy is, at all times, applied fairly to all within the community. This strategy will be monitored regularly to ensure it is not operated in any way that could discriminate or disadvantage against any particular group of people.

This Housing Resident Engagement Strategy has been developed with residents and has taken into consideration the need to tackle discrimination of all protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Re-assignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership

Where required, resident engagement opportunities or policies/procedures may require an Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken prior to implementation.

The Council will provide information in other formats when requested. Residents will be invited to indicate if they wish to discuss translation or interpretation options, or if they require additional services to enable them to access or understand the strategy, to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in any way.

You can find contact details of how and who to notify on the following page.

Contact Us

Thank you for taking the time to read the Housing Resident Engagement Strategy. If you are interested in engaging with us, providing feedback and improving the Housing Service, do not hesitate to get in touch with the **Resident Engagement Team**.

The Team can be contacted on:

- **Email:** ResidentEngagement@woking.gov.uk
- **Phone:** 0300 373 0373 (option 4)
- **Letter:** Housing Resident Engagement Team, Woking Borough Council, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6YL

You can also contact the team if you require this document in another format or translated.

