


LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

Meeting / Date	Cabinet 22 September 2022	
Report Title	Housing Scrutiny Committee Themed Review 2021-22: Resident Engagement	
Cabinet Portfolio	Councillor Ahsan Khan – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Lead Member for Housing and Regeneration	
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Wards affected	None specifically	
Public Access	OPEN	
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Themed Review 2021-22: Resident Engagement Appendix 2 – Proposed Response Appendix 3 – Equalities Analysis Screening Tool	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council's scrutiny committees conduct themed reviews as part of an annual work programme. This is an opportunity for a committee to engage in a sustained way with a particular topic. This year the Housing Scrutiny Committee conducted its review on the Council's Residents Involvement Strategy and the Council's Building Safety Engagement Strategy. The attached report sets out the Committee's findings and recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve the following recommendations:
- (a) That the Housing Scrutiny Committee Themed Review report be noted;
 - (b) That the recommendations outlined in the report be adopted and taken forward as outlined in the proposed response in appendix 2.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Committee conducted its themed review throughout 2021-22, and its approach is outlined in **appendix 1**. Officers have prepared a proposed response which is attached as **appendix 2**. Cabinet are asked to review and approve the response.
- 3.2 The full recommendations are outlined in the report (appendix 1). A summary of recommendations can be found below:
- 1. That the new Resident Involvement Strategy explores all possibilities to enable digital engagement with residents, whilst ensuring that there are digital inclusion offers in place.
 - 2. That all Council staff working in housing services are involved in and responsible for the implementation of the new Resident Involvement Strategy
 - 3. That the new Resident Involvement Strategy maintains its commitment to be inclusive, and builds on this work in line with the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy
 - 4. That as part of the ongoing building engagement resident strategy, there is continued focus on communication, specifically:
 - (a) improving communication with harder to reach groups, particularly those who do not have English as a first language
 - (b) prioritising pictorial or graphic designs, particularly for immediate or urgent signage such as fire escapes
 - (c) ensuring information on fire risk assessments is made available to residents in the most appropriate and comprehensible way
 - 5. That services continue to promote fire safety information to leaseholders and tenants on a regular basis
 - 6. That, when legislation has been finalised, services report back to the committee on how the Accountable Person is held responsible
 - 7. That the STAR panel is supported to implement a formal process between recommendations and Council responses
 - 8. That the Council continues to support the STAR panel, both in providing independent advisory services to train members, and in ensuring members are involved in Council policies that affect them

- 3.3 Officers propose that all recommendations are accepted.

4. OPTIONS & ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Committee has reviewed the Council's policy and practice, and its proposals relate to current service delivery. It is a requirement for the Cabinet to consider each individual scrutiny committee themed review and respond to the recommendations within the report.

5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES (AND OTHER NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES)

- 5.1 The attached report of the scrutiny committee sets out a number of ways the themed review has taken into consideration both local and national policies in respect to its area of focus.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Formal consultation is not required for a scrutiny committee to conduct a themed review. The Committee has, however, spoken to a range of witnesses and sought a diversity of views in respect to its topic, as set out in its report.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk

- 7.1.1 The recommendations have been developed so that they can be implemented within the existing budgets available to relevant services. However, if in preparing to implement the recommendations contained within the themed review report, they are not sustainable within existing resources and officers find that additional expenditure is required, a report should be brought back to Cabinet to explain either: a) why the recommendations cannot be implemented; or b) proposals to finance their implementation.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 Part of the Council's constitution sets out the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules including, in paragraph 5, the procedure for Policy Review and Development. This report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 6.1 of the procedure rules as a report by Overview and Scrutiny. The procedure rules provide that in carrying out any such policy review or development, Overview and Scrutiny must have regard to available budgets and resources (para.5.2) and make recommendations to Cabinet (6.1).

7.3 Equalities and Diversity

- 7.3.1 The Council must further take into account its wider Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 when making a decision. The Council will consider the impact of changes

that might arise as a result of implementing the recommendations on those with protected equality characteristics, in particular where there is likely to be an impact on residents or service users from any changes to, or decommissioning of existing services. In order to assist with this, an Equality Analysis screening tool has been completed and is attached as **appendix 3**.

7.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)

- 7.4.1 The recommendations contained within this themed review report may have a positive impact on sustainability as engagement at an earlier stage may avoid sustainability implications at a later date. The recommendations may have an additional impact on sustainability, arising from day to day operations. These concerns will be taken into consideration by relevant officers during the design and implementation phase. If in preparing to implement the recommendations contained within the themed review report, they are noted to have a negative impact on sustainability, a report should be brought back to Cabinet to explain either: a) why the recommendations cannot be implemented; b) options to curtail negative sustainability impact.

7.5 Council Infrastructure

- 7.5.1 The recommendations contained within this themed review report are expected to be delivered within existing council infrastructure and resources.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None