Resident Engagement, Influence and Impact Strategy, 2023-28.

1.0 Introduction

The Brighter Places Corporate Strategy sets out the following three aims for the next five years: **Great Customer Experience**, **Great Place to Work** and **Great Homes and Partnerships**.

In April 2022, Brighter Places asked TPAS to carry out a SMART review of its Engagement activities which involved interviews and focus groups with residents during June 2022. The outcome of the TPAS review was used to develop a detailed Engagement, Influence and Impact action plan – identifying clear, strategic aims alongside an assessment of current provision and the things we need to do to achieve each of the aims in full. This initial action plan was subsequently reviewed and endorsed by the Engagement Panel in November 2022 and informs the basis of this strategy.

This strategy will help us to embed strong engagement principles and practice across the organisation, ensuring we deliver the aims of our Corporate Strategy, with residents at the heart.

2.0 Vision and aims

Brighter Places are committed to placing the resident voice at the centre of its operational delivery and strategic decision making.

We have developed clear strategic aims centred around the following themes:

A. **Resident influence and impact**
B. **Community connectivity and resilience**
C. **Accessible and enabling communication**

Theme A: Resident influence and impact

Influence and impact are key to demonstrating effective resident engagement has been achieved. Brighter Places recognises the need to broaden and strengthen the range of engagement opportunities available during the lifetime of this strategy to attract more people from a wider range of backgrounds to engage with us at their own convenience and in the topics they find most important. The following aims will guide how we achieve this over the next five years.

1. Effective resident engagement that is building an influential resident voice.
2. A wide range of opportunities for residents to provide feedback and influence service development in ways and at times that suit them.

3. Engagement activity integrates feedback to make every voice count.
4. There is a culture of positive engagement that is delivering great outcomes for residents.
5. A clear and ambitious plan to ensure engagement activity is embedded and delivering high levels of resident influence across the organisation.
6. Brighter Places invests the time and resources required to deliver excellent engagement and scrutiny services, securing greater influence and outcomes for residents.

Theme B: Community connectivity and resilience

Community doesn't begin and end at the boundary of our home or street; it reaches deep into the neighbourhoods where we build our lives and among those with whom we share traditions, experiences and backgrounds. As such, Brighter Places will play its part, supporting the communities that our residents identify with, so they are always welcoming, ambitious, well-connected and successful. The following aims will guide how we achieve this.

7. Brighter Places is investing in initiatives that respond to community-backed priorities that deliver quantifiable benefits for its residents.
8. Brighter Places is supporting its residents to forge connections with neighbours and key partners to resolve local issues and create community-building opportunities.

Theme C: Accessible and enabling communication

Communicating relevant, up-to-date performance information and the impact of engagement opportunities in an accessible and enabling way is vital for success. The following aims will guide how we achieve this:

9. Residents are kept informed about how Brighter Places' services are performing.
10. It is easy for Brighter Places residents to find out about the impact of engagement activities.
11. Brighter Places communicates in an accessible, straightforward, consistent and sincere way.

3.0 How will we achieve our aims?

We have discussed the strategic aims with our residents, and considered where are we now, and what key steps are needed to achieve our aims:

AIM 1: Effective resident engagement that is building an influential resident voice

What's in place?

- Monthly Resident Engagement Panel meetings – to review overall performance and select items for scrutiny at Customer Experience Committee (CEC) meetings.
- Quarterly 'Learning from Feedback' meetings – relevant managers meet with the Resident Engagement Panel to review complaints identified by the Feedback Team as a source of wider learning and improvement.
- Quarterly Customer Experience Committee (CEC) – Residents and Board representatives meet to review that we deliver on our customer promises and satisfaction measures and scrutinise specific service areas. Building on the Bridge Meeting progress, there will be a formal Terms of Reference which will describe what the committee is there to do, its scope and what delegated responsibility they have. The CEC will build and maintain strong working relationships with the Engagement Panel.

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim, we will improve communication to increase the engagement of other residents in the work of the Engagement Panel and our scrutiny functions. This will include improving the quality and accessibility of performance information provided to the panel; strengthening the panel by investing in training, governance and representation; supporting colleagues to proactively engage with the panel; and, developing mechanisms to capture greater resident insight as part of our scrutiny activities.

AIM 2: There are a wide range of opportunities for residents to provide feedback and influence service development in ways and at times that suit them.

What's in place?

- Connected Voices – a programme of resident engagement opportunities held online or in person – facilitating conversations that enable effective scrutiny, respond to emerging resident priorities or support specific business needs.
- Website:
    - Engagement pages updated regularly in advance of panel meetings.
    - Engagement Panel blog developed to provide regular commentary on the work of the panel.
- Face-to-face activities completed in recent years, include:
    - Summer of Listening door-knocking activity

- Summer of Listening Grand Finale
- Customer Care Standards in person engagement sessions

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim, we will build upon the Connected Voices initiative to reach and engage more residents in support of our scrutiny functions. We also recognise the opportunity that Connected Voices provides us to create a space where residents can connect with each other and Brighter Places colleagues/ partners in response to emerging priorities e.g. the rising cost of living.

In support of this aim, we will develop digital tools to gather insight and engage a greater number and diversity of residents in a broader range of topics at their convenience, including through Connected Voices.

AIM 3: Engagement activity integrates feedback to make every voice count.

What's in place?

- Complaints performance data – shared with Engagement Panel.
- Learning from Feedback – quarterly sessions with Engagement Panel to learn from customer complaints – scrutinised annually at CEC meetings.

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim, we will build on the performance reporting currently provided to the Engagement Panel around complaints and general customer feedback. The 'Learning From Feedback' work plays a key role in this and we want to do more to ensure residents understand how customer feedback is used to identify wider trends and service improvement opportunities. We will include details of the outcomes of this work in our Annual Residents' Impact Report and publish case studies on our website that identify any specific improvements made in response to customer feedback.

AIM 4: There is a culture of positive engagement that is delivering great outcomes for residents.

What's in place?

- Consultation and feedback templates developed to integrate effective practice into each team's engagement activities.
- Cross-departmental working providing consistent engagement support e.g. Communal Areas Project (Asset Team), New Developments (Development Team).
- Colleague Briefings and Team Meetings attended to provide updates on customer complaints, feedback procedures and engagement projects.

- Engagement ‘Sharepoint’ pages maintained, giving colleagues access to case studies, explaining the processes used and outcomes achieved for residents.

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim we will support all teams to develop the skills to deliver high quality engagement practice, promoting access to wider engagement and learning networks e.g. TPAS, and develop organisational capability to incorporate user-led design principles in our engagement and scrutiny practice.

AIM 5: A clear and ambitious plan to ensure engagement activity is embedded and delivering high levels of resident influence across the organisation.

What’s in place?

- The REII Strategy will deliver this aim the ongoing review by the Engagement Panel of the associated action plan will ensure we remain on track.
- New Customer Care Standards consulted on and approved.

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim we will include performance data for each of the Customer Care Standards as soon as it becomes available so the Engagement Panel can identify potential areas for review and scrutiny.

We will also work with the Engagement Panel to develop and deliver Listening and Feedback activities with residents, to gather views on the implementation of the REII Strategy, highlight outcomes achieved, understand how we’re performing and identify where improvements/ new initiatives can be developed.

AIM 6: Brighter Places invests the time and resources required to deliver excellent engagement and scrutiny services, securing greater influence and outcomes for residents.

What’s in place?

- An effective Resident Engagement Panel that meets every month to review performance, understand customer trends and insights, and identify areas for scrutiny.
- Networking opportunities for Engagement Panel members.
- Shadowing opportunities for Engagement Panel members.
- A dedicated Engagement Team
- Funding to deliver a programme of engagement and scrutiny activities.

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim we will agree annual training for each of our panel members and identify additional networking opportunities to ensure they're able to connect with actively involved residents from other housing providers to ensure we're reflecting and contributing to emerging best practice in the sector.

AIM 7: Brighter Places is investing in initiatives that respond to community-backed priorities that deliver quantifiable benefits for its residents.

What's in place?

- Community Investment (funding agreements with local voluntary and community sector organisations that deliver tangible outcomes for our residents)

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim we will develop consult upon new criteria to support our community investment activity that is informed by and responding to customer and community insight.

We will also explore ways to create participatory budgeting opportunities within our community investment programme, involving our residents and community partners in setting local priorities and/ or determining funding.

AIM 8: Brighter Places is supporting its residents to forge connections with neighbours and key partners to resolve local issues and create community-building opportunities.

What's in place?

- Estate walkabouts.
- Housing Officer relationship/ contact with some partner agencies.
- Tenancy Sustainment relationship/ contact with some partner agencies.
- Guidance material for setting up community groups.
- Listening resources – for colleagues to carry out localised community listening activities.

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim we will work with our Housing Management Team (HMT) to identify opportunities where additional community engagement can enable key residents to connect with local partners to resolve local priorities collaboratively.

This partnership work would follow asset-based community development principles, ensuring engagement activity generates greater local ownership of priorities and a release of community capacity.

There will be a greater Brighter Places presence in those areas where our housing stock is more concentrated and we can have the biggest impact. In those areas where we have minimal stock, we will work in conjunction with partners to achieve similar results.

AIM 9: Residents are kept informed about how Brighter Places' services are performing.

What's in place?

- Customer Care Standards (in place, but not currently monitored by Engagement Panel).
- Engagement Panel receives and reviews a self-selected set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) monthly, to identify areas for scrutiny.

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim we will publish more performance data including results of STAR surveys, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and other measures that demonstrate how we're doing and potential areas of improvement to residents.

We will also work with Customer Services Team to support the development of measures for the Customer Care Standards and ensure these are included in monthly monitoring information provided to the Engagement panel, whose updates are already published via the monthly panel blog, newsletter and e-news.

AIM 10: It is easy for Brighter Places residents to find out about the impact of engagement activities.

What's in place?

- Engagement Panel blogs published on website following each panel meeting, highlighting topics covered and outcomes, including items selected for scrutiny.
- Feedback reporting template developed and being used for local engagement activities.
- Listening Resources created to support colleagues with local community engagement.
- Engagement Team providing regular updates on engagement activities and outcomes on website in Residents' Newsletter (bi-annual) and monthly e-news.

What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim we will develop and implement a 'Resident Approved' criteria and endorsement, to indicate when a service, proposal or policy has been reviewed and/ or scrutinised by the panel and the outcome/s has achieved the relevant criteria.

We will publish an Annual Residents' Impact Report to share outcomes of Engagement Panel activity, CEC meetings and associated scrutiny activity, Connected Voices and local

engagement activities, identifying: new investment and resources secured; changes in policy & procedures; influence in training and wider learning, local outcomes and impact for residents and communities.

We will also publish the outcomes of our 'Learning From Feedback' and scrutiny activities at the end of each quarter, and include full details in our Annual Residents' Impact Report.

AIM 11: Brighter Places communicates in an accessible, straightforward, consistent and sincere way.

What's in place?

- Bi-annual print newsletter
- Monthly E-news
- Website
- All Teams – access to CAREpoint site (internal engagement information)
- Customer Letters & emails

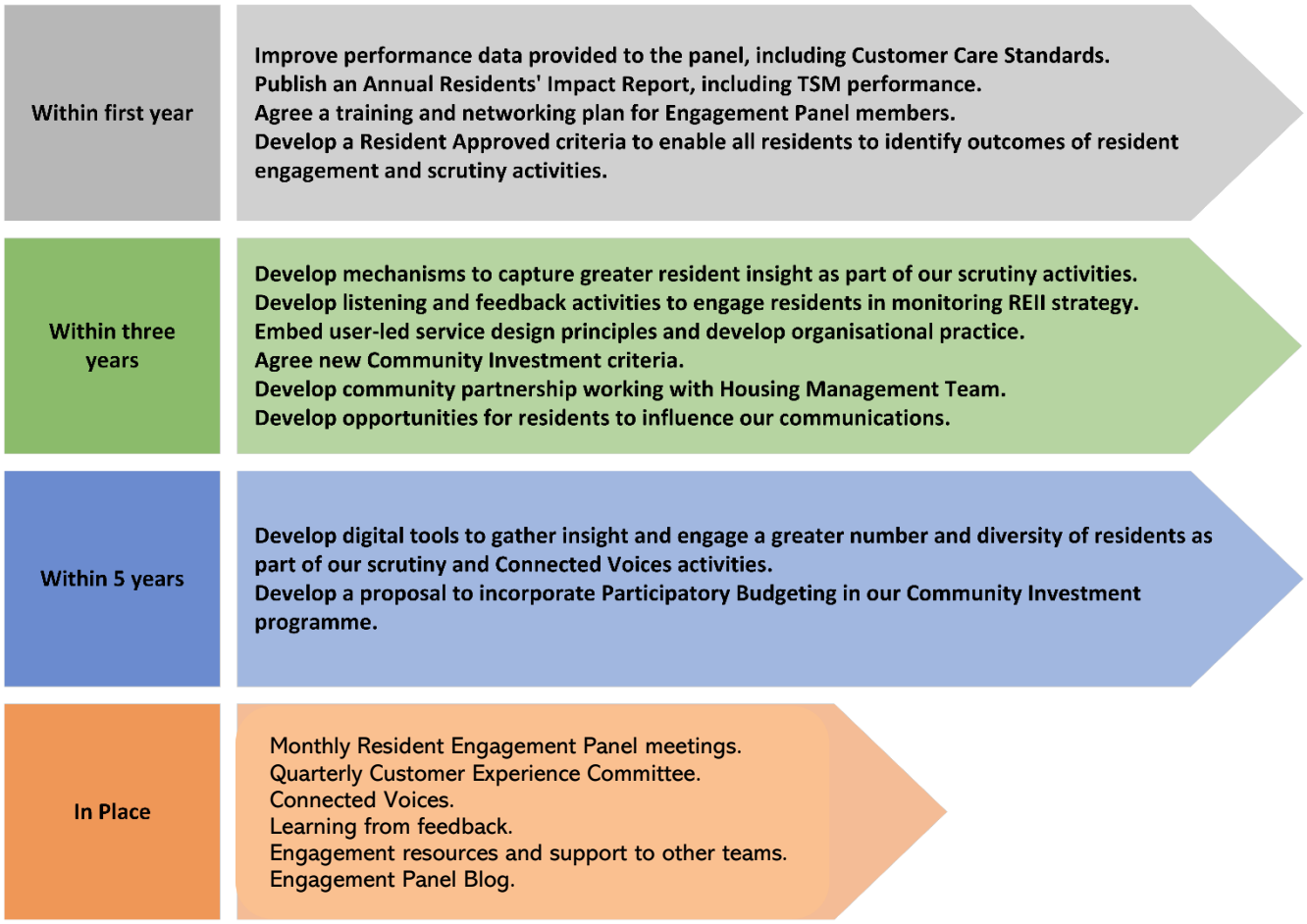
What else do we plan to do?

To fully achieve this aim we will create opportunities to involve residents in reviewing standard communications and ensure tone-of-voice guidance is developed and provided to all teams.

We will also work with residents to monitor the effectiveness of this guidance and respond to any opportunities to make our communications accessible for everyone.

4.0 Engagement action plan

Below is a summary of the activities currently being carried out and those we plan to deliver, along with key milestones.



The specific details of these actions have been developed into a strategic action plan which will be reviewed by the Engagement Panel every six months to ensure we are on track to deliver. The following provides a more detailed view of those actions which have been arranged beneath each of the strategic aims.

5.0 Monitoring

Our annual Residents' Impact Report will include the following measures, where relevant:

- Number of residents engaged per activity/ initiative.
- Overall satisfaction data illustrating how well residents feel their views are listened to (TSM).
- Outcomes of scrutiny activities.
- Outcomes of Learning From Feedback activities.
- Details of local resident and community engagement activities supported and funded

These measures will be reported to the Engagement Panel and Brighter Places Board and published on our website annually.

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Date reviewed and updated:	June 2023
Date approved:	
Date of next review:	

Appendix 1:

National context

There have been many drivers of positive change in the housing sector since the publication of the Social Housing White Paper, *The Charter for Social Housing Residents,* in November 2020. This strategy reflects the current regulatory requirements and prevailing good practice, as summarised below:

5.1 Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants, a clear approach to complaints and a wide range of opportunities for them to have influence and be involved.

5.2 Neighbourhood and Community Standard. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes they own clean and safe, co-operate with relevant partners to promote the wellbeing of the local area and help prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

5.2.1 The following table outlines important elements of the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard (TIES) and Neighbourhood and Community Standard (NCS) that are relevant to this strategy.

Standard	Required Outcomes
TIES 1.1.1.a	Provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards
TIES 1.2.1.a-f	A wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in: formulation of policies, making of decisions about how services are delivered, scrutiny of the landlord's performance, management of repair and maintenance services.
TIES 1.3.1.b	Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.
TIES 2.2.1.b	Supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them.
TIES 2.2.1.d	Providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.
TIES 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.
NCS 1.2	Local area cooperation:

	Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic well-being in the areas where they own properties.
NCS 2.3.2.c	A strong focus exists on preventative measures tailored towards the needs of tenants and their families.

5.3 Social Housing White Paper – The Charter for Social Housing Residents.

The Government has outlined clear intentions for stronger resident engagement and for organisations to be continually improving the way they engage with social housing tenants. There is a key focus on providing more detailed performance information to tenants, focussing on values around transparency and accountability. The seven elements of the charter are outlined below. The elements most relevant to this strategy are highlighted in bold:

5.3.1 To be safe in your home. We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.

5.3.2 **To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.**

5.3.3 To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.

5.3.4 **To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.**

5.3.5 **To have your voice heard by your landlord, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its board. The government will provide access to help, if you want it, for you to learn new skills to ensure your landlord listens.**

5.3.6 To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.

5.3.7 To be supported to take your first step to ownership, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

5.4 **Together with Tenants** sets out the case for landlords to further strengthen their relationship between residents and landlords. We want our residents to have a better experience when communicating with us so will be adopting the National Housing Federation's 'Together with Tenants' charter, which contains the following six commitments:

- **5.4.1** **Relationships:** Housing associations will treat all residents with respect in all of their interactions. Relationships between residents and housing associations will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.
- **5.4.2** **Communication:** Residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from their housing association on the issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how the organisation is working to address problems, how the organisation is run, and information about performance on key issues.
- **5.4.3** **Voice and influence:** Housing associations will seek and value the views of residents, and will use this information to inform decisions. Every individual resident will feel listened to by their housing association on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear.
- **5.4.4** **Accountability:** Collectively, residents will work in partnership with their housing association to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect the quality of their homes and services.
- **5.4.5** **Quality:** Residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.
- **5.4.6** **When things go wrong**: Residents will have simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. Residents will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

5.5 **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)** are intended to make landlords' performance more visible to tenants, and help tenants hold their landlords to account. There are 22 tenant satisfaction measures, covering five themes. The three measures that are most relevant to this strategy are measured by carrying out perception surveys. These are:

- **5.5.1** TP06. Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.
- **5.5.2** TP07. Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them.
- **5.5.3** TP08. Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect.

5.6 This strategy aims to ensure Brighter Places meets the requirements of this regulatory environment and in so doing, creates a diverse range of opportunities for our residents to achieve meaningful influence and impact.