

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2022

REFERENCE FROM HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2022

“736 DRAFT TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2021-2026 (REF) –

The reference from Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 was presented by the Senior Neighbourhood Manager, Housing Services in order to inform the Committee on the new strategy, which set out the Council’s Vision for increasing Tenant and Leaseholder Participation.

One notable change for the Strategy was the inclusion of leaseholders, following internal staff conversations, consultation and the need that was recognised to ensure that both tenants and leaseholders voices and views should be heard.

Within the Strategy there were three key themes and one overriding cross cutting theme:

- To increase involvement by Council Tenants and Leaseholders by including them in developing Tenant and Leaseholder centred services.
- To invest in staff and financial resources to enable the development of Tenant and Leaseholder driven services and participation.
- To support Tenants and Leaseholders in order to help them to influence and shape decisions and services.
- The final, overarching theme was ensuring that Tenants and Leaseholders felt their opinions were valued, listened to, and acted upon.

In order to deliver these key themes, Housing Services had developed a comprehensive action plan which set out how what, when and who would be taking these actions forward. As part of this, there was a Council internal staff group and tenant led working group involved with monitoring the Strategy and Action Plan, with this Committee providing additional scrutiny via six monthly reports on the progress of the strategy and the related Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

The Senior Neighbourhood Manager explained that the new Strategy built on the previous ones (mandated by WG since 2007) and learning the lessons from these. The Strategy had been developed by a cross departmental working group, in consultation with the Tenant Working Groups, as well as via the tenant profiling exercise, in order to look at the opinions of tenants not involved in such tenant groups nor other forms of participation. As part of the Strategy an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, as well as threats was made, as well as

taking on board WG guidance and best practice on tenant and leaseholder participation, such as including greater digital participation. Also, the Strategy would be acting upon the feedback from the STAR Tenant Satisfaction Survey where there had been a decrease in tenant satisfaction on the Council listening / acting on tenant views and keeping tenants informed, in order to reverse this decline.

The overall vision for the new Tenant and Leaseholder Strategy was to create a culture where the Council developed and maximised the opportunities for Tenants and Leaseholders to contribute towards creating Tenants and Leaseholders centred services.

In addition, work had already started as part of the Strategy's Action Plan, such as launching a new service quality assessors' group, which would scrutinise the relevant services, including gas services and anti-social behaviour.

Finally, an Equality Impact Assessment had been completed as part of the development of this Strategy, it being established, as part of the preparation work of the assessment, that 74% of the tenants engaged in the tenant participation structures were aged 65 and above, 89% were white, and 92% heterosexual. This would provide a 'baseline' for tenant participation for reporting and how to increase accessibility to all groups.

Following the Officer's presentation, the subsequent questions were raised by the Committee:

- Councillor Aviet asked if tenants and leaseholders needed to be part of a residents' board or similar in order to engage with this Strategy or could they join the relevant working groups solely based on being a tenant / leaseholder and asked how the Council attracted tenants and leaseholders to engage with the strategy. The Senior Neighbourhood Manager explained that one of the actions that had been identified in this new Strategy was the need to look at the current engagement structures. Typically, people first became a member of a tenant and residents' group, and then they got involved in other groups. However, as part of this new Strategy, the means of engagement would be expanded and reviewed. Also, currently, there were no leaseholder engagement groups in existence and therefore there was a need to launch such groups going forward as well as identifying a number of different ways in which to engage with tenants and residents more broadly and effectively. One example of widening tenant participation was on the St Luke's and St Paul's estates in Penarth, where the Council had been involved in a community development project, called 'Clean State' and engaging with tenants in order to make the local environment cleaner, greener, healthier and the local community more interconnected. This was an example of a more informal style of engagement with tenants and taking their views on board, which would be used more frequently going forward in conjunction with the use of digital surveys with tenants and residents (such as via the tenant pulse surveys where each Local Authority was able to send information out to their tenants and residents in order to get feedback via TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Cymru which had already proved successful).

Committee, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein, subsequently

**RECOMMENDED – T H A T** the comments of the Scrutiny Committee, as part of the consultation process for the Strategy and the Equality Impact Assessment, be considered by Cabinet prior to the final Strategy being agreed.

Reason for recommendation

To allow Cabinet to make a fully informed decision on the final Strategy, following further consultation.”