	Housing Scrutiny Committee 12 July 2018
	Report from the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing
Overview of Resident Engagement Framework	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	One: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Experience Panel Terms of Reference
Background Papers:	Two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Experience Strategy Customer Experience Panel Terms of Reference
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Troy Francis, Head of Customer Service Troy.francis@brent.gov.uk 020 8937 2794

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of Brent Housing Management resident engagement framework and the associated delivery plan. The report also provides an overview of current performance in the contact centre together with the improvement activities underway to deliver further improvements to our call handling performance.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the approved resident involvement framework and engagement plan, including the introduction of a new Customer Experience Panel.
- 2.2 To note the improvements made to the call handling performance and those underway.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The regulatory framework for social housing requires us to ensure that residents are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:
- The formulation of housing related service policies
 - The making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
 - The scrutiny of our performance and the making of recommendations to us about how performance might be improved
 - The management of their homes, where applicable
 - Agreeing local offers for service delivery.
- 3.2 A review of our resident engagement offer was carried last year, to assess the effectiveness of our approach and to establish to what extent we were compliant with the regulatory standards as set out by the social housing regulator. The review concluded that our current resident engagement approach was very dated and reflects the expectations of the previous regulatory requirements. In particular, it did not provide a consistent link between our resident voice and improvements to service delivery. Neither does it reflect meaningful co-regulation practices. In addition, the review showed that our offer:
- was mostly face to face involvement opportunities, which is not always convenient for everyone
 - provided a very wide spread of engagement opportunity, which means we don't always have time to do them regularly or as well as we would like to
 - engagement was often the same residents, who are involved in more than one panel, and are not always representative of the community and wider resident population
 - Research confirmed that all these activities resulted in the engagement of only 3% of our residents.
- 3.3 As a result and not surprisingly, we received feedback from residents about how disengaged and disempowered they feel on how their Housing Management service is delivered. We needed to address this.
- 3.4 Research shows that there is a direct correlation between customer engagement, high customer satisfaction and value for money. For this reason, our commitment to enhance our resident engagement offer is a key component of our Customer Experience Strategy. Our new offer is also embedded within the new target operating model and will be measured as core housing management activity across our frontline teams.
- 3.5 We also recognise that the emerging improvements to our digital platform will enable us to better understand our residents. This will, in turn, enable us to align our resident engagement activities with service improvements and the overall customer experience.

4.0 Our new Resident Engagement Framework

- 4.1 As set out above, resident engagement is a key strategic priority for Brent Housing Management and will be promoted accordingly. Our vision is to ***‘Work as one team alongside our residents, putting them in the driving seat to shape and continuously improve services’***.
- 4.2 Our new approach will ensure residents have a real opportunity to get involved in service activities at all levels. Our resident involvement framework will link resident engagement to service improvements. It will also provide a cyclical feedback loop enabling us to demonstrate the impact of resident feedback on service delivery.
- 4.3 We’ve established from the consultation work and profile of the borough that we have a diverse group of residents whose preferred means of engaging and time commitment will most likely vary by factors, such as location, culture, availability and other factors. We’ve also determined that one-size does not fit all and our approach needs to reflect this. In addition, we want to;
- Establish a more strategic approach to resident engagement
 - Focus on meaningful engagement, investing in a new digital experience, to enable us to ‘go digital’ with those who prefer digital
 - Have a reduced but focused improved engagement offer, so that we will do less things, but we will do them better and they will be more meaningful
 - Establish ways of seeking views from the silent minority (silent voice)
 - Establish ways for residents to help decide what investments are made on their estates
 - Enable residents to tell us what they think at the point of receiving a service, in real time
 - Ensure services are improved by using accurate performance data so that residents can effectively review services, challenge poor performance and work with officers to undertake an effective quality assurance role
 - Identify community funding opportunities by working with partners and third sector organisations so residents can bid for funding, which improves their neighbourhoods and communities
 - Continue to support resident associations and local residents to enhance networking and community capacity building opportunities.
 - Identify opportunities and key projects, either new or existing, where our involvement and support can help promote social inclusion, and digital inclusion

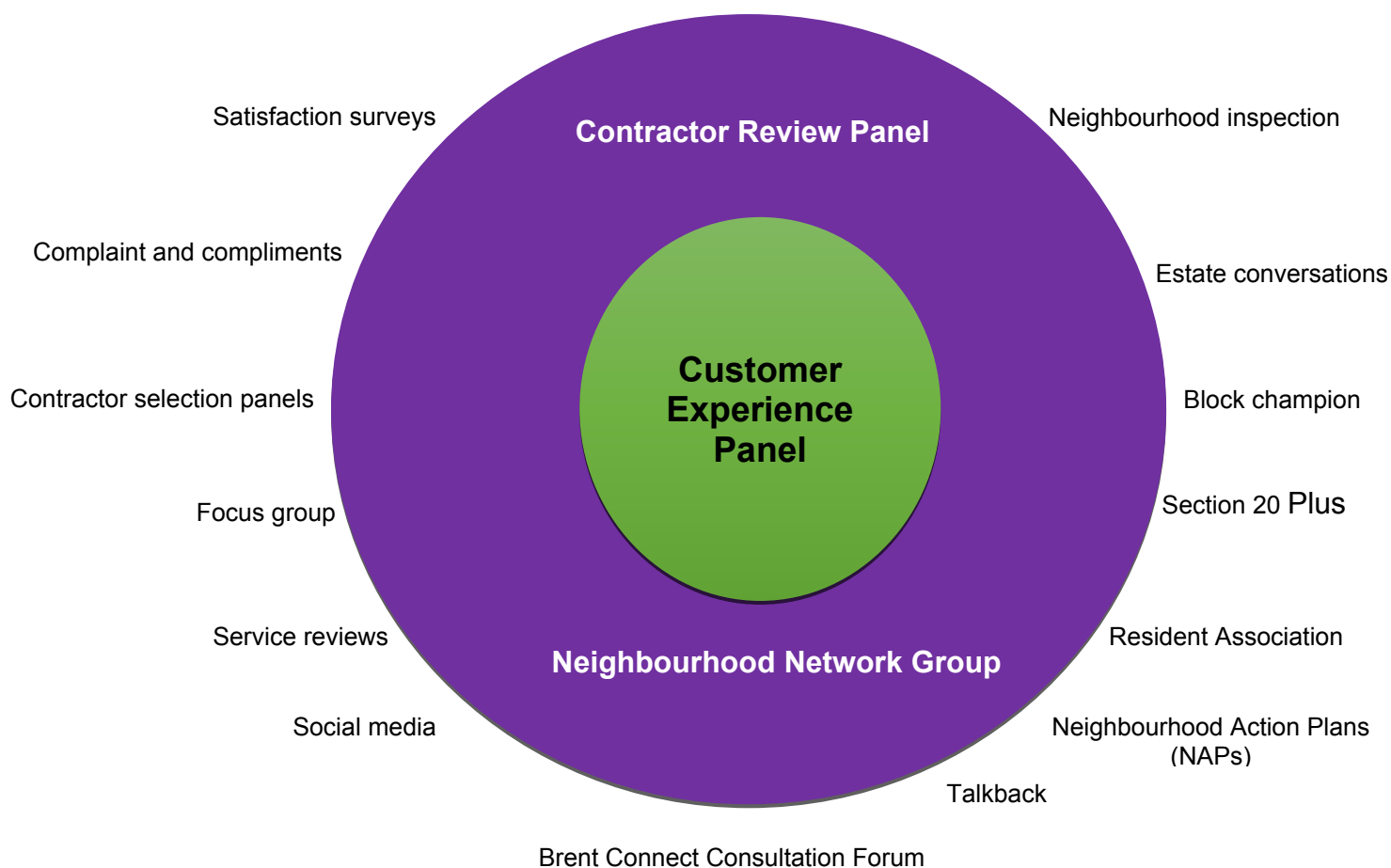
5.0 Menu of involvement

- 5.1 The framework is made up of a number of interlinked elements which channel ‘on the ground’ resident experiences and views through to the heart of scrutiny and decision making.
- 5.2 In accordance with our obligations under the regulatory standards, our resident engagement and scrutiny work is aimed at residents living in our residential stock or those that utilise a non-residential council owned asset e.g. garage, community centre. However, we will seek out opportunities to involve non-

council residents in local neighbourhood activities where this involves collaborating with other agencies as part of our community investment work. Together with, activities that doesn't involve any funding contribution from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

- 5.3 The diagram in figure 1 shows our approach and how these elements fit together. On the following pages is a further explanation of the role that each element plays.

Figure 1 **Our Approach**



Social Media

We will maintain Facebook and Twitter pages where there will be regular information posts on news and events from across Brent Housing Management Service. It will not just be about news and announcements, anyone will be able to get involved by messaging us or leaving comments to posts.

In an effort to increase our presence and improve the use of social media, we will encourage locally based staff to create and connect their own Twitter accounts to the Brent Housing Management Service Account.

We will set up Facebook pages in all of our key areas and will be using these to form local groups with resident's views being sought in this way.

We'll provide residents with opportunities to connect them to the heart of the decision-making process. We'll explore ways of hosting blogs on our websites which contain:

- Details of events
- Performance information
- Annual reviews

Staff will also be encouraged to set up WhatsApp groups for their blocks, to facilitate easy exchange of ideas and feedback. This will also be promoted to local groups to assist with communication and organising their activities.

We will introduce other social media channels as the need arises and as residents require.

Online Communication Panel

Ensures communication material including newsletters and online content, to address customer's priorities, are accessible to all. We will ensure key customer communications are customer-focused. We will also create online capabilities to enable residents to provide their views and post general comments.

Scrutiny & Co-Regulation

Customer Experience Panel

We will introduce opportunities for residents to scrutinise key areas of the Housing Management Service, through our **Customer Experience Panel (CEP)**. See **Appendix A**. This CEP will scrutinise our performance, champion residents' views and help us set local priorities. We will ensure the panel is representative of our tenant and leaseholder profile and will introduce a process that ensures the panel is refreshed regularly, without losing key experience.

Contractor Review Group

We will reform the Contract Review Group (CRG) function to provide residents with an opportunity to scrutinise repairs and maintenance services in a meaningful way. Outputs from this group will feed into the CRG. We will ensure the CRG is also representative of our tenant and leaseholder profile and introduce a process that ensures the panel is refreshed regularly, without losing experience.

Your Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood inspections:

We will provide our residents with opportunities to engage with us regarding services we provide on their estate. We will arrange for them to join their Homes and Community Housing Team and others in the local community to identify how their neighbourhood can be improved. We will also welcome ward councillors and key contractors to attend these. These will be followed up with 'You Said, We Did' communications, with clear timescales.

Section 20 Plus

We will extend the scope of the Section 20 consultation process to **tenants** to enable them to have the same rights to feedback on their views as **leaseholders**. We will also use the Section 20 Plus process to consult with residents on wider local improvements where appropriate. These will include, but not limited to, initiatives that will:

- Improve the communal services in our block or buildings
- Address environmental issues
- Address anti-social behaviour
- Improve community cohesion or sustainability

We will continue to engage **tenants** and **leaseholders** after the statutory or agreed period of consultation has closed. This will ensure they are able to provide feedback throughout the delivery of the project.

Block Champions

We will continue to support existing "Block Champions" who will support us to help identify and work on, local issues to successfully deliver our local service priorities.

Support for Community Groups

We will support new and existing community groups, resident's groups and social enterprises working in the areas where we have properties. We can provide training, including signposting to training organisations and other support to help them become self-sufficient. We will recognise constituted residents' groups which operate in areas where our residents live and involve a number of our residents.

We want to work with and support the Neighbourhood Network Group. We will therefore seek to establish a new set of terms of engagement, which would align with our new resident engagement framework and the outcomes it sets out to achieve.

Local Conversations

We will hold one-off events from time to time to address a local issue; if we need to promote a service in a particular area; or if we need to consult with residents on a specific topic. This will be done in a number of different ways including postal or telephone surveys, local surgeries, SMS messaging, door knocking, engaging with community activists etc.

Residents will be able to take advantage of the community grants scheme to set up their own Action Group. These can be groups founded to resolve a specific issue and are typically disbanded once they have done so. Such groups can be an effective form of engagement for residents wanting to get something changed / fixed, but not wanting to commit to more regular involvement.

Community fund

A discretionary fund will be made available to constituted community groups to further their aims and local objectives. We will also make available estate improvement budgets, which we will use to engage to determine how they are spent i.e. participatory budgeting. We will also work with our residents through their community groups and estate conversations to identify projects and activities that will be delivered by contractors as part of their social value commitments.

Brent Connect Forums

We will support the Brent Connect Forum by consulting the wider community on things that matter. We will encourage residents to attend these forums and also contribute to agenda items and discussions.

Culture and Diversity

We will work with internal department and local community group to nurture and promote **culture and diversity** across the borough. This will support the programme of activities linked to Borough of Culture programme.

Rate the services Brent Housing Management provide

We will regularly use a **telephone** and **online questionnaires** to ask about your overall satisfaction with our services.

We will carry out **Point of Service Questionnaires**: targeting residents who have had a service from us (e.g. a repair) and ask them to give us feedback on the service they received. We will explore developing, at point of service satisfaction feedback using our telephony system, this will enable residents to provide us with feedback in real time.

Shaping future services

We will undertake general customer research to support the development of our service.

Short ad hoc surveys from time to time and to help us understand residents' views on a particular topic. We will also organise Customer Journey Mapping as part of service reviews or the development of new services.

Talkback

We will continue to engage with residents through structured forums under the current Talkback structure, as part of our co-regulation activity, and seek to extend this approach to local areas where the needs arises.

Alignment with other activities across the council

The Resident Engagement Framework will complement the Council's **Stronger Community Strategy**. In particular, we will work with the Community Partnership Team to ensure housing management community engagement initiatives align and where required, resources and expertise are consolidated to improve outcomes to local residents. Brent Housing Management will establish links with the **Brent Connect Forums**, using this to engage on local community matters and capture views and aspirations from local people.

We will also engage with the Community Partnership Team to access and support other community engagement arrangement/initiatives including:

- Brent Connect User Forum
- Community Voluntary Sector
- Love where you live funding

We will contribute to Brent's community engagement review by making recommendations on how the outcome compliments our resident and community engagement approach, along with bringing together resources and expertise.

Budget

An important aspect of demonstrating that resident involvement is genuine, is to have a certain amount of devolved budgeting. The current Community Grant allows for an element of this. However, criteria of this grant has been reviewed to go beyond youth projects or fun days and instead give residents the autonomy to carry out more substantial work such as estate improvements. We will also ensure that residents are involved in any key spend commitments associated with our environmental improvement budget. We will seek to facilitate this through local conversations and as part of the development of neighbourhood action plans. We have ring-fenced approximately £420,000 this year to support neighbourhood and environmental improvements. Residents' voice will be at the heart of any spend commitments and we will use the resident engagement structure including the Resident Network Group and local conversations to progress the same.

Brent Housing Management will also promote the community partnership discretionary budget, ['Love where you live' scheme](#) where residents can apply for grants up to £500 to complement the Community Chest Grant and local discretionary budgets.

Evaluating the impact

The impact of the Resident Involvement Framework must be monitored in order to ensure it is effective. On an annual basis we will include an assessment of the impact of each of the key resident involvement bodies in our Resident Involvement Impact Assessment. We will also develop a suite of strategic and operational performance indicators to enable us to track our resident engagement work. Resident engagement performance outcomes will be included in management report to the CEP on a periodic basis.

During 2019/20 we will carry out an interim review with residents involved in the key groups such as:

- Customer Experience Panel
- Contractor Review Panel
- Neighbourhood Network Group
- Block Champions

The purpose of this review will be to look at what has worked for them, what has not and what action could be taken to improve the effectiveness of the resident scrutiny functions. We will also carry out a future review of this framework, in line with the specific requirements of the tenant involvement and empowerment standard. We will consult tenants, at least once every three years on the best way of involving them in the governance and scrutiny of their landlord's housing management service.

We will be keeping a watchful eye on best practice as it emerges. Our CEP members will be provided with information on how other social landlords are progressing with their approach to co-regulation and be given the opportunity to explore this in training sessions and capacity building activities. Regular benchmarking information will be provided to CEP members. This will allow the Panel to compare Brent Housing performance against other similar local and national organisations. Our local Management Team will embed the feedback from the resident involvement and scrutiny networks into our improvement planning process.

6.0 High Level Resident Engagement Delivery Plan

	Action “This is what we are going to do?”	Objective “This is how we are going to do”	Time Frame “This will be done by”
1	Establish the Customer Experience Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree formal terms of reference • Agree role profile for members • Launch recruitment campaign, targeting residents that reflects the diverse resident profile • Establish induction programme 	September 2018
2	Re-launch the neighbourhood inspection programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the frequency of the existing inspection programme • Review terms of reference including strategy to increase attendance from residents and stakeholders 	August 2018
3	Develop an annual training programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out skill base assessment • Develop training activities (in-house resources and external training vendor) 	September 2018
4	Launch the Section 20 Plus consultation scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish link between the major works and wider environmental improvements • Explore ways of seeking engagement through virtual platform 	September 2018
5	Develop a suite of strategic/national indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify strategic measures linked to the new resident engagement framework • Establish reporting arrangement into the Customer Experience Panel and housing management team • Establish mechanism for annual impact assessment to residents 	August 2018
6	Deliver plan to promote new resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a suit of materials to promote resident engagement 	July 2018

	engagement offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer Complete review of resident engagement page on the Council website Establish reporting arrangements to measure the effectiveness of promotional methods 	
7	Establish register to capture resident involvement interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop specification to establish IT solution to capture interest for resident engagement activities 	September 2018
8	Establish strategic link and alignment to community engagement activities provide by the corporate Community Partnership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete mapping of engagement synergies between the Housing Management and Community Partnership Team Contribute to the delivery of the Stronger Community Strategy through partnership initiatives 	October 2018
9	Review service improvement and change management methodology to provide assurance of resident voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete review of management report template to include resident engagement consideration Complete review of project management methodology to include resident voice 	July 2018
10	Establish IT solution to bring resident engagement activities together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create IT solution to capture residents involvement input Provide guidance to staff on how to register resident engagement input 	October 2018
11	Consider any changes to resident engagement and empowerment regulatory standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the outcome of the impending green paper from the government 	November 2018
12	Work with our corporate team and the voluntary sector to enhance digital inclusion offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry of mapping of digital inclusion activities across the Council and the voluntary sector and establish ways of extending this to our customers Review housing web pages to make it accessible for residents to get involved 	September 2018

7.0 Performance Overview

One of the main areas of complaints from residents has been their experience when they telephone us. Many have complained about the time it takes for us to answer the phone and how the calls are managed. We have therefore been working hard to create a better experience for residents.

We are happy to report that call handling performance has shown significant improvement over the past few months – leading up to the end of May 2018. The improvement initiatives delivered through our service transformation programme has made a positive difference in the way we manage service activities through our telephone contact channel. These improvement initiatives include:

- Better management of resources based on call pattern
- Improved support for call advisors, including coaching and better access to back office teams to resolve complex service requests
- Improved management and performance information, enable the customer experience management to assess individual improvements including the quality of call handling
- Delivery of customer service training to all customer advisors

Figure 2-4 illustrates the performance trend for the 13 months leading up to the end of May. It shows a consistent improvement in the proportion of calls answered together with the average length of time residents have had to wait for their calls to be answered.

The longest wait time has also reduced significantly, though we recognise that this needs to be better, and we are working very hard to resolve some of the service issues that gets in the way. These include finding a sustainable solution to some of the network system outage and teething issues associated with the new telephony system.

Figure 5 sets out a list of improvement underway or planned to address the abovementioned issues.



Figure 2

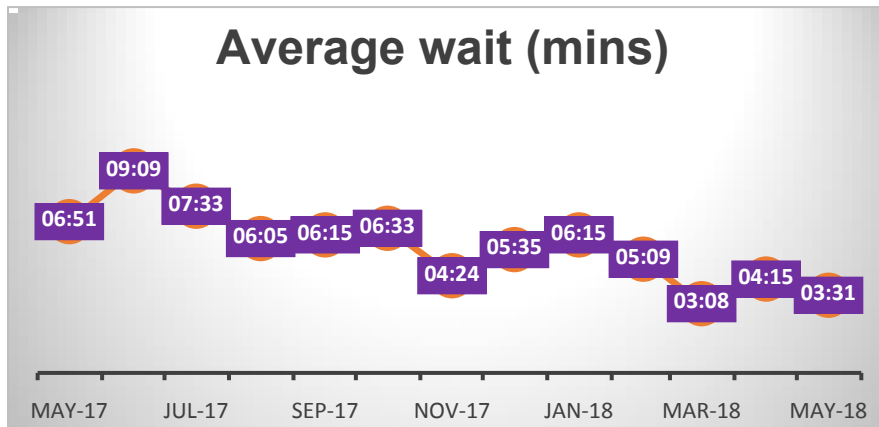


Figure 3

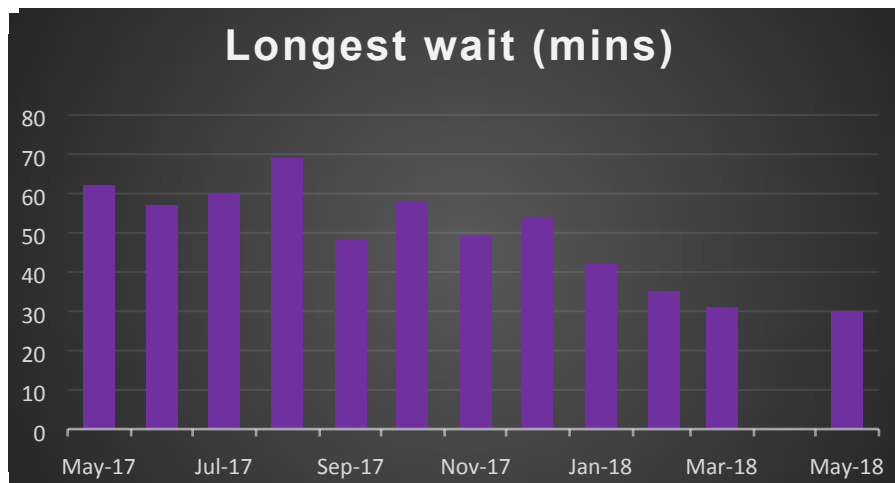


Figure 4

Top 5 Improvement Action

Ref	Improvement action	Start	Finish
1	Complete train the trainer customer service training for frontline manager	July 2018	September 18
2	Deliver a programme of bitesize training session to improve knowledge base	July 2018	September 18
3	Work with corporate IT department to address network and telephony issues	June 2018	August 18
4	Implement the new target operating model including the establishment of a co-location structure	July 2018	December 18
5	Deliver the online self-service delivery plan	June 2018	March 2018

Figure 5

Report sign off:

PHIL PORTER

Strategic Director of Community and Wellbeing