

Tenant Involvement – Council Housing Model Implications 19/20

1. Purpose

- 1.1 How might each model approach engagement and what are the implications for the Council?
- 1.2 How can each structure further enhance the customer experience and outcomes for tenants (STAR results attached at Appendix 4)
- 1.3 What are the opportunities to further embed engagement with Place Based Working.

2. Overview

- 2.1 It should be noted that best practice is consistent across the sector regardless of provider.
- 2.2 There is an ongoing refocus and strengthening of regulation around the tenant voice. This means that all Social Housing providers, regardless of the specific structure e.g. RP, ALMO, In-House, should be on a continuous journey to revisit and evolve their practices to ensure these remain appropriate and responsive to the external environment.
- 2.3 The approach to tenant involvement will underpin the delivery of the 5 key elements of the Social Housing green paper - Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities; Expanding supply and supporting home ownership; Effective resolution of complaints; Empowering residents and strengthening the regulator; Ensuring homes are safe and decent.

3. Context - Current Tenant Involvement Strategy

- 3.1 In June 2018, in consultation with the Council, the KNH Board approved a new Tenant Involvement Strategy – ‘Get Involved’. The strategy highlights what tenant involvement means at KNH, the outcomes KNH seeks to achieve in partnership with tenants, leaseholders, the Council and other partners and the impact KNH wants to achieve.
- 3.2 The Tenant Involvement Strategy reflects the Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards, specifically the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and the Neighbourhoods and Community Standard (see appendix 1 and 2 below) and aligned with TPAS’ Landlord Accreditation Framework on Tenant Engagement (TPAS, formerly known as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service, are the leading experts in tenant engagement www.TPAS.org.uk) Please see Appendix 3.
- 3.3 The Tenant Involvement Strategy has also been informed by best practice across the social housing sector, participation by KNH staff in TPAS national roundtable events and through the sharing of experiences with other housing providers e.g. Blackpool and Coastal Housing, St. Leger Homes in Doncaster and Rotherham Council who have visited KNH to discuss their approaches to engagement.
- 3.4 The Get Involved Strategy complements the Resident Engagement Framework which forms part of KNH’s Fire Safety Management Plan (FSMP). The FSMP is informed by the findings from the Hackitt Review, recommendations from the Social Housing Green Paper and the priorities set out in the Council’s Fire Safety Policy (approved in x 2018) and Kirklees Housing Strategy 2018-23.
- 3.5 The Framework brings a more structured, transparent and robust approach to the fire safety relationship, ensuring all tenants and leaseholders have a strong voice in scrutinising fire safety practices and performance. This will be aligned with the revised Complaints Policy and Procedures at KNH.

4. Current KNH Tenant Involvement Strategy Key Outcomes

- 4.1 The voice of the tenant is clearly evident in key decisions taken by the Board.
- 4.2 Service improvements are shaped by and reflect the voice of the tenant.
- 4.3 More opportunities for individuals to have a say in the future of their homes and communities.
- 4.4 Increased enrichment of the business and staff through the diverse and collective experiences of our tenants.

4.5 More local people coming together around a common purpose to help create successful communities.

5. Comparison

Option 1 (In-house)	Option 2 (Almo)	Option 3 (Registered Provider)
Tenant Board Member Representation		
Consumer Standards determine that tenants should have a direct link to decision making processes.		
National Housing Federation (www.housing.org.uk) Code of Governance for Housing Associations includes the following principles: Accountability – there is proper accountability to, and involvement of, all the organisation’s stakeholders, primarily its residents and, Customer First – that the needs of existing and potential service users are at the heart of business decisions and strategy.		
Currently, KNH Board are custodians of the tenant voice and act as scrutiny. The Tenant and Leaseholder Panel (TLP) acts as support and challenge to the board.	KNH Board currently has 3 tenant board member positions, 1 of which is currently vacant. Tenant Board members represent tenants’ voice in strategic decision making.	Good governance practice among RP’s supports tenant representation on Boards and any Sub-Committees.
To ensure a clear tenant voice is being heard, the Council would create a dedicated Housing Scrutiny panel for the next 2 years. The TLP would continue to amplify the voice of tenants.	Tenants have a direct link to Councillors who also sit on the KNH Board.	For example, Yorkshire Housing have a Customer Services Committee that act as a link between the Board and its customers. The chair of the CSC sits on the Board. https://www.yorkshirehousing.co.uk/get-involved/customer-voice-panel/ Wakefield District Housing and Together Housing Group also have Ward Member representation on their Boards.
TLP could form part of the flightpath to Cabinet. This would be supported by the Cabinet member having a regular agenda item at TLP meetings as a formal part of the engagement / scrutiny structure.		However, it would be up to the Board to determine whether it is relevant to have a direct link to the Council as part of the governance arrangements. It is recognised that in the event of being a Board member, a Councillor’s first duty would be to the RP.

Tenant and leaseholder panel (TLP)		
The TLP would continue under this option and would link directly to any new governance arrangements. There would be a particular focus on landlord services - rent setting, compliance and safety and service agreements with tenants e.g. communal cleaning.	The TLP are a key part of KNH's governance framework ensuring tenants and leaseholders can influence the development of strategies, policies and plans and how the business is run. Currently made up of 6 panel members (Terms of reference allow for maximum of 12 members).	In line with the Consumer Standards and NFA Code of Governance, it is not unusual for RP's to have Tenant Panels or Forums in place. The likelihood is that this would continue in some format. For example, Together Housing Group (https://www.togetherhousing.co.uk/your-home/listening-to-our-tenants/resident-engagement/) run resident engagement and scrutiny groups. Yorkshire Housing Association has a Customer Voice Panel that provides opportunities for tenants to engage through consultations, focus groups, meetings, or reading paperwork and providing written or verbal feedback.
TLP could form part of the flightpath to Cabinet. This would be supported by the Cabinet member having a regular agenda item at TLP meetings as a formal part of the engagement / scrutiny structure.	2 members of TLP attend every KNH Board meeting. The model is not unusual among ALMOs of a similar size e.g. St. Leger Homes also has TARAs (tenant and resident associations).	Councils are generally regarded as a strategic partner of the RP. However, it would be up to the Board to determine whether it is relevant to have a direct link to the Council as part of its governance arrangements.
	TLP are recognised as an asset and positive links with Board have been established. Two members of TLP attend every KNH Board meeting to assist connections.	
Service improvement and challenge (SIC) - Scrutiny		
An approach to tenant scrutiny is considered good practice across the Housing sector, linked to decision making processes.		
Supports elements of the Regulator for Social Housing - Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.		
New governance arrangements of the housing management service would take on board best practice and ensure tenant scrutiny was in place. There is opportunity to ensure that this function is kept discrete from, but benefit from, the connections to other wider Council Place based engagement.	KNH have found it difficult to recruit to a standing panel as part of the new TI Strategy. In 2019, KNH commissioned TPAS to work with a small number of tenant scrutineers to review the Complaints Procedure which is now scheduled to go to KNH Board in February 2020.	An RP would decide on its own strategy.

Council Housing scrutiny reports into Overview scrutiny committee and this will be used to ensure we are hearing tenant voice. TLP will amplify the voice of the tenants. The combination of the above will provide an auditable trail / traceability of communications and information flows to evidence tenant voice in decision making.	A further exercise to promote further opportunities for tenants to decide on future topics to scrutinise will begin early in 2020.	
Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) and Street Voices (SV's)		
TRA's are fairly common across ALMO's and In-house management services.		TRAs are less popular among RPs therefore it is seen to be unlikely that an RP would continue to support a continuation of the groups in the longer term.
Kirklees / KNH have historically been seen as a leading light in tenant engagement which is endorsed by many Councillors from across all parties.	The TRA's and SV's continue to play an important role in Kirklees. KNH have adopted a light touch approach to supporting these groups with an emphasis tenants doing more for themselves and their communities.	KNH currently supports, on average, a much higher number of TRAs compared with many other housing providers of a similar size). This may be a reason for the groups to be discontinued by an RP.
Allied to this, and acknowledged as a significant asset, TRA's and SV's will to continue to be seen as vital as the current model will be the Council model going forward.		
The opportunity to connect TRA's into a broader citizen approach will be taken and the street voices principle will be adopted as part of our citizen engagement,	KNH currently supports 47 TRA's and is unusual in terms of the number of TRA's given its size.	
	SV's are individual tenants who champion the voice of tenants in those areas which do not have the support of a TRA but who are working towards KNH's aims and objectives). KNH currently has 19 Street Voice representatives.	
Digital Platform (https://kirklees.tenant.digital/)		
All Housing providers are looking to maximising the use of technology to engage customers and improve access to services.		
The 'Get Involved' Platform could exist under this option. It would be included under Kirklees Councils IT and Communications strategies and would be accessed through the Kirklees Website.	The 'Get Involved' Platform allows tenants, residents, staff and partners to share and participate in a wide range of involvement opportunities.	The RP would decide its own channel access strategy and whether to continue with the 'Get Involved' platform.

The opportunity to integrate into other engagement platforms would be looked into.	The Platform is currently accessed through the KNH website and has the potential to be accessed directly through Kirklees Council's website.	
This approach offers the opportunity to connect people and wider services together, whilst still enabling tenants and leaseholders to have a direct voice. As with all Services, there would be a continued drive to put the tenant / leaseholder (citizen) first and designing interaction in an intuitive way that works for people.		
Neighbourhood forums - North & South		
Existing forums could continue to exist under all models and there are examples within RP's such as Together Housing.		
Forums meet quarterly and are an opportunity for TRA's, SV's and Ward Members to come together to talk about KNH activities including involvement opportunities and, the development of policies and procedures. This is envisaged as continuing to occur within an In-house option.		The RP would decide its own engagement strategy and whether to continue to use the forum approach.
Minutes from Forums are shared with the TLP to ensure that the voice of the tenant at a local level is also heard and able to influence service delivery and improvements. This could continue In-house		There is no requirement for the RP to invite Ward Members or the same partners' organisations to be part of the Forums.
Further guaranteed integration into the Council's Place based approach would enable links to wider agenda's and partners such as Health and Adult social care.	The Forums are also a platform for partners talk to TRA's and SV's on a range of different subjects. Recently forums have received presentations covering Prevent (Extremism), Modern Day Slavery and Hate Crime.	As a singular focussed vehicle, there is no guarantee that RP's would engage in wider agenda's which would negatively impact on the range and depth of reach.
Estate Based Surgeries		
There are 2 estate based surgeries currently in Kirklees. They give tenants the opportunity to drop in to a location to speak with their Housing Officer. This could continue under all 3 options.		
In-house provides opportunities to further increase alignment with Place based working and other frontline services working in and around the estates e.g. Streetscene.	The surgery in South Kirklees is fortnightly and is well attended. The on in North Kirklees has recently changed its approach. In line with local feedback, and to become more responsive, it now happens at least once a month but the dates are determined by tenants and their needs. Both approaches are valued.	The RP would decide their own strategy and whether this should continue.

Estate inspections		
This is likely to continue under all options as it links to the Regulator for Social Housing’s Neighbourhood and Community Standard.		
Estate Inspections take place at least on a quarterly basis. They are an opportunity for TRA’s & SV’s to walk their estate with Ward Members, the housing officer, estate caretaker and occasionally other partners such as the Police, Streetscene etc.		The approach would depend on the strategy chosen by the RP. If they decided to continue, the RP would decide whether or not Ward Members have a role to play in inspections.
		An example of an approach is Together Housing Group have 3 Estate Services Groups covering all regions, In conjunction with the Estate Teams. Meeting three times a year, the role of residents on these groups is to help improve grounds maintenance and cleaning services across estates.
Grant Scheme		
It is good practice for a grant scheme to be in place.		
Current approach would be reviewed to see how impact could be maximised in tandem with other Council grant pots e.g. Up to You, Do Something Now and Growing Great Places. These share a similar criterion. Steps would be taken to ensure that outcomes were predominantly for the benefit of tenants.	Under the KNH Integrated Grant Scheme, TRA’s can access two funding pots; TRA grant & the Social investment fund.	RP’s would be under no obligation to retain the same grant arrangements. However, they could continue it, or create an alternative approach as it is linked to the RP’s Social Value obligations.
	The TRA Grant is designed to support the day to day activities of a TRA including room hire, payment of utility bills (where they have premises) and stationery. The TRA grant is awarded twice a year with allocations of up to £500 per award.	
	The Social Investment Fund is open to TRA’s to deliver projects in their communities that align to the 7 Kirklees Outcomes. There are 2 allocations of awards up to £2k per award. Applications are assessed by TLP.	

Place Based Working		
In-house delivery would enable the Council's strategic intent to be maximised and would not be dependent on relationships, or Board priorities, at any specific time. This would mean being able to utilise a greater range of resource whilst still ensuring tenants were the predominant beneficiaries.	KNH are currently supporting Kirklees Council to deliver place based working in particular in relation to the roll-out of the Place Standard. This work on Council estates managed by KNH is approached as part of the 'Your Home Your Place Investment Programme. KNH are continuing to explore how the Place Standards methodology can support grounds maintenance and other environmental works across estates. At present, 27 staff at KNH are trained on Place Standard toolkit.	An RP would be under no obligation to support place-based working or put Councillors at the heart of their strategy. Neither would they be required to share any plans for engagement to enable either a joined up approach or constructive input. The Council would not be able to access appropriate data and intelligence to inform wider strategies unless the RP agreed to include within their approach to GDPR.
Place based working recognises and builds on the strengths of Kirklees' towns and communities – each of which has its own unique local identity. Central to this is co-production which places Councillors at its heart and supports working within wards.		However, there are clear benefits for the RP to support the principles of Place based working e.g. avoidance of consultation fatigue among tenants, opportunity to align related priorities that would benefit the RP e.g. Playable Places Strategy etc
There is a recognition that tenants are also citizens who engage with a range of Services and strategic partners, each of whom look to connect with them. Kirklees estates are also home for citizens who rent or have bought their own property. The mixed estates mean there is an opportunity to bring communities further together rather than provide artificial divides.		
The opportunity to engage in an holistic way would mean a simpler relationship / engagement strategy. This would avoid potential duplication and consultation fatigue. Additional benefits would also include improved Housing links to the wider partnership including Health and connecting with approaches taken to co-production by Adult Social Care and 'whole person, whole system and whole family'.		

Annual Service Planning Conference

This is an example of best practice and, in line with the Consumer Standards, all models would need to adopt an approach to ensure tenants can influence and inform services.

<p>In October 2019, KNH held a tenant service planning conference. This revamped annual event commenced during the summer months and involved KNH engaging with tenants to ascertain what they thought KNH did well, not so well and what could be done to improve. Questions included satisfaction with services and value for money. Tenants should have a say in how rental income is allocated and services prioritised and delivered and this approach could continue to be used within In-House provision.</p>	<p>There is no requirement for this to be an annual or face to face event e.g. Yorkshire Housing have a Customer Voice Panel Page.</p>
<p>This information was presented back to tenants at the conference which was supplemented by workshops where tenants were able to have a conversation with Heads of Service about the services provided by KNH. This information is being used to prioritise and develop service plans and the feedback has also contributed to the Council's budget setting process.</p>	<p>RP's are also not required to have Ward Member involvement in the process and are under no obligation to share the findings from any consultation with the Council.</p>

Surveys / Questionnaires

Customer feedback is required under all housing models. Evidence of how services are performing is a requirement of the Consumer Standards. This includes sharing performance data with tenants at least on an annual basis.

<p>The approach currently adopted could be continued In-house. There is also the opportunity to jointly harvest data and intelligence, in line with GDPR requirements, that enables strategy as well as operational delivery to be increasingly informed.</p>	<p>KNH administer a number of questionnaires and surveys that are both perception and transaction based. KNH continues to use the STAR (Satisfaction of Tenants and Residents) survey as the main method to understand tenant satisfaction levels and trends. Results are attached at appendix 4.</p>	<p>RP's are under no obligation to share the findings from any consultation with the Council.</p>
	<p>KNH also shares performance data with tenants through an Annual Report.</p>	

Fire Safety / Resident Engagement

The emerging Housing Green Paper / Hackitt Review is explicit in terms of the expectations placed on housing providers to have in a place a Resident Engagement Strategy, linked to fire safety as best practice.

<p>KNH have developed a Fire Safety Resident Engagement Framework. The strategy utilises the structures mentioned above to engage, update, consult and brief tenants on all aspects of fire safety. This includes work that will take place next year to recruit tenant Fire Safety Champions, establish a High Rise Forum and produce a High Rise newsletter. This could be replicated if an In-house provision is required.</p>	<p>An RP would identify and implement its own approach.</p>
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Appendix 1

Regulator for Social Housing – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards

1.1 Customer service, choice and complaints

1.1.1 Registered providers shall:

- a. provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards
- b. have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

1.2 Involvement and empowerment

1.2.1 Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- a. the formulation of their landlord's housing-related policies and strategic priorities
- b. the making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- c. the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
- d. the management of their homes, where applicable
- e. the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and
- f. agreeing local offers for service delivery.

1.3 Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

1.3.1 Registered providers shall:

- a. treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- b. demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.

2.1 Customer service, choice and complaints

2.1.1 Registered providers shall provide tenants with accessible, relevant and timely information about:

- a. how tenants can access services
- b. the standards of housing services their tenants can expect
- c. how they are performing against those standards
- d. the service choices available to tenants, including any additional costs that are relevant to specific choices
- e. progress of any repairs work
- f. how tenants can communicate with them and provide feedback
- g. the responsibilities of the tenant and provider
- h. arrangements for tenant involvement and scrutiny.

2.1.2 Providers shall offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint and set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about

performance against the standards, and details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. Providers shall inform tenants how they use complaints to improve their services. Registered providers shall publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints. Providers shall accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's/tenants' behalf.

2.2 Involvement and empowerment

2.2.1 Registered providers shall support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for involvement and empowerment, including by:

- a. supporting their tenants to exercise their Right to Manage or otherwise exercise housing management functions, where appropriate
- b. supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them
- c. the provision of timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in a form which registered providers seek to agree with their tenants. Such provision must include the publication of an annual report which should include information on repair and maintenance budgets
- d. providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.

2.2.2 Registered providers shall consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery. This shall include how performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants and arrangements for reviewing these on a periodic basis.

2.2.3 Where registered providers are proposing a change in landlord for one or more of their tenants or a significant change in their management arrangements, they shall consult with affected tenants in a fair, timely, appropriate and effective manner. Registered providers shall set out the proposals clearly and in an appropriate amount of detail and shall set out any actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) to tenants in the immediate and longer term. Registered providers must be able to demonstrate to affected tenants how they have taken the outcome of the consultation into account when reaching a decision.

2.2.4 Registered providers shall consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.

2.3 Understanding and responding to diverse needs

2.3.1 Registered providers shall demonstrate how they respond to tenants' needs in the way they provide services and communicate with tenants.

Appendix 2

Regulator for Social Housing – Neighbourhood and Community Standard (Extract)

Source: www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards

1.1 Neighbourhood management

Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.

1.2 Local area co-operation

Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.

1.3 Anti-social behaviour

Registered providers shall work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes.

2 Specific expectations

2.1 Neighbourhood management

Registered providers shall consult with tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes. This applies where the registered provider has a responsibility (either exclusively or in part) for the condition of that neighbourhood. The policy shall include any communal areas associated with the registered provider's homes.

2.2 Local area co-operation

Registered providers, having taken account of their presence and impact within the areas where they own properties, shall:

- (a) identify and publish the roles they are able to play within the areas where they have properties
- (b) co-operate with local partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives

Appendix 3

TPAS: National Tenant Engagement Strategy

The full document can be downloaded at www.tpas.org.uk or contact graham.sykes@knh.org.uk

Engagement Strategy	Make sure your tenant engagement links directly to business
Resources for Engagement	Your engagement has got to be resourced to ensure it is effective in delivering planned outcomes.
Information & Insight	Provide access to information at the right level, at the right time, to the right people in the right way.
Influence & Scrutiny	Ensure tenants, leaseholders and communities can influence appropriately.
Community Engagement	Engage with communities and local stakeholders to develop projects and plans to meet jointly identified needs.
Valuing Engagement	Ensure your tenant engagement outcomes will benefit stakeholder organisations, tenants, leaseholders and communities.

Appendix 4

Satisfaction of Tenants and Residents (STAR) Results

KNH have used STAR (previously STATUS) since 2003. STAR is a perception survey and therefore not linked to a specific transaction. Results are significant to +/-3.5% although this varies year on year and is dependent on sample size. Fieldwork for the 2019 STAR survey is currently underway and the results will be available early in the New Year.

Question	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Comment
Overall satisfaction with KNH	85%	86%	84%	81%	82%	80%	Results show a gradual decline in satisfaction. Satisfaction peaked in 2012 with result of 87%
Satisfaction with the quality of home	83%	83%	83%	81%	82%	83%	This result has remained consistent.
Satisfaction with the neighbourhood	85%	84%	82%	78%	83%	77%	Results need to in broadest possible context as narrative shows that responses linked to this question incorporate Community Safety and Streetscene.
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	82%	85%	83%	81%	81%	80%	Results fairly consistent. Satisfaction in Repairs and Maintenance Services is a key driver to overall satisfaction with KNH.
Satisfaction that KNH listens and acts on the view of tenants	62%	65%	64%	59%	74%	63%	It is important to note that this does not reflect on the tenant involvement strategy and is more of an indicator how KNH delivers frontline services. This can be evidenced in verbatim comments included in STAR reports (available on request)