

This Report will be made
public on 22 March 2021



Report Number **OS/20/13**

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 30 March 2021
Status: Non key decision
Responsible Officer: Helen Sudbury – Housing Operations Lead Specialist
Cabinet Member: Cllr Godfrey - Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Special Projects

SUBJECT: TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

SUMMARY: This report brings the draft Tenant Engagement Strategy for the Housing Service back to Members, following a period of consultation with our tenants.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report OS/20/13.
2. To seek Members' further views and comments on the draft Tenant Engagement Strategy and Action Plan.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A report was brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 February 2021 to gain Members' views and comments at an early stage on the draft Tenant Engagement Strategy (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The Strategy was then open for consultation by being published on the Council's website and having an article in the Tenant Newsletter (hard copies were posted to all tenants and leaseholders). Tenants were encouraged to phone, write or email their comments to our Tenant Engagement Specialist. Tenants who do not access the internet could request a hard copy to be sent to them.

2. OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The consultation began on 17 February and closed on 12 March 2021 and we had 9 respondents. There were no comments to make any changes to the Strategy.
- 2.2 Comments pertinent to the Strategy were:
 - That is absolutely fine, having alterations and adaptations myself that are due to begin fairly soon will give me a first-hand view and a chance to pass on my experience to you.
 - I am profoundly Deaf and rely on email as my main method of communication. I find that it varies in how long my emails take to be read and actioned so suggest a live chat service for every department so things can be dealt with in real time.
 - I am physically disabled and have benefited from several changes and adaptations to my property which I am grateful for and extremely pleased with. I look forward to being able to share my experiences via tenant engagement in the future.
 - I would welcome the mental challenge and chance to be able to put something back into my community.
 - Just read the draft copy, it's OK but a lot of people want to live a quiet life and only want to contact you when there is a problem.
 - I think looking after tenants needs should be first on the list, other than that can't fault it.

- I feel that content is very good and all the areas of need have been addressed, there is a slight spelling mistake on page 7-with the word understanding and on page 11.

2.3 Prior to the Strategy going to wider consultation, the involved tenants we work with had already been introduced to the document and had contributed. The Chair of the current Tenant and Leaseholder Board, Elaine Bostock, has made a statement of support for our approach in the Foreword to the Strategy. Elaine and Gillian Jenkins, also a Board member, have been invited to this meeting.

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1 As well as developing the Strategy, which sets out our vision for tenant engagement, we have produced an Action Plan (Appendix B) to show how we will achieve this. This is our 'road map' and will be a live document as we create the engagement structure and activities which will hear and respond to our Tenants' Voice.

3.2 Pending any changes Members might want to see following this Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, the Tenant Engagement Strategy and Action Plan will go to Cabinet on 14 April for approval.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
The Strategy is not approved or is not implemented, therefore the Council will not be compliant with the Regulator	High	Low	Thorough consultation at an early stage will lead to the Strategy and Action Plan being approved.
Tenant and Leaseholder Board not willing to embrace the new structure	Medium	Low	Informal and formal consultation process set up to allow plenty of time for meaningful feedback.

5. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Legal Officer's Comments (NM)

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

5.2 Finance Officer's Comments (CI)

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications

There are no diversities or equalities implications arising directly from this report

6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officers prior to the meeting:

Helen Sudbury, Housing Operations Lead specialist
Helen.Sudbury@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Tenant Engagement Strategy

Appendix 2 Action Plan