



Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Plan 2020 to 2025

December 2020



delivering promises, improving lives

Foreword

We have always placed residents at the heart of our services, offering the widest possible range of opportunities for them to become involved.

We are the country's first housing association to be awarded the Exemplar Accreditation for resident engagement by Tpas, the Tenant Engagement Experts. This recognises our trailblazing approach to resident engagement, a track record we are proud of.

Involving residents to help shape our services provides us with strong foundations for good governance and supports our strategic objective to be a landlord of choice by putting our customers first. Our compliance with the Regulator's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard demonstrates our commitment to hearing residents and valuing their contributions.

The Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Plan builds on this foundation, to further support effective engagement with all our residents through various channels.

We are committed to listening to residents when improving and shaping services, involving them both informally and formally at a level to suit their commitments and preferences. Providing a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved is key to our success.

We will continue to put residents first by involving them in matters which impact their lives, their homes and neighbourhoods, including safety and security and active involvement in the decisions we make.

Andy Wallhead
Chief Executive

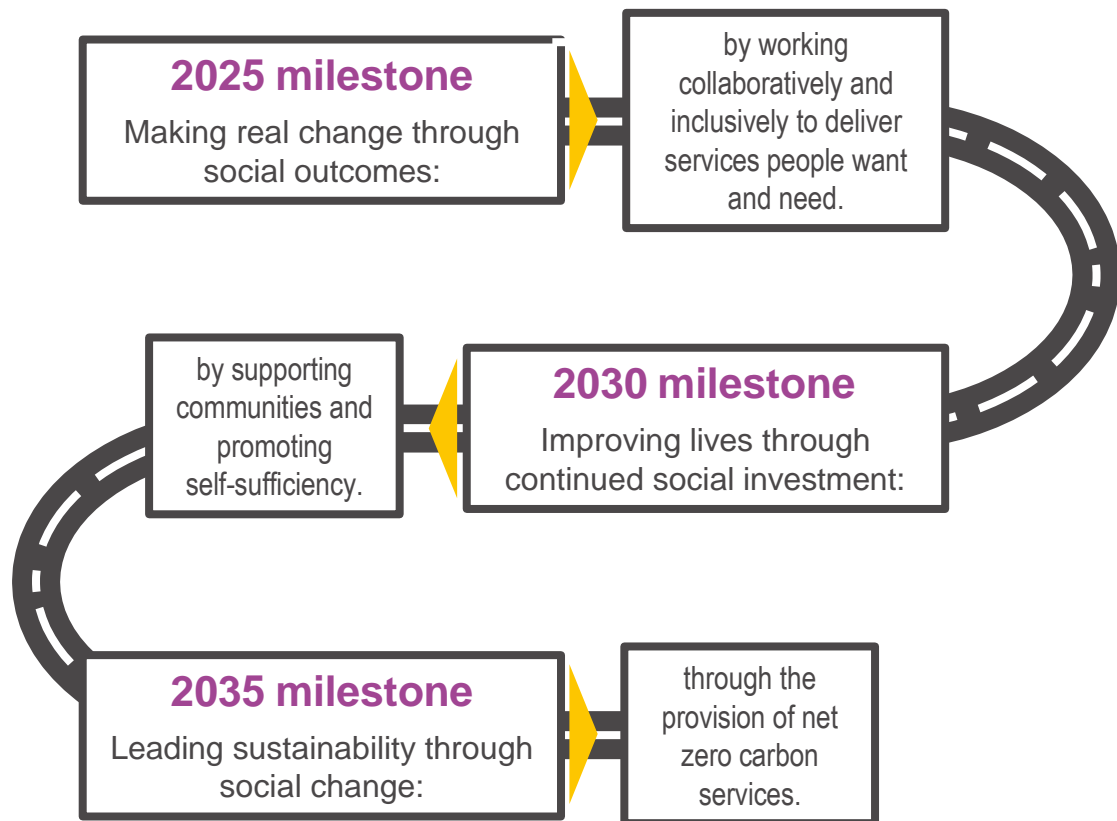
Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Plan 2020 to 2025

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1. Our Vision

Our Vision is to **create confident communities**. The long term purpose of our Vision is supported by three five-year milestones.



To achieve our 2025 Milestone, we have agreed delivery priorities, as set out in our 2025 Business Strategy.

These priorities are aligned to our Strategic Objectives.

- To be a landlord of choice by putting the customer first
- To be a partner of choice to create better places to live
- To be a positive force of leadership to develop the potential of people
- To be a well-managed and well governed business

2. Purpose of the plan

This plan sets out how we will contribute to the achievement of our 2025 Milestone and the priorities set out in our 2025 Business Strategy.

It focusses particularly on making a positive contribution towards the following strategic objective and priority:



By improving opportunities for residents to become involved; providing comprehensive support to existing groups; supporting the formation of new groups; and targeting engagement activities to connect with residents who are demographically representative of the district.

3. Background to the plan

An understanding of the need for effective and meaningful resident involvement is embedded in the culture of the organisation. This means working with residents to co-produce effective services that deliver their objectives, to meet a variety of needs. It means being accountable through our monitoring and scrutiny and open in our communication. We will work to empower tenants, residents and communities to work with us to achieve shared aims and community priorities.

Our understanding of the aspirations of our tenants drives the services which we provide to meet their needs and requirements. We make sure resident scrutiny of these services happens. The tenants and residents who make up our Neighbourhood Panels, Customer Excellence and Resident Involvement Monitoring Groups can challenge us with complete confidence.

Our approach supports compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH's) Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, ensuring that residents have a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved with the business, helping to shape its services.

The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty mean that we must consider the risk of discrimination and the needs of people who are disadvantaged or suffer inequality, when we make decisions about how we provide services and implement policies. We must also demonstrate how we are taking their views into account when making changes to policies, procedures and services. Our approach to involvement means effectively targeting our activities, including all necessary adjustments and considerations, to ensure participation is possible for everyone. We use views which are shared to inform our decision making processes to meet the requirements of the legislation.

In 2019, we were awarded the Tpas Exemplar Accreditation for resident engagement, recognising long standing good practice and our status as a beacon, or trailblazing organisation. Tpas membership enables us to experience and learn from good practice, to promote continuous improvement across our own approach to resident involvement. We work in a way which is consistent with the Seven Key Activities contained in the framework of Tpas' National Engagement Standards. Maintaining these standards leads to positive outcomes for residents.

We are an Early Adopter of the National Housing Federation's (NHF's) Together with Tenants plan, which was established in response to the social housing green paper, being one of 133 social housing providers helping to test the plan through online collaboration. We know that we do not always get it right for everyone, are not always as accountable as we should be to residents and that more can be done to ensure that residents feel represented and listened to. This includes ensuring that they are meaningfully involved in the decision making that determines the quality of their homes and services they use. Becoming an Early Adopter shows our commitment to ensuring we continue to enhance the relationship with residents and ensure they are engaged at all levels of the business, as we look to improve in advance of the greater expectations that will be put on us through the launch of the Social Housing White Paper.

4. Plan aims

The Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Plan establishes the following aims to ensure our approach to resident involvement and scrutiny is ready for future challenges. This will ensure we deliver effective, value for money services, in line with our strategic objectives and priorities set out in our 2025 Business Strategy, to achieve our Vision to ‘create confident communities.’

Our aims and expected outcomes to be delivered through this plan are:

Aim: **To undertake quality engagement activity which is inclusive and representative of our resident demographic.**

Key Outcome: Our resident involvement and decision making processes consider the needs of all residents, including those with diverse needs, and under engaged communities.

We will plan and undertake a programme of targeted engagement activities each year, developing themes which reflect areas which are of importance to us and residents, that we take into the heart of our communities. We carefully balance Promotional events, which increase awareness of the services that we provide; and Quality events, which involve interaction with residents and recording their views. We will also continue to consult on policy reviews, plans or proposals that are likely to have a customer impact. We will ensure there are opportunities for residents living within and outside the Wakefield district to get involved, ensuring we have views that are representative of all our residents.

Aim: **A transparent approach to scrutiny, that strengthens a resident-led process of constructive challenge.**

Key Outcome: Scrutiny arrangements ensure that residents’ views help shape and improve services and drive performance. A relationship of openness and trust will ensure we achieve co-creation of services which are tenant centric.

We will increase the number of residents involved in scrutinising our services, ensuring this is representative of those who receive our services and support them to develop new skills and knowledge. We will value resident perspectives which challenge us on areas where it is felt we should do things differently to achieve transparency and value for money.

Aim: **A blended approach to resident involvement, combining face to face, phone, written and digital methods.**

Key Outcome: A representative base of residents becomes involved as they are empowered to participate through newly available platforms and channels.

We understand that people have busy lives, with personal commitments and responsibilities. We know that everyone has preferences about how they wish to engage with us and understand that there are barriers which also limit their opportunities. We will create new involvement opportunities using face to face, phone, written and digital methods to ensure we adapt our approach to suit the needs and requirements of a broad base of residents.

Aim: **To enable tenant and resident community groups to thrive and play a valuable part in the lives of their neighbourhoods.**

Key Outcome: Groups that are formally or informally involved with us receive comprehensive assistance including advice, accountancy services, grants and our support of their meetings and events.

Our Communities Together Agreement sets out our approach to working with formal and informal groups across the Wakefield district. We support tenants' and residents' groups providing practical support, resources and advice. This includes assistance in applying for funding, helping to plan and hold events and attendance at meetings. Our involvement helps to strengthen the work these groups do to enrich the lives of their communities.

Aim: **To ensure that complaints which are made by residents are acted on in a timely, thorough manner, and handled fairly and positively.**

Key Outcome: A process and culture of handling complaints which is positive and resident-focused. We will ensure that we take the appropriate actions on occasions when things go wrong and be clear how a complaint can be escalated if a resident is dissatisfied with our response.

We will make it clear to residents what we consider to be a complaint and how they can be made. This process will be easy to access and the stages and timescales involved will be clear and understandable. We will handle all complaints by making sure that we remain resident-focused and arrive at the correct remedial action. We will continue to ensure that we learn from complaints and cascade key lessons to employees who are involved in this function. All of this will build on foundations of an effective complaints process, whilst ensuring compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and specific requirements of the RSH's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.

Aim: **To ensure that on matters of building safety and security, residents are confident their expectations about transparency and needs for information are met.**

Key Outcome: Residents, including those in our multi occupancy buildings, are effectively involved as part of Resident Engagement Strategies that ensure transparent communication of safety information and involvement in decision making on matters which affect their homes and communities.

In the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy there is a great expectation for change in the relationship between social landlords and residents. We will continue to nurture positive, transparent relationships which will live up to the priorities created by the Social Housing White Paper. We will continue to build on trust and communication to create pride in our communities and challenge the stigma that social housing residents can often face.

Aim: To support people to improve their opportunities through engagement with our Foundation Grant and Community Grant Schemes.

Key Outcome: Foundation Grants support people living in our properties to improve their employment opportunities. Community Grants strengthen the work of voluntary groups in our communities.

Our Foundation Grant Scheme improves employment opportunities by helping fund training, identification, transport and childcare. Anyone living in one of our properties is eligible to apply for up to £1,500 in a three year period. This makes sure that some of the most popular training is accessible. Our Foundation Grant Panel includes employees and tenants. Applicants have access to support from our Community Employment Advisors to improve their chances of success. In 2019/2020, 93 applicants in our neighbourhoods benefitted from grants totalling £96,970.51.

Our Community Grant scheme provides up to £1,500 which local community groups can bid for to fund a community project. The grants help provide support for small voluntary groups whose work will benefit our communities and contribute to our Vision of creating confident communities.

Aim: Support our objectives to reduce fuel poverty and our ambition to deliver net zero carbon services.

Key Outcome: Residents are engaged and educated on the benefits of net zero carbon services and work with us to benefit our communities wider.

By 2025 we want to be a fit for purpose, sustainable and greener business, responsive to climate change. This will involve working with our residents to educate them on the benefits to them and their families, their communities and the environment generally. As we take a proactive approach to the climate change agenda and reduce our emissions, engagement with residents is going to be critical.

5. Annual Milestones

| Aim: To undertake quality engagement and consultation activity which is inclusive are representative of our resident demographics. | | |
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| Year | Milestones | Expected Outcome |
| 2020/2021 2021/2022 | Adopt the Commitments of the National Housing Federation (NHF) Together with Tenants Plan and Charter. | Stronger relationships with residents, through clearer communication and active listening to hear tenant voices. Strengthened scrutiny arrangements and accessible redress for dissatisfied tenants. |
| 2020/2021 2021/2022 | Complete a review of Neighbourhood Panels. | Required changes to the existing model are implemented. |
| 2021/2022 | Retain Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation. | Demonstration to residents and peers that in achieving the Customer Excellence Standard, that residents are at the heart of our services and challenge ourselves to make continuous improvement. |
| 2021/2022 2023/2024 | Reapply for Tpas Exemplar Reaccreditation. | Exemplar status reaccreditation achieved. |
| 2022/2023 2024/2025 | Consider implementing all recommendations from the Tpas Exemplar accreditation process. | All recommendations beneficial to improving resident involvement are adopted. |
| Aim: A blended approach to involvement, combining face to face, phone, written and digital methods. | | |
| Year | Milestones | Expected Outcome |
| 2020/2021 | Establish a Virtual Panel to broaden the scope of consultation and scrutiny activities. | Increased opportunities for resident participation in scrutiny activity through a representative group of tenants and leaseholders. Involvement will be easier, suiting individual commitments and preferences. |
| 2021/2022 | Offer a dedicated digital platform to carry out effective engagement. | Improved access to engagement opportunities for residents who are unable to take advantage of traditional models. |

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| Aim: To enable tenant and resident community groups to thrive and play a valuable part in the lives of their communities. | | |
| Year | Milestones | Expected Outcome |
| 2020/2021 | Complete a review of the Communities Together Agreement. | Agreement updated to ensure it remains fit for purpose and the application form also made available in a digital format. |
| Aim: To ensure that complaints which are made by residents are acted on in a timely, thorough manner and handled fairly and positively. | | |
| Year | Milestones | Expected Outcome |
| 2020/2021 | Complete a review of the Complaints Policy and Procedure to ensure it meets the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. | An accessible complaints process that is fair and quick and identifies no areas of non-compliance with the Complaint Handling Code or Tenant and Involvement and Empowerment Standard. |
| Aim: To ensure that on matters of building safety and security, residents are confident their expectations about transparency and needs for information are met. | | |
| Year | Milestones | Expected Outcome |
| 2020/2021 | Support compliance with the requirements of the Building Safety Act through effective, transparent engagement with occupiers. | Residents, particularly of multi occupied buildings are proactively engaged. All necessary information regarding safety and security will be provided in addition to a range of opportunities for residents to influence key decision making. |
| 2021/2022 | Adopt the key recommendations of the Social Housing White Paper. | Complete all necessary changes to engagement activity to help tenants challenge stigma and become empowered making their communities places to celebrate. |

| Aim: To support people to improve their opportunities through engagement with our Foundation Grant and Community Grant Schemes. | | |
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| Year | Milestones | Expected Outcome |
| 2020/2021 | Complete a review of the Foundation Grant Scheme | Outcomes determined in terms of the effectiveness of the scheme in facilitating training for tenants that delivers a successful transition to employment. |
| 2021/2020 | Introduce a streamlined application process for the Community Grant Scheme that takes advantage of digital technology. | A more efficient and effective application process that is easier to access for applicants. |
| Aim: To support our objectives to reduce our carbon footprint and our ambition to deliver net zero carbon services. | | |
| Year | Milestones | Expected Outcome |
| 2022/2023 | Feasibility of sustainability ambassadors considered ahead of recruitment and engagement of appropriate residents. | Approach to recruiting sustainability ambassadors to support objectives towards net zero carbon identified. |

These milestones will be delivered through Annual Team Plans and be subject to annual review.



Vision

to create confident communities

Mission

to inspire, transform and promote excellence

Values

to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity

delivering promises, improving lives