

# Housing Services Policy



**Division** – Housing and Safer Communities, directorate-wide

**Title of Policy:** resident engagement policy

|                                   |                                                        |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Review</b>                     | Version: V3 – for engagement with residents            | Effective date:                    |
|                                   | Replaces: new policy                                   | Date of completion: September 2025 |
| <b>Scope</b>                      | Tenants and leaseholders of Royal Borough of Greenwich |                                    |
| <b>Approval</b>                   | Cabinet Member                                         | Date signed off:                   |
| <b>Equality Impact Assessment</b> | Where required                                         | <b>Yes/no/partial</b>              |

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## 1.1 Policy Objective

- 1.1 This policy is about how the Royal Borough of Greenwich engages with our residents about their homes and the places that they live. It sets out how we apply the Our Greenwich Community Engagement Pledge to our activities as a landlord.

The policy includes:

- Our principles for resident engagement
- Our engagement pyramid
- Decisions we engage on
- How we engage with residents, including equalities and engagement with diverse groups
- How we act on resident feedback
- Legal and constitutional elements of engagement

## 2. Context

- 2.1 **Strategic context:** This policy has been produced in line with the Royal Greenwich Community Engagement Pledge and sets out how we will apply this pledge to our work with tenants and leaseholders in our homes.

The principles of the Community Engagement Pledge are:

|                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Create open dialogues and share engaging communications | Ask the community firstly for thoughts and feedback<br>Share clear information<br>Ensure communications are available in accessible and inclusive formats<br>Create jargon and acronym free materials<br>Request feedback from the community during any engagement activity |
| Encourage thriving relationships                        | Build trust with partners and residents<br>Harness community knowledge, insight and expertise<br>Be open, respectful and responsive                                                                                                                                         |
| Foster honesty about influence and impact               | Highlight what can be achieved<br>Provide the necessary time for engagement and build community capacity<br>Make sure activity is needed and evidence driven<br>Ensure updates include how contributions have influenced any decision<br>Share outcomes and impact          |
| Collaborate together with communities                   | Work locally with stakeholders<br>Liaise on the ground with communities<br>Develop engagement activities together                                                                                                                                                           |

In this policy we have chosen to use the word “resident” rather than “community” because it is specifically about people who live in our homes.

- 2.2 **Constraints** – the key constraints to this policy are the time and resources (including money and technology) available to officers, and the time and resources available to tenants. We prioritise our activities to make the best use of this time.
- 2.3 **Compliance** – this policy has been produced to comply with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing’s Consumer Standards. It also refers to the rules set by the Building Safety Regulator for high rise buildings as set out in the Building Safety Act 2022, but the detail of this is covered in a separate policy. The 1996 Housing Act requires us to consult with tenants on “significant” changes to their housing services. This policy sets out how we will comply with this but also go beyond it with wider engagement on areas which are not required under the Act.
- 2.4 **Equalities** – An equalities impact assessment has been completed. There are no significant impacts identified.
- 2.5 **Engagement** – we produced this policy by working in partnership with residents in winter 2024 /spring 2025 to build on longstanding work in this area in order to comply fully with the consumer standards – this included two detailed sessions with the Housing Policy and Improvement Panel to discuss the panel structure and the engagement pyramid. We then tested the draft policy through an engagement session and online survey open to all tenants and promoted through YourView in June and July. Our survey ran from 23<sup>rd</sup> June to 27<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

Our work also draws on wider feedback from our residents during 2024, and feedback from our Lead Member and officers involved in resident engagement.

## 2.6 **Scope and exclusions**

We intend to engage with our residents about the key decisions and actions which affect them, their homes and areas, and to provide ways for residents to raise and engage with us about topics which are important to them. Residents means tenants and leaseholders of homes owned by RBG, including temporary accommodation which is owned by the council. It includes lead tenants and other people who live permanently in their households.

Decisions which are in scope for this policy are:

- Work in and around residents’ homes:
  - How we plan, deliver and communicate about repairs to residents’ homes or blocks, including where there is damp or mould
  - How we plan, deliver and communicate about capital works to residents’ homes or blocks, including kitchens, bathrooms, lifts, roofs, etc
  - How we care for our properties and estates, including caretaking
  - How we keep our residents safe and secure in and around their homes<sup>1</sup>
- Supporting residents:
  - How we support residents who experience anti-social behaviour, hate crime or domestic violence in our homes and on our estates
- Parking:
  - How we manage parking, including bicycles and electric car charging, on our estates (but not on roads or car parks which are not part of our estates)

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<sup>1</sup> The detail of how we engage with residents who live in high rise buildings about their safety is covered in the Building Safety Policy

- Rents, service charges and leaseholder charges
  - Levels of rent and service charges
  - How we collect rents and service charges, and how we communicate with residents about this
- Communications:
  - How we communicate and engage with our residents, including the channels that we use and the types of messages that we share

Decisions which are out of scope for this policy are:

- Decisions which relate to a specific residents' circumstances or needs; these are managed through routine service requests, and residents can make a complaint if we have not met their expectations. If residents raise an issue with officers about their specific circumstances which requires resolution, we will encourage them to make a service request or raise a complaint.
- Decisions about wider RBG services which don't relate to homes or estates – this engagement and consultation will be run by other teams within the council. We will work with the central council team to avoid residents being over-consulted on too many topics at one time.
- Decisions which do not relate to homes where RBG is the landlord or freeholder.
- Decisions about new build homes, before they are ready for tenants to move in. These are managed through the planning system, but the housing team will be closely involved if the proposed developments have an impact on our estates

### **3. Policy**

#### **3.1 Our resident engagement pyramid**

The resident engagement pyramid describes different levels of engagement, starting with basic awareness at the bottom and progressing through stages of increasing commitment and awareness.

- The pyramid describes different activities, not different people – residents might be at different levels for different topics they are involved in and move up and down depending on their interests and capacity.

We value engagement at all levels and will offer training and support to residents to move to engagement levels higher in the pyramid when they wish to do so.

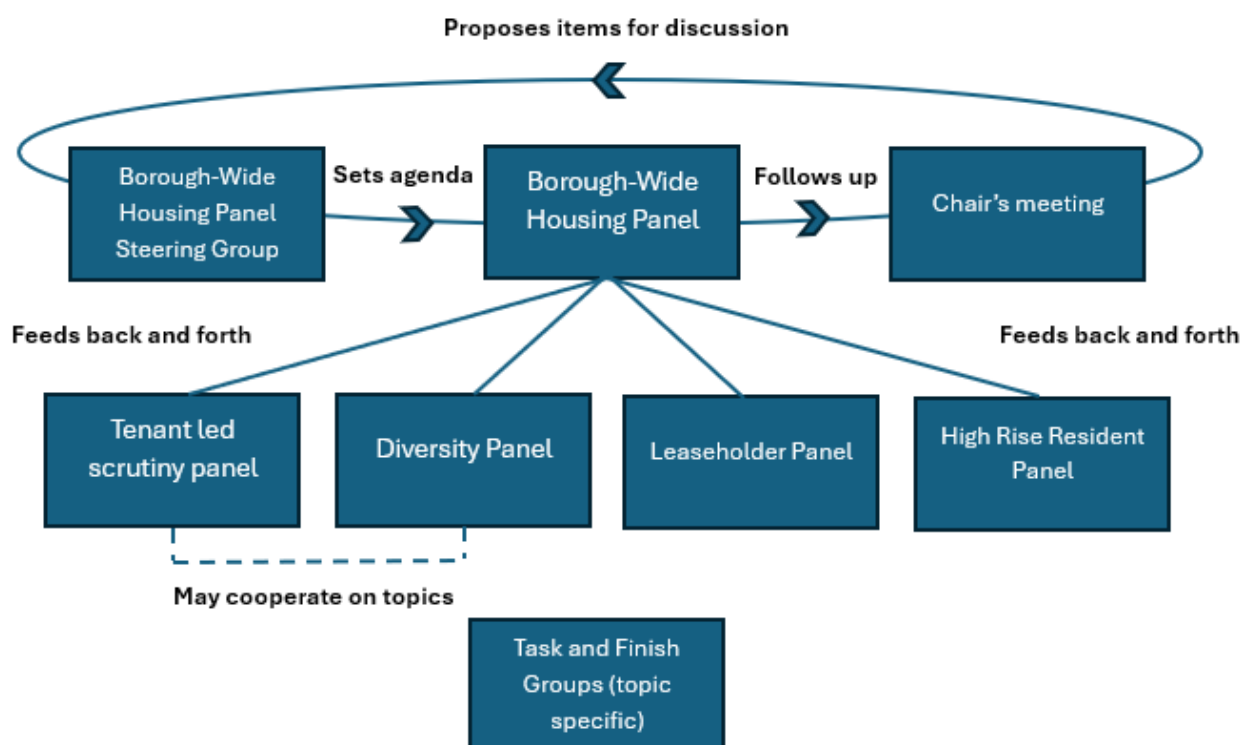
The activities in the pyramid are described in more detail in section 3.2 below.

| Your contribution                                                        |             | What the activity may be about                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shaping and guiding actions over a long period of time                   | LEAD        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borough Wide Housing Panel</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| Working with residents and officers to make change                       | COLLABORATE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panels: Leaseholder, Tenant Led Scrutiny, Diversity</li> <li>Borough Wide Panel Steering Group</li> </ul>       |
| Supporting the redesigning of services or creating new ways to do things | CO-CREATE   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations on service redesign</li> <li>Task and finish groups</li> <li>Housing Champions Level 3</li> </ul> |
| Sharing your ideas for making things better                              | CHIP-IN     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Champions Level 2</li> <li>Estate and voids spot-checks</li> <li>Borough Wide Housing Panel</li> </ul>  |
| Subscribing to YOURVIEW and telling us what you think                    | OPT-IN      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YourVIEW</li> <li>Estate walkabouts</li> </ul>                                                                  |
| Letting residents know what is happening and sharing news                | BE AWARE    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Champions Level 1</li> <li>Talk Housing</li> </ul>                                                      |

## 3.2 How we engage with residents

### 3.2.1 Meetings and panels

#### 3.2.1a Panels focused on tenants



We run a series of resident panels, which form the core of our engagement practice – the core panels involving tenants from across the borough are shown below.

- **Borough Wide Housing Panel Steering Group:** This group sets the agenda for the Borough Wide Housing Panel and discusses policy engagement items. Meetings occur two

to three weeks before the Borough Wide Housing Panel. Attendees are a fixed group, with new attendees invited annually. This group is chaired by a tenant.

- **Borough-Wide Housing Panel:** This central panel updates and discusses issues that are relevant across the borough and provides feedback from other tenant panels. It meets quarterly and is open to all tenants and leaseholders and will be held at varying locations across the Borough, subject to availability of suitable venues. Chair is elected by the panel every 2 years.
- **BWHP Chair's Meeting:** This meeting is for the BWHP chair, chair of the BWHP Steering Group, Director of Housing and Safer Communities and Cabinet Member. It covers strategic updates and discussions, as well as high-level follow-up on outcomes of other meetings. It meets six-weekly.
- **Tenant Scrutiny Panel:** (likely to be renamed - Tenant Oversight Committee?) Tenants on this panel scrutinise our housing services, providing feedback and holding officers accountable. This panel meets quarterly or as the group determines. Attendees are a fixed group, with new attendees invited annually.
- **Housing Diversity Panel:** This panel champions equality and inclusion, ensuring our services meet the diverse needs of all our residents. The purpose is to investigate how tenants' experiences vary according to diversity characteristics, leading to improvement recommendations. This panel meets quarterly or as the group determines. Attendees are a fixed group, with new attendees invited annually and has key representation from resident members of our House Proud (LGBTQ+ and allies) and SHARP (Social Housing Anti Racism Pledge) working groups.
- **High Rise resident panel:** This panel is for residents living in high rise council blocks in the borough and will focus on addressing building safety issues.
- **Task and Finish Groups:** These are formed for specific projects with focused discussions on areas for development identified by officers, such as complaints responses. These groups are fixed-term. Attendees are invited for each project.

### 3.2.1b **Leaseholder Panel**

Leaseholders are welcome at Borough Wide Housing Panel as there are many topics which are relevant to both tenants and leaseholders, such as estate caretaking and managing anti-social behaviour. Leaseholders are asked not to get involved in questions which are specific to tenants, for example on rent setting.

We also operate a Leaseholder Panel for leaseholders to discuss issues specific to them, including service charges and capital works. Where this Panel discusses issues which are also relevant to tenants, the chair of the panel will feed back to the chair of the Borough Wide Housing Panel. A leaseholder co-chairs this panel with a nominated council officer.

### 3.2.1c **Local Panels**

In the past, Greenwich had resident panels covering each area of the borough. In recent years many of these have fallen away as it has been difficult to find residents who want to attend and chair them. Others remain active, but residents tell us that it can be hard to find people to take on formal roles. It is not possible for officers to provide support to the panels without detracting from the other engagement structures, which residents tell us are important.

In the next two years, we propose to support the remaining active Local Panels to transition to new forms of governance, for example as Tenants/Residents Associations or Housing Champion Networks.

### **3.2.2. Other methods of engagement**

We also engage with residents through various methods at different levels on the participation pyramid – including through surveys, estate walkabouts and our Housing Champions programme.

*Housing Champions* are council tenants or leaseholders who volunteer to improve their communities. They act as a point of contact for neighbours, represent resident views, and help shape local services. All Champions receive training and support. There are three levels:

- Level 1 - The Broadcaster (sharing information)
- Level 2 - The Active Engager (leading on specific areas like estate walkabouts)
- Level 3 - The Ultimo (leading projects and gaining professional housing skills through training and apprenticeships)

*Consultations:* We consult with residents on specific questions about our services, to improve the way we work, and sometimes to meet our legal obligations. Depending on the topic, consultations may be run through YourView and/or through other methods, such as social media and Talk Housing articles.

*YourView* is our online platform through which tenants and leaseholders can collaborate with the council to improve housing services. It offers various levels of involvement, from quick surveys to more in-depth projects, allowing residents to share their opinions and directly influence how their housing is managed. Residents' opt-in to receive emails from our YourView platform to be involved.

*Estate Walkabouts* include residents, officers and councillors. They focus on communal repairs, caretaking, and environmental issues, allowing residents to suggest small improvements like new signage or notice boards. They typically involve an initial online meeting to gather residents' concerns, followed by an in-person walkabout on the estate a few days later with residents and staff to investigate those issues.

*Estate Caretaking and Voids Spot Checks* involve groups of Housing Champions and officers checking the quality of key services. Residents and officers select and visit a small group of housing estates to check the quality of caretaking services and raise any issues with the caretaking manager. We use a similar process to spot check the condition of void properties (where the previous tenants have moved out) before they are offered for re-let to new tenants.

### **3.2.3 Engaging around specific projects and estates**

At times, we will invite residents to support us with specific improvement projects. These might be to do with improving a particular service, designing a new service to meet a new need, or changing our services to respond to a new legal or regulatory requirement.

We also work with residents to improve a specific estate where feedback from residents and/or our data shows that there is a particular need. If residents ask for it, this can include assisting them to set up tenant and resident associations (TRAs).

Depending on the project, we might use the following:

- Interviews (where we talk to one or two people at a time)
- User testing (where we ask people to try out an early version of the service, especially for the website)
- Focus groups (where we talk to people in a group)
- Walkabouts

This might involve contacting residents who have previously participated in related consultations, who are part of a specific group (eg. people who live in high rise buildings or in a particular estate) or who have expressed an interest in a particular area.

#### **3.2.4 *How we identify residents to engage with***

We use a multi-faceted approach to identify and engage residents and promote the Borough Wide Housing Panel, ensuring we reach a diverse range of voices and encourage participation in various ways. Our methods include:

- Monthly YourView newsletter
- Quarterly Talk Housing magazine
- Information on our website
- Opportunities shared on social media
- Messages shared by Housing Champions
- Welcome events for residents moving to new council homes
- Targeted communications to residents living in temporary accommodation
- Publishing information on Estate Notice Boards

For specific topics or projects, we work with colleagues across the council to identify residents with relevant experience or expertise.

### **3.3 *Engaging with diverse groups***

We commit to engaging with residents from different backgrounds and to ensuring that RBG staff have cultural competency and respect for different resident groups. We commit to ensuring that RBG staff understand Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles and their relevance to their role.

We know that our residents are highly diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and faith, and in the experiences they have had before and during their time living in our homes. We want to make sure that all our residents feel comfortable engaging with us and that the residents we engage with reflect the diversity of our population.

Some of the ways that we use to make our engagement suitable for diverse groups include:

- Offering a choice of in-person and online engagement, at different times of the day for people with work/caring/childcare responsibilities.

- For in-person events, offering materials in various formats – printouts and email versions.
- For online engagement, offering a mixture of surveys which can be filled in at any time, and specific meeting slots.
- Engaging with residents over the telephone and via written communication if that is their preference.
- Advertising culturally relevant events across the Borough to promote community cohesion.
- Offering translations into languages other than English.
- Using clear and accessible language and avoiding jargon in all communications and particularly for those with learning disabilities or limited English skills.
- Running Panels and other sessions in venues which are accessible to residents with disabilities, and which are close to public transport links.
- Developing a culture of awareness and competence on neurodivergence, to help us shape inclusive engagement.
- Booking taxis where residents would otherwise find it difficult to attend an event.
- Where we provide refreshments, ensuring these are suitable for attendees' religious and dietary needs
- Targeted support for underrepresented groups. We have achieved Pledge Pioneer status for our commitment to work more inclusively with LGBTQ+ residents and are working towards accreditation under the Social Housing Anti-Racism Pledge (SHARP). Both have working groups, made up of representative residents, RBG officers and local community agencies.
- A council wide Anti-Racism Strategy is in development, and we have an active Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group. There are council wide opportunities to take part in training and open conversations about race, equity and bias.

We will continue to develop this list as our residents' needs develop and change, and as new technology becomes available and we commit to conducting equality impact assessments for all engagement initiatives to identify and mitigate potential discrimination or exclusion. We provide resources or support (e.g., transport / childcare / or interpreters) to enable participation from tenants facing socioeconomic / accessibility barriers.

### 3.4 How we act on resident feedback

#### 3.4.1 Types of decision

| Decisions we make                   | How we engage                          | How we respond                                             | Who is responsible                                                                | Examples                                                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Our vision for housing in Greenwich | Formal consultation on the Housing and | With a written strategy, and updates through Our Greenwich | Strategy and Insight team with steers from Housing and Safer Communities Director | 2021-26 Housing Strategy<br>Our Greenwich performance updates |

|                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                        |                                                                              |                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                               | Homelessness Strategy <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                        |                                                                              |                                                                                                                     |
| How we prioritise our directorate-level resources (money and staff time)                      | Reviewing the priorities we are told about through Panels and surveys                                                                                    | In our Directorate Service Plan and divisional service plans                                                           | Housing and Safer Communities Director and Assistant Directors               | Repairs Transformation Programme – investing extra staff time in the area our residents told us was most important. |
| When to investigate the performance of our services to see where we need to make improvements | Issues we are told about through Panels, alongside our data (we expect this will be especially the Diversity and Scrutiny Panels)                        | By creating and running specific research projects                                                                     | Service teams instructed by Directors                                        | Creating the repairs follow-on line, because residents told us that our follow up repairs system wasn't working.    |
| How and what we communicate with our residents                                                | In discussion at Panels, through feedback residents send to us in general or on specific proposals, and in line with our strategies and planned projects | With changes to drafts for specific communications. With wider changes to our use of channels and the content we share | Communications Team and Community Participation & Diversity Team             | Communications strategy and messages and poster design around our 2025 rent increase                                |
| How we improve a specific service                                                             | Staff from that service attending one of our Panels, or setting up a specific event, survey etc                                                          | By making changes to service design or procedures                                                                      | Service team managers and teams supporting them (including the Digital Team) | Rethinking Tenancy programme – improving the way our tenancy staff work with residents                              |
| How we improve a specific estate                                                              | Through estate walkabouts and targeted local events                                                                                                      | By designing and delivering specific projects, working closely with residents                                          | Service team managers and teams supporting them                              | Woolwich Common fly-tipping reduction project                                                                       |
| When we respond to a specific issue (for example, a repair needed)                            | Estate walkabouts and spot checks (and also through                                                                                                      | By resolving that issue, or by explaining where we are not able to resolve it                                          | Service team managers                                                        | Many specific issues, eg. blocked gutters, overgrown vegetation, estate lighting.                                   |

<sup>2</sup> Because this Strategy also relates to people who live in private rental, owner occupied and Register Provider housing, we also consult with these groups

|                     |                             |  |  |  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| to a communal area) | individuals raising issues) |  |  |  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|

### 3.4.2 Responding when residents raise specific issues

We aim to provide the same speed and quality of response when residents raise specific issues regardless of how these issues are raised. For example, we might hear about a blocked gutter on one of our estates through an estate walkabout, a report from a caretaker, a call to the contact centre or an email from a local councillor. We will prioritise our response based on how urgent the issue is and how it fits into our existing work plans, rather than how it is raised.

We have made this decision because we believe that it is the fairest way to allocate resources. If we prioritised feedback from one particular route over others, it could build unfairness into the system – for example, if we prioritised feedback from estate walks over feedback from the contact centre it would disadvantage people who cannot attend the walks because of caring responsibilities. We will always try to feed back to residents about when the issue they have raised is likely to be fixed.

## 4. Legislation

4.1 The key legislation, standards, and guidance that inform this policy are:

- *Regulator of Social Housing – Consumer Standards:* These standards set out requirements for social housing providers regarding tenant engagement, ensuring landlords listen to and act on tenant feedback. The most relevant to this work is the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing>
- *Building Safety Act 2022:* This Act emphasises resident engagement in building safety matters, requiring landlords to consult with residents on safety risks and improvements. [The Building Safety Act - GOV.UK](#)
- *Data Protection Act:* This Act ensures that resident data is handled responsibly and lawfully during engagement activities, protecting their privacy. [Data Protection Act 2018 - GOV.UK](#)

## 5. Implementation and Performance

5.1 We will implement this policy through:

- Drafting terms of reference for new or updated panels and consulting on them with our residents (Leaseholder Forum, Diversity, Scrutiny and BWHP Steering Group, BWHP chair's meeting)
- Ensuring that actions and outcomes from the various panels are published in Talk Housing and on the Council's website.
- Revising the staffing model for community engagement, specifically which officers and Directorate Leadership Team members lead for which panel(s) to ensure accountability
- Setting up and running a project to support the remaining Local Panels to transition to new forms of governance such as Tenants/Residents Associations or Housing Champion Networks.
- Providing joint training for tenants and officers, focussed on the skills needed to run, support and participate in the diversity and scrutiny panels.
- Providing briefing sessions at Directorate Leadership Forum and in team meetings to explain the new policy and how we expect officers to work with it.

- 5.2 We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through:
- Measuring the levels of engagement through our different engagement methods, including the diversity characteristics of those involved.
  - Requesting feedback from residents through the Panel structure.
  - Our Tenant Satisfaction Measures, specifically the survey measure on residents feeling their views are listened to and acted on.
- 5.3 We will carry out a formal review of our engagement practices every 18 months, through the Borough Wide Housing Panel and the Tenant-Led Scrutiny Group (oversight committee / panel) and update this policy in response. We will support this using data on our different types of resident engagement, resident feedback, and best practice from other directorates in the council and other organisations.

## **6. Related procedures & documents (if relevant)**

- 6.1 This policy and/or procedure is related to:
- Our Building Safety Policy, which covers the way we engage with people who live in our high-rise buildings about their safety in their homes
  - Our TSM (Tenant Satisfaction Measure) reporting and transactional surveys, and our complaints reporting – these describe other ways that we collect and act on resident feedback