

**Wiltshire Council**

**Environment Select Committee**

**8 January 2019**

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**Subject: Resident Engagement Plan 2019-2022**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Clewer  
Cabinet Member for Housing, Corporate Services, Arts,  
Heritage and Tourism**

**Key Decision: No**

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### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to present the updated Resident Engagement Plan 2019-2022 and Action Plan to the Environment Select Committee (ESC), and for it to endorse the Plan and action plan to be implemented.

This report is being presented to the ESC to seek members' viewpoint and guidance around the future direction of Resident Engagement within the Council's Housing Services.

Updates on delivering current resident engagement arrangements (2015-2018) have previously been provided to the Environment Select Committee.

A new Resident Engagement Plan will assist the service in ensuring it can deliver the high quality flexible services that are supported in the Business Plan. It will also assist in ensuring we act in accordance with the Regulatory Standards and will assist in our retaining TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Accreditation; as well as assisting the service in exceeding residents' expectations. There is increasing evidence that having resident engagement arrangements has had a positive impact on the quality of service provision to residents and their families.

The current resident engagement arrangements began in 2015 and conclude in 2018. An updated Resident Engagement Plan and Action Plan are required to ensure that services provided to residents meet their expectations, that our actions are in accordance with our obligations including legal and regulatory obligations, and to complement the Council's Business Plan.

**Proposal(s)**

For the Environment Select Committee to endorse the Resident Engagement Plan 2019-2022 and Action Plan, which has been agreed by the Housing Board and recommended to the Environment Select Committee.

**Reason for Proposal(s)**

The current resident engagement arrangements began in 2015 and conclude in 2018. An updated Resident Engagement Plan and Action Plan are required to ensure that services provided to residents meet their expectations, that our actions are in accordance with our obligations including legal and regulatory obligations, and to complement the Council's Business Plan.

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13 December 2018

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**Key Decision: No**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to present the updated Resident Engagement Plan 2019-2022 and Action Plan to the Environment Select Committee (ESC), and for it to endorse the Plan and action plan to be implemented. The Housing Board have agreed the Plan and are recommending it to the Environment Select Committee for it to note.

**2. Relevance to the Council's Business Plan**

**2.1** The Council's vision is to "create strong communities in Wiltshire" (Business Plan, p2) and governance arrangements around the Council's housing stock contributes to this vision by: including residents of our housing stock, joining their knowledge with that of Councillors and independents to ensure that by embracing community involvement and working together, everyone is able to take more responsibility or their own wellbeing. Combining knowledge from a range of sources and ensuring that service users are included, can contribute toward the Council's goals of implementing innovative service changes, in turn delivering even better services in a cost conscious commercial manner, and protecting those who are most vulnerable whilst furthering our digitisation ambitions. The direction and future priorities of Housing Services are aligned with and constructed to complement the Council's Business Plan.

**3. Overview and Scrutiny Engagement**

**3.1** This report is being presented to the ESC to endorse the Resident Engagement Plan 2019-2022 and Action Plan, which has been agreed by the Housing Board and recommended to the Environment Select Committee.

**4. Background**

**4.1** At its meeting held on 1 September 2015, the ESC included the item ‘Housing Association Resident Participation and Scrutiny’; the ESC resolved: “To notify Overview and Scrutiny of the Environment Select Committee’s intention to form a [housing] scrutiny Task Group.”

**4.2** At its meeting held on 27 October 2015, the ESC resolved: “To agree the proposed membership of the Resident Engagement Task Group.”

**4.3** At its meeting held on 12 April 2016, the ESC was presented with the Resident Engagement Task Group final report, which “...explored how well residents of Wiltshire have been able to engage with the Council to identify means of best practice.”

(a) The ESC resolved that:

- “i. The Committee endorsed the report of the task group and the 11 recommendations within it;
- ii. The response from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure, Libraries and Flooding would be provided at the next meeting of the Environment Select Committee;
- iii. A further update and report on resident engagement would be provided to the Environment Select Committee in a year’s [sic] time.”

(b) The report recommended (non-exhaustive list):

- “1. To ensure that Wiltshire Council has defined a precise purpose and overarching aims of its resident engagement programme as a framework for the identification of the most appropriate resident engagement mechanisms.

...

- 11. For the Environment Select Committee to receive an update report on the progress of Wiltshire Council’s resident engagement strategy and its outcomes in twelve months.”

**4.4** At its meeting held on 7 June 2016, the ESC was presented with the ‘Executive Response to the Resident Engagement Task Group’s Final Report’, which included that:

(a) “Recommendation No. 1

...

The Resident Engagement Strategy approved by the Housing Board in July 2014 defines the purpose and aims of resident engagement. It

sets out the framework for the engagement process together with a structure with agreed direction, objectives, intended outcomes and effective delivery arrangements.

The strategy [and action plan] is currently under review and the amended version will be presented to the Housing Board for their input / comment / approval in July 2016.”

(b) “Recommendation No. 11

...

Housing would be more than happy to provide the ESC with an update on progress in 12 months.”

(c) The ESC resolved:

“i. ...

ii. That a meeting be arranged between the Task Group and members of the Housing Panel to review the Resident Engagement Strategy and ensure that Housing Panel meetings provided the best possible service to residents;

iii. ...

iv. That the Environment Select Committee receive an update report on the progress of Wiltshire Council’s resident engagement strategy and its outcome in twelve months.”

**4.5** At its meeting held on 13 June 2017, the ESC was presented with a ‘Resident Engagement Update’ paper. The meeting minutes record that: “This annual report is aimed at providing the Environment Select Committee with a yearly update on the outcome of the resident engagement strategy and its progress since 2016.” The minutes go on to record that: “He [the Associate Director] explained that the strategy would be brought to the Committee for approval, once it had been formulated.” The Cabinet Member “...was present and gave his support to the representations made...”.

**4.6** The current resident engagement arrangements began in 2015 and conclude in 2018.

**4.7** Throughout 2018, the service has engaged with the Challenge and Change Group (scrutiny), which is a group of volunteer residents, to incorporate their viewpoint into the new Plan, which is now being presented to the ESC.

**4.8** Members of the Housing Board received the Resident Engagement Plan and Action Plan on 24 September 2018; members’ viewpoints have been

incorporated into the Resident Engagement Plan and Action Plan; the updated Plan was presented to the Housing Board on 26 November 2018.

- 4.9** The Housing Board has 9 members (3 councillors, 3 independents and 3 tenants). The Housing Board has agreed the Resident Engagement Plan 2019-2022 and Action Plan, and is recommending it to the Environment Select Committee for the ESC to note.

## **5. Safeguarding Implications**

- 5.1** There are no significant safeguarding implications associated with this report.

## **6. Public Health Implications**

- 6.1** There are no significant public health implications associated with this report.

## **7. Corporate Procurement Implications**

- 7.1** There are no significant corporate procurement implications associated with this report.

## **8. Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

- 8.1** All Board members operate in and treat all residents in a fair and balanced manner, maintain their independence and make recommendations to Housing Services. Board members do not represent a particular area; they represent all Council residents in the county of Wiltshire and make recommendations in the best interests of all Council residents in Wiltshire.

## **9. Environmental and Climate Change Consideration**

- 9.1** There are no significant environmental or climate change implications associated with this report.

## **10. Risk Assessment**

- 10.1 Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken:** Wiltshire Council's Housing Board and Housing Services may be put at a disadvantage in terms of delivering the high quality flexible services that are supported in the Business Plan. We may be in breach of the Regulatory Standards. We may fail to retain TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Accreditation. We may fail to meet residents' expectations. Collectively, this may be viewed as a missed opportunity for improvement if the service were not to focus on delivering the identified priorities.
- 10.2 Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks:** Arrangements offered may fail to encourage engagement or the recommendations and/or viewpoints received may be less than helpful. To address these concerns, well trained officers

steer the conversations toward productive matters and online training for residents is also now available.

- 10.3** Powers cannot and have not been conferred on the Board so as to enable it to make binding decisions, as outlined in the Paper passed by Cabinet on 22 January 2013. The Board makes recommendations to Housing Services and can make recommendations to Cabinet.

## **11. Financial Implications**

- 11.1** There are no significant financial implications associated with this report.

## **12. Legal Implications**

- 12.1** There are no significant legal implications associated with this report, other than failing to comply with the Regulatory Standards and the points of Law which underpin the regulators powers.

## **13. Options Considered**

- 13.1** A written document was required given the current resident engagement arrangements document was due to expire.

## **14. Conclusions**

- 14.1** Further building upon the successes of our previous resident engagement arrangements appears to be a prudent move. Refining the proposed Resident Engagement Plan and Action Plan with the input of Members so as to exceed residents' expectations, ensure our compliance with our legal and regulatory obligations and complement the Council's Business Plan, is appropriate. There is increasing evidence that having appropriate resident engagement arrangements has had a positive impact on the quality of service provision to residents and their families.

## **15. Proposal**

- 15.1** For the Environment Select Committee to note the Resident Engagement Plan 2019-2022 and Action Plan, which has been agreed by the Housing Board and recommended to the Environment Select Committee.

## **16. Reason for Proposal**

- 16.1** The current resident engagement arrangements began in 2015 and conclude in 2018. An updated Resident Engagement Plan and Action Plan are required to ensure that services provided to residents meet their expectations, that our actions are in accordance with our obligations including legal and regulatory obligations, and to complement the Council's Business Plan.

**Simon Hendey**

**Director – Housing and Commercial Development**

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13 December 2018

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Resident Engagement Plan

## **Background Papers**

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Business Plan.

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 22 January 2013.

Minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 1 September 2015.

Minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 27 October 2015.

Minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 7 June 2016.

Minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 13 June 2017.

Regulatory Standards (The Regulator of Social Housing).

Resident Engagement Strategy 2015-2018.