



Connect with Housing

Resident Engagement Plan

April 2014 to March 2017

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1. Foreword

Darren Welsh, Head of Housing

This plan is the first of its kind for Kingston housing. Within the Council, engaging with our residents is very important because it tells about our services from the point of view of those who receive them, and this can then lead to service improvements. It also helps us to support local communities and be of benefit to them.

Our plan contains some principles about how we will engage and what we want to achieve. It also sets out some of the actions we want to carry out over the next three years. It is supported by a detailed action plan which will see more housing staff than ever before working directly with our residents.

I believe this plan will create new partnerships between the Council and those living in housing we manage, and that these partnerships will result in better services, stronger communities and increased satisfaction with our work.

2. Background

- 2.1. The One Kingston programme was developed in 2009 and aims to reshape the council to ensure it is fit to face the challenges of the future within available resources. As part of this, the Housing Transformation programme has been set up to bring about changes within the housing service. One of the projects within the programme has been to review the effectiveness of resident involvement and participation.
- 2.2. The housing service commissioned an independent report on the current arrangements for resident engagement in Kingston's council housing. The report by PSI Consultancy (UK) Ltd was completed in early 2014, and recommended that Kingston requires:
- A coherent strategy and framework setting out the reasons why resident involvement is important at RBK.
 - Communication methods that use accessible language, are less formal, offer flexibility, form part of an overall strategy and, crucially, focus on outcomes for residents and their communities
 - Improved knowledge of residents in terms of profile, their behaviour, aspirations and requirements to ensure there is a clear relationship between this and the targeting of activity and resource allocation
 - Tangible improvements in performance and service experience to rebuild confidence and credibility in the resident involvement service and overcome 'legacy' issues
 - A broader range of engagement methods which respond to the capacity, capability and aspirations of residents as well as the need for the service to have meaningful feedback. These need to be less focussed on formality and attendance at meetings.
 - Wider organisational ownership of resident involvement so that it is embedded structurally, culturally and within performance management arrangements
- 2.3. The report also made a further 45 detailed recommendations.
- 2.4. This document seeks to create the strategy (or plan, as we are calling it) that was recommended, and is accompanied by an action plan that sets out the steps that we all need to take in order to make the plan a reality for our residents

3. Delivering the plan

Terms

- 3.1. We will use certain words in this document which have, in this setting, a specific meaning. Readers may wish to refer to the glossary at the end before reading the rest of these pages.

Aims

- 3.2. The purpose of engaging with residents will be to do one or more of the following:

Good governance and accountability

- Allow residents to challenge the way services and policies affect them and hold the council to account
- Enable residents to contribute to housing policy and decision-making
- Involve residents in the Council's decision-making process

Shaping services and improvements

- Know more about what our residents need and want
- Change or improve services, taking into account the way residents experience those services
- Ensure residents have the information they need about matters that will affect them

Sustainable communities and neighbourhoods

- Help build better communities

Overall

- Build the understanding and skills that residents need to achieve these aims

Engagement approaches

- 3.3. Kingston's housing service already supports residents' associations. We will continue to do so, and we will support the formation of new associations wherever appropriate.
- 3.4. Residents' associations have also been supported fully by the Fed, and we expect that valued support to continue and grow as we move to engage with an even wider range of residents.
- 3.5. Our existing forms of engagement are:
- Residents' associations
 - Kingston Federation of Residents

- Various working parties set up to review and update housing policies and to develop new engagement initiatives
- Leaseholder Panel
- Kingston Residents' Scrutiny Panel (KRiSP)
- Sheltered housing forum
- Estate inspections
- Ongoing training programme for residents' associations and individual residents (largely delivered through the Fed)
- Better Homes consultation

3.6. The challenge for the housing service is to also reach those residents who are not involved with residents' associations, and to work with them to achieve the aims set out at the start of this document.

3.7. Over the life of this plan, we will build on existing methods of engagement and introduce new ones, including:

Panels

- Communications (residents and staff)
- Resident engagement panel (residents and staff)
- Repairs

Young people

- In year one we will be speaking with young people about how they want to engage

Disabled people

- Inviting disabled residents to investigate and comment on access to housing services

Online

3.8. We will look to introduce online engagement for some or all of the following:

- Sheltered housing
- Leaseholder forum
- Communications
- Readers' panel
- Disabled people
- Estate-based information and forums

Activities

- Consider resident inspectors of:
- Resident inspectors of voids (empty properties)
- Resident inspectors of estates
- Resident inspectors of repairs

Estates

- Estate advocates

Service checking

- Service investigations
- Mystery shoppers

Insight

- Use of existing data
- Complaints analysis
- Performance data
- Repairs feedback

Surveys

- Repairs exit surveys
- Major 'Star' survey and one-off consultation surveys

- 3.9. We will introduce new ways for residents to engage with different levels of time commitment needed. This will include ways for residents to give their views from their homes (online forums, surveys, email groups), on site (inspections and mystery shopping), and in meetings. Some of this will be done along with our partners, including the Fed and Achieving for Children.
- 3.10. We will develop training for and with staff and residents to support all forms of engagement.

4. Principles

- 4.1. Before introducing a new form of resident engagement, we will:
- Make sure we are clear about why we are doing so, and what we hope to achieve
 - Be clear about how much influence residents can have as a result of their engagement and what will happen with the results of the engagement
 - Think carefully about which residents, staff and partners should be involved in the new form of engagement, and which approaches will be most suitable
 - Say how much time will be needed from residents and staff
 - Get a balance between the resources needed from the council and other partners and the benefits that can come from the engagement
- 4.2. Once a form of engagement is in place, we will check:
- Whether it is achieving (or has already achieved) what it set out to do for residents, the council and partners

- Whether the resources put into the engagement and the benefits coming out are balanced and provide good value
- Whether the engagement duplicates any other ongoing form of engagement, and whether it can be made to work better with and strengthen any other form of engagement
- That the outcomes are being successfully communicated to residents, staff and partners

Levels of engagement

4.3. There are different levels at which we will engage with residents. We will make clear to residents what level of influence they can have using the following:

a) Information

Organisations should provide information that supports and enables local people to have their say and get involved in the decision making process. The information should be tailored for different audiences so that it can be easily accessed and understood and set out in a way that encourages people to get involved in the decisions that affect them.

b) Consultation

Community engagement is reliant on effective consultation. Consultation provides local people with opportunities to have a say about decisions and services that affect them. Consultations can be formal, via opinion surveys for example, or they could take the form of direct dialogue with local people, for example through resident community panels.

c) Involvement

Effective community engagement means providing opportunities for local people to have their say and get involved in activities, giving them greater influence over decisions and service delivery. This could be in the form of providing feedback on decisions, co-designing policies and services or by providing the opportunity to co-produce and carry out some aspects of service delivery for themselves.

d) Support

In addition to providing the means for people to get involved in decision making and service delivery, community engagement should encourage and support people to take an active role in their communities. It should be supportive, aid people to develop so they are empowered to get involved, identify their needs and develop and implement their own solutions to meet them.

e) Empowerment

Good community engagement aims to empower people by devolving power, influence and responsibility into the hands of communities and individuals so

that they are able to take decisions about services that affect their lives. This follows a bottom up approach to future service delivery aspirations.

Promoting ways to get involved

- 4.4. We will make sure our new ways of working are ready to go and then publicise resident engagement as part of the housing transformation programme, letting residents know of the new ways in which they can get involved. We will also tell staff so they can encourage residents to come forward. We will publish this plan in both its full form and in summary to make sure it is accessible.
- 4.5. We will create new-look resident engagement pages on the website, which will include the ability to get in touch online.

5. Knowing our customers

Data collection and use

- 5.1. We need to know more about our residents and what their needs are. The council already holds considerable information including survey results, census information, and records of service use. We will draw on all the useful information we have to build a better picture of what our residents are like, and use this to inform both service provision and engagement.

Reaching the whole community

- 5.2. As new ways for residents to engage with the housing service are brought in, we will record who takes part and in what ways. At least once a year, we will take those records and look at the sorts of people who have engaged, especially using the attributes of age, gender, disability and ethnicity. We will compare this with the information we have on the make-up of all residents in council housing to make sure we are reaching the all sections of community. Where we are not, action will be taken to try to reach those members of the community we have engaged with the least.

6. Scrutiny

Kingston Residents' Scrutiny Panel (KRiSP)

- 6.1. Kingston has a Residents Scrutiny Panel made up of more than a dozen tenants and leaseholders. KRiSP has been specifically recruited and trained to examine housing services on behalf of other residents and make recommendations to us on how these services can be improved.

- 6.2. We worked with the Kingston Federation of Residents to set up the Kingston Residents' Scrutiny Panel (KRiSP). This included:
- directly involving Council tenants and leaseholders in helping to shape our housing policies and priorities
 - investigating how well housing services are being delivered and making recommendations about how they can be improved
 - helping make sure housing services are of the highest standard and quality and good value for money
- 6.3. KRiSP will be preparing an annual rolling programme which will list the planned investigations for the year and in which service areas. This will be available to view once it has been devised and agreed.
- 6.4. We encourage our residents to think about joining KRiSP. For further information on what is required, see our website:
http://www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200227/get_involved/498/kingston_residents_scrutiny_panel
- 6.5. 2014/15 will be its first full year of scrutinising the housing service and its first area of investigation is garages. We will fully support its work and its independence to help it to drive service improvement, value for money, increased satisfaction with services and challenging the council on the way it operates.

7. Kingston Federation of Residents

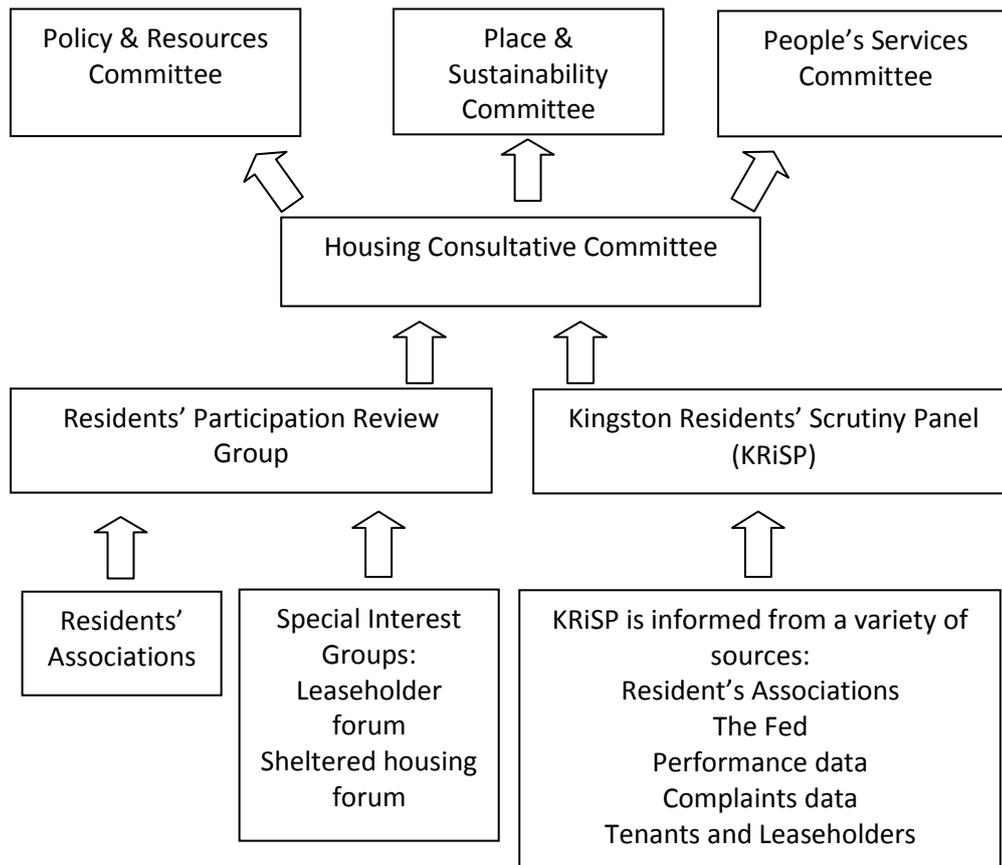
- 7.1. The Kingston Federation of Residents (the Fed) is an independent company working whose aim is to work for the betterment of council residents in the borough, particularly their housing and estate environmental conditions. It has a governing board elected by its members annually, and two full-time paid staff working from an office in Tadlow, Norbiton. It is grant funded by the council.
- 7.2. Its role to date has been to act as a voice for residents on all housing matters, whilst seeking to set up new residents' associations and provide support to existing groups, including:
- the provision of residents' association and personal development training
 - informing residents on local and national housing issues through its newsletter 'Home Truths' which is delivered to all council properties
 - representing residents' concerns and interests to the council
 - working with the council to improve the ways in which residents can influence housing services (such as the creation of KRiSP)
 - running campaigns on behalf of residents, and lobbying on their behalf.
- 7.3. It has an annual business plan setting out its goals each year.

- 7.4. There is a need to get a clearer understanding between the council and the Fed on how we will work together under the new proposals in this plan. We will work with the Fed to agree how roles will be undertaken in future, where necessary coming up with more formal arrangements that make sure that there is resident focus, value for money, quality and a lack of duplication, in our work with residents and partners.
- 7.5. Our intention to engage with residents beyond existing residents' associations will undoubtedly bring fresh challenges for the Fed and the way it relates to a wider range of residents.
- 7.6. We intend to work with the Fed to see how we can best support residents together, whilst ensuring the Fed continues to provide good value for residents for the funding it receives.

8. Overview and governance

- 8.1. Currently there are several established groups that play an active role in working with the Council to shape housing strategies, make decisions and contribute to service improvements. The Council will work with these groups to ensure roles are properly identified and that there is no duplication.
- 8.2. The current established groups are:
 - Housing Consultative Committee – part of the council's decision-making process, it is made up of councillors, senior council officers and resident representatives put forward by residents' associations. It has some delegated decision-making powers and advises the council's Place & Sustainability Committee.
 - Resident Participation Review Group – a forum for residents' association representatives, Federation and council officers and councillors, facilitated by the Fed to discuss and agree on housing policies and issues
 - Residents' association chairs' meetings – called quarterly to deal with mutual concerns and operational problems for associations
 - KRiSP

The current groups feeding into the Council's processes are shown in the diagram below:



- 8.3. The independent report from PSI recommends rationalising strategic engagement into one borough-wide body. We will work with the Fed to:
- consider the potential implications for strategic resident representation of increasing engagement from residents who are not part of a residents' association
 - look at the existing roles and potential overlaps and outcomes between different groups
 - consider whether the existing groups are the most effective way to give a strategic voice to residents, or whether there is room for improvement

9. Service improvement

Service-based engagement

- 9.1. We will introduce new ways for residents to influence services in ways to suit their interests, preferred methods and the amount of time they can give. These will include:

Service investigations (customer journey mapping)

- 9.1.1. Customer journey mapping tracks the experiences of residents from their first point of contact to the delivery of the service they need. It is carried out by trained people using a set of templates. It will enable the housing service to understand the 'customer journey' and use this information as a way to improve services.
- 9.1.2. We intend to add to the customer journey mapping through a three-stage process designed to improve residents' satisfaction with services and to make services more efficient. We call these 'service investigations', and they will have three stages:
- 9.1.3. Stage one: customer journey mapping
- 9.1.4. Stage two: operational staff journey mapping – staff 'journeys' will be mapped alongside that of the residents, to understand how they carry out work to provide the service that has been requested by the resident, and identify any obstacles they may face.
- 9.1.5. Stage three: staff and residents session – we will identify residents who have recently used the service in question, and then invite them and operational staff and managers to come together to consider the results of the customer and staff journey mapping and to make proposals for improvements.
- 9.1.6. We will initially train some housing staff to use customer journey mapping in such a way that they can later train others. Staff will not be asked to carry out customer or staff journey mapping in their own service area so that the mapping remains objective. We will also explore ways to increase the numbers of people able to provide customer journey mapping, potentially by training residents and further staff, but also looking to use college and university students to undertake this role as part of their course.
- 9.1.7. The choice of which services are investigated using this approach will be influenced by repeat contact (when we don't get it right first time), complaints analysis, performance information, repairs feedback, the need to assist the Kingston Residents' Scrutiny Panel (KRiSP) in its work, and the need to inform other service-based engagement.

Mystery shopping

- 9.1.8. Mystery shopping is when people record their experiences of accessing services, and these are used to improve the service for residents. Typically, it uses set enquiries, such as trying to get information about a particular service, which are then used as the basis for contacting the council by telephone, email, or in person whilst noting features such as

staff politeness, knowledge, and ability to respond to the enquiry successfully.

- 9.1.9. We will recruit and train a 'bank' of mystery shoppers who can be called on to test services as and when needed.

Resident inspectors

- 9.1.10. We will carry out research to see the value of resident inspectors for services such as repairs, estate standards and properties before they are let, including working with other local authorities to share and compare standards. If we find that these approaches have produced real benefits elsewhere, we will work with the Fed to set them up in Kingston

Use of service and performance information

- 9.1.11. We will use information about services to help identify the areas of most concern. As well as listening to what residents say, we will take into account information on service performance, complaints, service costs, repeat contact, repairs feedback, service costs and comparisons between Kingston and other similar landlords.
- 9.1.12. We will monitor our performance with the aim of getting repairs right first time and use this as a key indicator of our performance.

Other issues of importance

- 9.1.13. There will be issues that become particularly important to residents at different times, and we will look to engage with residents in appropriate ways on these if there is no obvious forum to pick those issues up.

Cultural change

- 9.2. The housing transformation programme will see changes across the whole housing service by the end of 2015. This will bring new opportunities to refresh the relationship between the council and residents.
- 9.3. We realise that we need to improve services and that residents may not believe, at the time this document is written, that talking to us will change anything. But we also believe that our services must be driven by the needs and experiences of residents so we hope residents do come forward and will see that their voice makes a difference.
- 9.4. Resident engagement and involvement needs to be at the heart of what we do. It therefore needs to be in the job expectations of the council's senior managers.

- 9.5. Customer training for all housing staff will be carried out as part of our learning and development programme to support staff.
- 9.6. Regular customer satisfaction and staff surveys will also be undertaken to monitor our progress on customer focus, engagement and satisfaction.

Better Homes and investment

- 9.7. At present, we carry out local consultation with residents on every estate, giving them choices of fittings and making sure our arrangements for working on their estate fit with residents' lives and that they are acceptable.
- 9.8. There is also a delivery board, which contains resident representatives, to monitor progress across the Better Homes programme.
- 9.9. We will consult with residents on their overall priorities for investment in the council's housing stock. This will include proposals for how the environmental improvements budget is spent as part of the Better Homes programme. We will also look at additional service investment beyond better homes (due to be completed by the end of March 2017).

10. Community benefit

Residents' associations

- 10.1. Although independent of the council and accountable to their own communities, the council recognises residents' associations and makes funds and resources available to them. This is because we see the many benefits association bring to their communities, and in representing their communities to the council and other organisations.
- 10.2. Being voluntary organisations, assistance and advice on good practice is given by both the council and the Fed to ensure residents' association committees have the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles successfully.
- 10.3. With the Fed, we will review the model constitution for residents' associations.
- 10.4. We will work with the Fed and residents' associations to help ensure that associations are:
 - provided with support and assistance so they are well run, including revising policies and documentation relating to them
 - well informed
 - provided with useful training
 - able to influence council policy, procedures, and investment
 - able to influence local services and the physical environment
 - providing benefits and accountability to their members
 - inclusive of all sections of their communities

- funded in accordance with council policy

Community groups

- 10.5. There are currently two community groups operating on council estates at Cambridge Road and Alpha Road. They are independent of the council and are key to helping communities in matters such as residents' quality of life, health and wellbeing and community cohesion.
- 10.6. The housing service has no formal links with these groups, in the way it does with residents' associations. However, it does have on-going, informal contact and may work with them on specific activities.
- 10.7. The work currently being carried out by the council's Equalities and Community Engagement Team (ECET) which focuses on factors that can contribute to poor health such as housing, environment, crime and safety, and lifestyle may well give rise to new community groups. We will work with ECET and the Fed to look at how the council might provide advice and support in managing the co-existence of both a community group and a residents' association in the same area.

Estate advocates

- 10.8. We recognise that while estates have issues that are shared by all those who live on them, not every estate has its own residents' association. We will therefore introduce a new and formalised arrangement through which we recognise individual tenants and leaseholders living in areas where there is no residents' association, to liaise with us on estate matters including, where they wish, promoting their roles as estate advocates. We will provide training to support them, and a set of terms of reference agreed with residents who are already informally acting in this role.

Estate inspections

- 10.9. Estate inspections take place at least quarterly on each estate, and residents are encouraged to join staff in walking around their estate to identify problems so they can be resolved. Residents' associations play a strong role in inspections on their estates, but fewer residents tend to take part on estates without an association. We will:
- continue to support joint estate inspections with residents and/or residents' associations and to publicise these to increase attendance by residents
 - feed actions identified from inspections and progress on these back to residents' associations and other participants, including exploring ways this can be done online
 - with residents, draw up clear standards for all aspects of estate services

- continue work on estate management agreements on School Lane and Cambridge Road estates, and to start new agreements with two other residents' associations in 2014/15.

Estate surgeries

10.10. We will hold estate surgeries so residents can raise issues locally with their estate manager.

Minor Environmental Improvement Grants

10.11. An annual budget of £100,000 is set aside for minor improvements to estates – typically works costing up to £5,000. A list of desired works is put forward by residents' associations and staff, and these are then considered by the Resident Participation Review Group, which prioritises the works to be done in the year.

10.12. We will:

- start the process of identifying and approving works earlier, so that there is more time to complete works by the end of each financial year (31 March)
- encourage better identification of works for estates without residents' associations through estate inspections, asking caretakers and, where possible, involving local residents on an informal basis
- seek to use local contractors where practicable to deliver local works
- review our approach for future years to maximise the benefits whilst making it easier for staff and residents to run

Halls

10.13. The housing service owns four halls – Piper, Queen Mary's, Kingsnympton and School Lane. It directly manages Piper and Queen Mary's halls, as well as the community shop and residents' association meeting rooms on Cambridge Road estate. Kingsnympton and School Lane are currently managed by youth services. We will:

- ask for an independent audit of the way halls work
- make changes to the policies and procedures for halls bookings, charges and payments, and any other recommendations arising from the audit
- in the longer term, decide how we are going to manage and let our halls

10.14. Where halls are managed by another service, we will ensure there are clear arrangements in place for their management, including access for the local community.

Partnerships

10.15. We recognise the strengths that come from working with partners. When other teams and organisations have aims that are similar to ours, the sharing of

knowledge, experience and resources means that together we can achieve more than we can alone.

- 10.16. We will continue to look for partners with whom we can work more effectively and will use these to create or strengthen activities that will be of benefit.

11. Special interest groups

- 11.1. There are groups within the community that we do not listen to as much as we could, or which have particular needs that we must address. During the life of this plan we will seek to target such groups with specific approaches for listening to them.
- 11.2. As we engage with residents, we will keep records of who we have engaged. At least once a year we will check to see if we are reaching all sections of the community living in council housing. Where sections of the community are under-represented, we will make further plans to ensure we reach them.

Leaseholders

- 11.3. We recognise that there are some issues that are specific to leaseholders and of great importance to them. We will use the leaseholder forum and a new online forum so we can hear from leaseholders and address their issues.

Sheltered housing

- 11.4. We will continue to meet sheltered housing residents using the sheltered housing forum, and we plan to add to that by setting up an online forum especially for sheltered housing where residents can not only raise issues of importance to them, but also interact with other sheltered residents and learn about services that affect sheltered housing.

Other tenures

- 11.5. As well as working with leaseholders and sheltered housing, we will also look at reaching people living in other types of housing, such as temporary accommodation, private sector leasing, newly-housed tenants, and sub-lessees of leaseholders.

Young people

- 11.6. We already understand that our engagement with young people is not sufficient and that we know very little about how they feel about living in our housing and communities, or how our services affect them. To improve this, we will work closely with the youth service for Kingston and Richmond – Achieving for Children – to:

- identify suitable ways to engage with young people
- talk with young people about ways in which they might wish to be involved. Possibilities include (but are by no means limited to) using technology to record their views about living in our housing, forming youth associations or sub-groups of existing residents' associations, giving views on-line or by smart phones, and forming a housing youth forum
- consider how we might best use existing 'youth associates' – young people who have been trained to investigate and report on the accessibility of services to young people – to 'youth proof' elements of the housing service

Disabled people

- 11.7. Disabled people's experience of the housing service, communications and the physical environment are often quite different from those of other people. There is a need to hear about those experiences and to understand needs and try to address them. We will:
- Invite disabled residents to investigate and comment on access and other issues
 - If they wish, to continue to work with disabled people on those issues
 - Possibly create a parallel on-line forum with advice from the panel so that disabled people who cannot or do not wish to attend panel meetings can contribute
- 11.8. Any such panel would be part of our wider approach that will engage with disabled residents and other special interest groups on terms of equality with all other residents.

Different sections of the community

- 11.9. As we start to collect better information about the people who engage with us, we will be able to check to find sections of the community whose voices are being heard the least. Over the life of this plan we will find ways to reach those people. Examples might include residents of different ethnicities, vulnerable people, and those who may not have English as a first language.

12. Embedding involvement

'A habit, not a department'

- 12.1. This phrase was used by PSI in their report on resident participation in Kingston. Up until now, there has been a tendency for staff to regard the engagement of residents as something to be done by the resident participation team. Estate management and other teams also have close ties with residents' associations

and the strategic bodies such as the Fed, Housing Consultative Committee and the Resident Participation Review Group.

- 12.2. There are three main reasons why this single resident participation team approach is not practical:
- It is better for those delivering services to speak directly with the service users – the residents – because they understand their service in detail and can answer questions and agree to changes in the service and they will hear the issues at first hand rather than through the resident participation team, which does not have specialist knowledge of services
 - The resources available in the resident participation team are insufficient to deliver a comprehensive engagement programme. Spread across all staff, the workload can be manageable and connected directly with every service in order to add value and enhance services
 - All staff who provide the housing service must be focused on residents' needs
- 12.3. Given that engaging with residents is seen as the responsibility of all staff, we will develop training and support for managers and staff to ensure they focus on outcomes and that they have the skills and resources necessary for successful engagement. We will share good practice when approaches work well, and review areas when they do not.
- 12.4. There are certain operational resident participation roles that need to be delivered by specialists, but not all of these need to sit within the remit of the resident participation team. We will:
- consider where resident participation roles best sit at this time, taking into account the need to change the culture of resident engagement
 - consider the resources required
 - consider changes to staffing roles and practices
 - consider how best to facilitate communication between teams and partners to deliver good engagement with residents
- 12.5. Whilst an increased role in engaging with residents will be part of our staff culture, we also want it to become part of the culture for residents, so residents come forward and talk to us, and encourage their neighbours to do the same. The conversation needs to be two-way and held as widely as possible.

13. Resident compact

- 13.1. The current resident compact is an agreement between the council, the Fed and residents on the standards for engaging with residents.

- 13.2. Since its last review in 2010, the existing resident compact has not been updated. This is of concern because it contains particular standards that represent council policy that may be required for use.
- 13.3. However, the work required to review it will be difficult to resource in 2014/15, given the changes arising from this document and the action plan. We will, therefore:
- review and republish the compact in 2015/16
 - use 2014/15 to identify areas of the compact to be revised, and areas that are now contained in this plan instead
 - continue to take a pragmatic and common sense view on standards and procedure(s) to deal with issues that arise in the interim period, in consultation with the Housing Consultative Committee and the Fed.
- 13.4. Although a formal review will only happen in 2015/16, we will review two key areas in the first year: annual support work for residents' associations and the council's policy on recognition of associations.

14. Action planning and monitoring success

- 14.1. The action plan that is drawn up alongside this document has a detailed list of the activities the housing service and our partners will carry out to make resident engagement work better. All actions need to be supported by managers and staff, and to be realistic – that is, they can be done within the available resources, budgets and timescales. This scale of change cannot be undertaken all at once and needs to happen over time.
- 14.2. Every activity will have desired outcomes, so residents, partners and staff know what we are trying to achieve and will know when we have got there. The actions will become part of team plans for staff across our service and partners, but will also be held by the resident participation team to allow for the success of this plan to be monitored.
- 14.3. As work progresses, residents, partners and staff may need to adapt their activities, timescales and desired outcomes, or perhaps add to them as new opportunities for improvement become apparent. Some approaches may not work, for example because they fail to engage residents or otherwise become unworkable, or because there are better ways to achieve the desired outcomes. Flexibility will be needed as we try new ways of working, building on the approaches that have worked, trying new ones, or discarding ones that do not work. In all cases, the action plan should be revised accordingly.

Monitoring engagement

- 14.4. The resident participation team will capture information on resident engagement from wherever it is taking place so a picture is built of:
- which residents are being engaged in which activities
 - outcomes for residents, the housing service and partners
 - the profiles of those being engaged, so we can make sure we are reaching all sections of the community
- 14.5. This will be reported to residents annually at a strategic level.
- 14.6. We will develop a database of resident engagement, focused on people (who is engaging and how to contact them), activities (records of how we have engaged and with whom, as well as outcomes) and groups (who is a committee member of associations, their roles, recognition and funding, outcomes)

Review

- 14.7. This plan will be reviewed annually. In doing so, feedback will be requested from residents on their perceptions of the effectiveness of the activities they have engaged with. An annual analysis of the profile of engaged residents will be compared with the profile of council residents in general and the results taken into account when reviewing this document and action plan.

Action plan

- 14.8. The action plan that is drawn up alongside this document will be fully refreshed annually, taking into account the success of engagement approaches in the context of the resources used. It may also be changed during the year to allow flexibility.
- 14.9. We will form a new panel of residents, staff and Fed representatives to monitor the way this plan works as well as the accompanying action plan, and to agree ongoing additions or changes to the action plan.

Communication

- 14.10. One of the new methods for engagement will be involving residents in the ways in which we communicate. They will help us to develop a communications plan so that key messages are delivered in effective ways and in accessible language, and that residents are encouraged to come forward and engage with us by seeing the differences brought to our service by resident engagement.
- 14.11. We will let residents know what is being achieved through residents getting involved using a 'you said... we did...' approach.
- 14.12. We will let residents know about the differences that have been made by engaging residents.

15. Glossary

Resident

Any person living legally in property owned by The Royal Borough of Kingston – tenants, leaseholders, and their families and household members. We also include leaseholders who sub-let their properties, freeholders of properties within the boundaries of our estates, and any members of households within an area represented by a residents' association (regardless of their tenure or landlord).

Engagement

Any interaction with residents that is intended to seek their views and ideas or active involvement to improve or change services, the physical environment, amenities, community spirit or social cohesion. That engagement with residents may also include others with an interest, such as providers of services, the Kingston Federation of Residents, councillors, neighbours, voluntary and community groups, or government.

Partners

People or services who work with the council and/or with residents to achieve a shared goal.

Resources

The amount of effort and expenditure put into engaging, including the time of staff, residents and partners, the use of facilities, and all financial costs.

We/our

In this document, 'we' or 'our' refers to Kingston Council.

The Fed

This means the Kingston Federation of Residents