

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 9 October, 2017

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services

Tenant Engagement Strategy

Purpose of the Report

1. To agree a draft Tenant Engagement Strategy for public housing.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet endorse the draft Tenant Engagement Strategy attached at [Appendix 1](#) to this report, as a working document for further consultation.
2. That the draft Tenant Engagement Strategy is referred to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee for consideration.
3. That draft Tenant Engagement Strategy is subject to a broader consultation with all Vale Council tenants and existing Residents' Boards.
4. That the Tenant Engagement Strategy is referred back to Cabinet for finalising upon receiving the views of the Scrutiny Committee and feedback from the broader tenant consultation exercise.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To ensure that tenant engagement is at the heart of the decision making process and a broad range of tenants have the opportunity to take part in a variety of different ways.
2. To provide an opportunity for Scrutiny to make any comments.
3. To give the wider tenant population an opportunity to comment and suggest changes to the draft strategy.
4. To agree the final Strategy document.

Background

2. In 2007 the Welsh Government set out a requirement for all social landlords to develop their own local Tenant Participation Strategies. The first Vale Strategy was published in 2008 and led to an improvement in tenant participation; albeit from a fairly low base. Two years later, the Vale published a further strategy with more

ambitious objectives designed to drive further improvements which also included outcome focussed objectives for the first time.

Relevant Issues and Options

3. It has been seven years since the last strategy was published and the current version aims to pick up any gaps which have come to light and also incorporate feedback from more recent tenant consultation. A number of priority areas identified include: a need to involve a broader cross section of tenants; the need to develop the range of methods used to engage tenants (beyond the traditional tenants association type approach); the need to develop the capacity of tenants groups to play a bigger role; and lastly ensuring tenant views feed into the strategic decision making process, for example: shaping new services, developing new policies and deciding spending priorities.
4. The priorities inform the new strategy and the outcomes focus has been retained in order to maximise the impact of the actions and initiatives which have been identified.
 - Resident consultation and priorities
5. A variety of techniques have been used to consult tenants and inform the priorities included in the draft Tenant Engagement Strategy. These include the large scale tenants satisfaction survey (STAR survey) which asked specific questions about whether tenants feel their views are listened to and acted on. Over 1,300 tenants completed the survey and it is possible to break the results down into different demographic groups and different geographical areas, enabling us to get a detailed insight into the views of tenants across the Vale.
6. A specific tenant engagement questionnaire was also completed by tenants attending the recent Festivale event held in August. Over 50 surveys were completed and useful feedback was received about the aims of the strategy, barriers to tenants getting involved and suggestions for activities and initiatives that would encourage more tenants to take part. A breakdown of the results is included in the Strategy.
7. Whilst a significant amount of feedback has already been received from tenants, the intention is to undertake a final round of consultation with tenants and tenants groups once the draft strategy has been agreed. Any changes can then be incorporated, along with feedback from Scrutiny Committee, into the final document which will then come back to Cabinet for approval.
 - Monitoring and evaluation
8. Progress with implementing the Strategy will be measured via the completion of individual actions contained within the Operational Delivery Plan towards the back of the document. There will also be periodic reports to the Homes and Safe Communities Committee regarding the range of projects and initiatives taking place.
9. The Strategy includes a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis which flags up a range of issues and opportunities; the key points feed into the objectives and inform the operational delivery plan featured towards the end of the document.
10. Significant progress has been made over the last few years in respect of tenant engagement and there are a range of formal and informal opportunities in place for tenants to take part. These include nine residents' boards operating in a number of areas across the Vale and several overarching tenants groups including the sheltered housing forum, quality design forum and the tenants working group. In

addition, many tenants fill in surveys, attend focus groups, join in with community events or attend festivals. The focus of the new Strategy is to build on this solid foundation and develop a range of creative and flexible ways of engaging a broader cross section of tenants in order to improve the quality of feedback provided and use this to drive service improvements.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

11. Significant financial support has been set aside to deliver the objectives in the Strategy. This includes provision of a £36,000 to support the activities of residents' Boards and other tenant groups which represent the interests of Council tenants. A Revenue budget has also been made available to fund two Community Investment and Involvement Officer Posts to take the lead in community engagement and capacity building. Lastly, participatory budgets of £60,000 per annum have been set aside to fund smaller scale estate and environmental improvements identified by local residents and groups.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

12. Improved engagement with our tenants helps us to improve our services which in turn assists in creating stronger and more sustainable communities.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

13. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the report, however effective tenant engagement has been shown to help reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour on specific estates.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

15. Tenant Engagement will take into account the needs of tenants from a variety of backgrounds as well as people with protected characteristics.

Corporate/Service Objectives

16. This Strategy is consistent with the overarching vision within the new Corporate Plan, namely 'Strong Communities with a Bright Future' as well as several of the Well Being Outcomes, including 'An inclusive and Safe Vale', 'An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale', 'An Active and Healthy Vale'.
17. It is also consistent with many of the core objectives (which support the Well Being outcomes), including: reducing poverty and social exclusion; decent homes and safe communities; promoting regeneration; sustainable development and protecting the environment; and active and healthy lifestyles.

Policy Framework and Budget

18. This report is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

19. This report will affect all council tenants and therefore no individual ward member consultation has been undertaken.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

20. Homes and Safe Communities.

Background Papers

None.

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Officers Consulted

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Committee Reports
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