Appendix 3

Tenant and Resident Involvement Strategy

Keeping Customers & Communities at the heart of what we do.

Foreword

We are pleased to introduce our Tenant and Resident Involvement Strategy 2013-16 – Keeping Customers & Communities at the heart of what we do, which has been developed in partnership with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) in close consultation with residents.

Oxford City Council is committed to involving tenants and residents in improving services through widening the role that they have in:

- Decision-making
- Shaping and developing services
- Scrutinising and monitoring performance, challenging us to improve and holding us to account if we fail to do so and highlighting what is working well
- Complaints

This is why we have developed a new model of involvement, with a range of ways for you to get involved to the degree and level that you choose. We hope that the hundreds of you who expressed interest in involvement through the recent consultation will recognise where your feedback has influenced our approach, and that you will take the opportunities that we are developing to continue to influence and improve all that we do.

Scermony

Councillor Scott Seamons Oxford City Council's Executive Board Member for Housing

1. Introduction & Background to the Strategy

Oxford City Councils' Mission is: **'Building a world-class city for everyone'**. The Mission is underpinned by the following corporate priorities:

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Meeting housing need
- Strong and active communities
- Cleaner greener Oxford
- An efficient and effective council

A strong and effective approach to resident involvement and customer insight (what you tell us) can make a difference in each of the corporate priority areas and deliver real outcomes for residents in Oxford. Our approach is one of 'Keeping Customers and Communities at the Heart of What We Do'. This Strategy sets how we intend to do this.

The term **'Resident'** is used throughout this document to represent tenants, leaseholders, advocates or any other customer of our services. Where a particular item is only relevant to a specific client group they will be referred to as such (e.g. 'tenants' or 'leaseholders').

In terms of Resident Involvement, we mean:

- all of the activities and processes to help Oxford City Council to know what its' residents and communities want and need
- all the ways that residents can get involved, if they want to
- the systems for accountability and support

Gaining resident's views is vital for us to constantly enhance and improve services. The many benefits/outcomes of involvement can be seen through:

- improved services which better meet residents needs
- better equality of access to services by removing potential barriers
- increased value for money by considering the costs and benefits of what we do

- clarity around decision-making by seeking your views and explaining the decisions we make
- more effective scrutiny and monitoring of performance
- increased capacity, confidence and skills through the training and support that we offer
- improved community cohesion by helping communities to help themselves
- increased influence over quality of life in neighbourhoods and communities
- better staff/resident relationships

2. What Have We Learned

Residents from across the City took part in a postal and online consultation, designed through a Resident & Officer Steering Group. The results of this consultation have been used to develop this strategy.

You told us that:

- Half of you (50%) either wanted more of a say in the work that we do, or didn't know that you could have a say
- Many are interested in what is going on, with 19% specifically wanting to get involved in improving either their local area or housing services for all, and 17% want to get involved if we can find a way that doesn't mean lots of meetings
- 42% of you can spare anything from a few minutes to a couple of hours or more each month to get involved
- The top three service areas that you would like to comment on are:
 - \circ Repairs and Anti-Social Behaviour (tied 1st) 33%
 - Improvements & Major Works 30%
- The top three service areas that you would like to have involvement in are:
 - Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Facilities (tied 1st) 13%
 - \circ Youth Facilities & Improvements & Major Works (tied $3^{rd}) 12.7\%$
- The majority of you (who would like to get involved) are more interested in informal opportunities such as completing surveys, reading leaflets and newsletters etc.

- A significant number of you are interested in looking in close detail at specific services (scrutiny) or being involved in a panel or group that represents your local area
- There is also healthy interest in using technology to get you involved (text, online) as well as using new methods of involvement such as mystery shopping, and social activities.

3. Aims of the Strategy

This Resident Involvement Strategy has five main aims, each with targets and milestones to be reached over the next three years. These are:

- We will ensure that there is a strategic commitment to involvement & empowerment
 - We will communicate our aims and approach to resident involvement & empowerment and we will ensure that these aims are influenced by resident's priorities and aspirations and are clear about the scope of our approach
 - We will routinely review the impact and cost of Resident Involvement and identify outcomes in collaboration with residents
 - We will promote all aspects of Resident Involvement, including the principles of tenant management
- We will ensure that there are a wide range of opportunities to be involved and influence what happens
 - We will ensure that there are a broad and accessible range of involvement opportunities
 - We will provide easily accessible information that is developed in collaboration with residents
 - We will provide a range of opportunities for residents to exercise meaningful influence over our strategic direction/priorities
 - We will provide a range of opportunities for residents to exercise meaningful influence over local services
 - We will understand and respond to the diverse needs of residents

- We will make better use of Resident Intelligence
 - We will ensure that we capture meaningful intelligence from residents so that we have a clear view of our resident profile
 - We will use this information to influence our approach to Resident Involvement
- We will deliver resident-led scrutiny and involvement that can demonstrate Value for Money for both the resident and the organisation
 - We will involve residents in setting standards, performance indicators and targets and report on our performance
 - We will ensure that we develop robust processes to ensure our accountability to residents for services
 - $\circ~$ We will measure impact and efficiency
 - We will support resident led scrutiny
- We will provide training opportunities that will empower residents to be involved in improving communities, neighbourhoods and homes
 - We will offer supporting and resource resident involvement & empowerment to ensure that resident skills are developed
 - We will embed an inclusive and accessible involvement culture across Oxford City Council ensuring that staff are aware of the role of resident involvement, have resident involvement targets, and are positive about resident involvement ensuring that staff are skilled in Resident Involvement
 - We will support and celebrate resident involvement

All targets and milestones associated with these aims will be monitored in partnership with residents and reviewed at least annually.

4. Resident Involvement & Regulation

Regulatory requirements for registered providers of social housing are set out by the Tenant Services Authority in its Regulatory Framework for Social Housing which came into effect in April 2010.

Responsibility for regulating social housing passed to the Homes and Communities Agency in April 2012. The framework is based on the principle of co-regulation where there is a clear role for tenants to scrutinise performance.

Oxford City Council's Housing Service is expected to support coregulation by:

- Offering all tenants a wide range of opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing, including the ability to influence strategic priorities, the formulation of housing related policies, and the delivery of housing resident services
- Consulting with tenants and acting reasonably in providing them with opportunities to agree local offers for service delivery
- Providing tenants with a range of opportunities to scrutinise performance against all standards and in the development of the Annual Report
- Providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more actively involved.

Local Offer

Oxford City Council consulted widely with tenants and leaseholders to assess their priorities and service requirements. The results of this consultation created a set of 'Local Offers' promising certain levels of service across a range of services. Each resident involvement activity should support the service's commitment to these standards.

Additionally, specific standards were agreed in relation to involving you in how we manage and deliver the housing service. These are:

• We will fully support the development of a city wide tenant and resident involvement strategy, with opportunities to establish more Tenant and Resident Associations (TRA's) to represent the views and experiences of tenants and residents.

- We will support, recognise and facilitate a city-wide tenant and resident structure to ensure the views of all tenant/resident groups are represented democratically in making decisions.
- We will work with tenant and resident representative groups, to agree future housing delivery at both a city-wide and local level.
- We will involve tenant and leaseholder representatives in monitoring and regulating our housing service
- We will publish an annual report to look at how we have performed over the year.

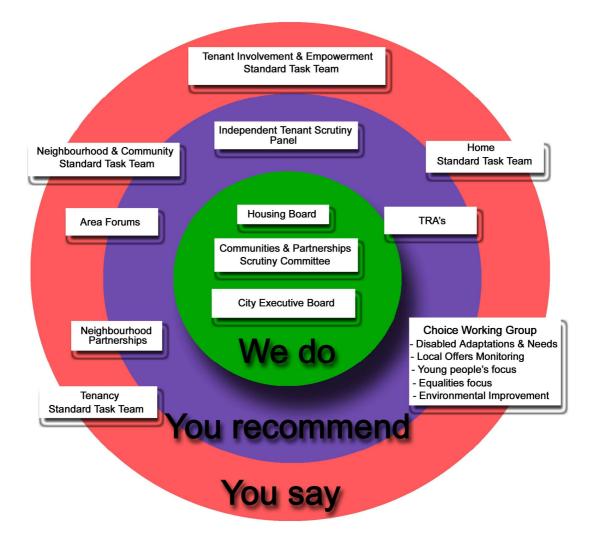
In addition to ensuring that the level of service promised in the 'Local Offers' document is met, the cost of delivering the service needs to be considered to ensure that tenant and leaseholders receive the maximum benefit from the available resources.

Localism Act

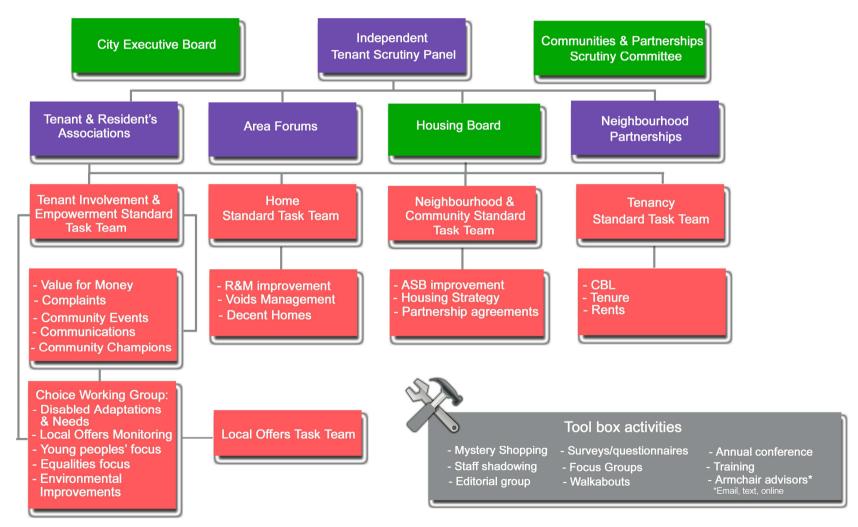
The Localism Act contains a requirement for a 'democratic filter' to be developed to resolve more complaints at a local level. This will involve giving power to tenant's panels, Councillors or MPs to resolve complaints before they are referred to the Ombudsman.

We will work with tenants and leaseholders to design this 'filter' and develop the terms under which it will work.

5. Resident Involvement Wheel



5. Resident Involvement Structure



Page | 9

We Do: These activities will be undertaken by the Council, both elected members and staff in consultation with residents and subject to your influence.

You Recommend: These activities are those in which residents take the lead (tenants and leaseholders only in the case of the Independent tenant Scrutiny Panel). They require a high time commitment and specific knowledge, for which training and support is available.

You Say: These activities are undertaken in partnership with Council staff and provide opportunities for you to provide feedback and for your views to influence decisions and what happens next. They offer you the opportunity to be involved to the degree and level that you choose, including how much time you put in. Some activities such as Mystery Shopping require specific skills for which training and support is available.

Over the life of this strategy, we will:

- Develop this structure including all support documentation (terms of reference, codes of conduct etc.) and provide the support and resources required to ensure involvement effectively delivers the outcomes set out in section 1
- Promote involvement and effectively recruit to increase the numbers and broaden the diversity of those residents who are involved
- Assess the impact of our involvement activities and review the methods of involvement on an annual basis, focussing our time and resources on the most popular and effective and on developing new and innovative involvement opportunities to replace those which are proven not to work

Independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel

This Panel will work on behalf of all Tenants and Leaseholders of Oxford City Council to ensure that it provides excellent, customer focussed services and delivers value for money.

It will provide an independent check of the services provided by Oxford City Council and where needed challenge the delivery of services and the performance of the landlord, making recommendations for improvements in service delivery, performance and efficiency, and resident satisfaction.

The Independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel will utilise the feedback of residents from all other aspects of the Involvement Structure and will be accountable to all tenants and leaseholders.

Tenants & Residents Associations

Tenants and Residents Associations (TRA's) are independent organisations run for and by residents in a voluntary capacity. They aim to improve their local area and work with the Council and other agencies to improve services and community cohesion.

Subject to meeting agreed recognition criteria, we will provide support and resources to help TRA's effectively meet their aims.

Standards Task Teams

As part of the co-regulatory approach, the responsibility for regulating consumer standards (the services delivered to tenants and leaseholders) has passed to the Council and its tenants and leaseholders.

Standard Task Teams will be developed in each of the four consumer standards, providing an opportunity for:

- Information
- Consultation
- Participation and
- Empowerment

Each team will consist of a database of interested residents who have expressed interest in a specific area of service.

Involvement activities will operate on a 'task and finish' basis, meaning that we will only ask for your time when there is a specific task to complete.

The nature of the task will depend very much on the outcome required but tasks will utilise the tool box activities to effectively engage with residents.

Overall responsibility for ensuring that the task teams are effectively engaged lies with the relevant Housing Revenue Account Board staff member, who will set specific targets (in consultation with residents) for staff in relation to involving residents in:

- Decision-making
- Shaping and developing services
- Scrutinising and monitoring performance
- Complaints

Choice Working Group

The Choice Working Group (or groups) will meet on a quarterly basis to:

- Monitor and review Local Offers
- Develop and monitor a 'need to reach strategy' aimed at broadening the diversity of involvement and ensuring that those underrepresented through involvement have opportunities to influence what we do (this could involve developing specific 'community of interest groups', subject to demand)
- Develop a process through which residents can influence the allocation of small-scale environmental improvement monies

Area Forums

Area Forums are quarterly meetings across the six areas of the city, providing an opportunity for local people to discuss priority issues for the community and agree actions with other residents, councillors, city council teams and other partners.

Neighbourhood Partnerships

Neighbourhood Partnerships help residents work in partnership with local organisations and community groups. They involve residents working with service providers, local councils, community groups and businesses to make local services more responsive to their priorities.

Neighbourhood Partnerships bring many benefits including residents having more influence over how the neighbourhood develops, getting resources targeted to local needs and service providers and community groups working together to have more impact in the area.

Tool Box Activities

The tool box provides a range of ways to involve residents from their point of interest as follows:

- **Mystery Shopping:** Provides us information about how we are doing from your perspective as a customer so that we can check if standards are being met and identify areas where services can be improved
- **Staff Shadowing:** Provides an opportunity for you to spend time with our staff to understand what is involved on a daily basis. You can then use this information when we consult you about how we can improve or change services
- Editorial Group: Ensures that any customer communications such as leaflets and newsletters are subject to resident influence, contribution and/or approval
- Surveys/Questionnaires: Will continue to be used when we need the views of larger numbers of residents
- Focus Groups: Are a one-off meeting aimed at understanding views of people on a single issue or range of issues, along with finding out why people feel the way they do. Focus Groups are very useful as a tool for residents to express their views about the services they receive or the communities that they live in.
- Walkabouts: Provide either regular opportunities for residents to walk their estate with their housing officer, or the opportunity to 'spot check' estates as part of a wider consultation or scrutiny exercise.
- Armchair Advisers: Comment on services and performance and complete short consultations through emails, sms/instant messaging and through the website.

6. Support & Resources

To make sure that support and resources are available for effective involvement, we will:

- Develop a clear expenses, incentives and rewards policy
- Provide/arrange transport to and from venues for involvement activities if you are unable to do so
- Ensure venues are accessible to all, and meet the needs of all residents, taking account of cultural diversity
- Vary times and locations of involvement activities to ensure that all residents have access to involvement
- Provide the appropriate staff to support involvement activities
- Provide dedicated financial resources and equipment to support involvement
- Ensure that appropriate independent advice is available to individuals and groups if they require it
- Assess the training and support needs of individuals and groups and provide the necessary resources to meet need
- Ensure residents groups have access to funding and resources to support activities whether as part of a Tenants and Residents Group, access to training and development, or improvements to their local environment

7. Diversity and Inclusion

We will make sure that in delivering services, we continue to be inclusive and representative. We want all residents to be involved regardless of age, ability and background and will provide the support needed to enable this.

We want to be effective in enabling wider involvement and to do this, we will develop a 'need to reach strategy' and ensure that information is available in a variety of formats, including different languages, on audio cassette and large print.

8. Monitoring and Review

We will make sure that there is a cohesive approach to resident involvement and that activities are monitored for effectiveness. Information will be analysed to make sure that the needs and priorities of residents are taken into account.

Information from involvement activities will be dealt with in a joined up way with service areas using results to enhance and shape their services to residents. We want to be sure that residents who are involved see what has been achieved and believe that they have made a real difference.

We will continually work to improve the feedback and monitoring systems in place to make sure they are relevant and meet the needs of the service. Progress of the strategy will be reviewed annually to make sure that involvement is working well. We will review the decisions that have been taken to demonstrate evidence of resident involvement.

We will work alongside residents to monitor the successful delivery of this strategy, through the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard Task Team and will drive forward the action plan to make sure that the key milestones are met and delivered.

9. Next Steps

Although this strategy is intended to provide a framework for the Resident Involvement Service from 2013-16, there are a number of areas of the action plan that we have begun working on already.

During the first year of the strategy, we will:

- Communicate the aims of our approach and launch the new structure of involvement, recruiting to Standards Task Teams and establishing the Independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- Develop the tool box approach to provide a broad range of involvement opportunities, including staff and resident training
- Develop involvement plans for each service task team and work with members of the Independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel to produce a clear programme of servicebased reviews.

We know that your priorities for involvement are:

- Repairs & Maintenance
- Anti-Social Behaviour

We will therefore ensure that the first Involvement Tasks carried out by the Home; and Neighbourhood & Communities Standards Task Teams will focus on opportunities to influence and improve these service areas.

In addition, we will also establish a tenant steering group/s through the Involvement & Empowerment Task Team to:

- Influence the design and format of the published strategy
- Support and promote the launch event for Standards Task Teams
- Develop all support documentation including terms of reference; expenses, incentives and rewards policy; involvement leaflet and expression of interest form; annual statement of impact; and other support documentation required to bring the strategy to life
- Develop our approach to Tenant-Led Scrutiny

There will also be a monitoring group set up immediately to be led by the Landlord Services Manager to review and monitor the current Local Offers.

Annex 1 Strategy Action Plan –

Aims	Actions	Task	Time	Lead	Progress
1. We will ensure that there is a Strategic Commitment to Involvement & Empowerment	 Communicate aims and approach to involvement and empowerment and ensure these aims are influence by residents priorities 	 Publish strategy and summary document Hold launch event for Standard Task Teams Develop database of involvement 	2012/3 2012/13 2012/on- going		
8 6	2. Routinely review the impact and cost of RI and identify outcomes in collaboration with residents	 Develop template forms to assess the impact of involvement across services, including basic cost-benefit analysis Work with the TI&E STT to develop and publish an annual statement of impact Review involvement activities and assess VFM with residents annually 	2012/13 2013/on- going 2013/on- going		
	 Promote all aspects of RI including the principles of tenant management 	 Develop involvement leaflet including expression of interest and feedback form Undertake RI roadshow promoting strategy and involvement activities Quarterly newsletter articles plus an annual focus on RI incorporating resident-led articles and Intro to tenant management 	2013 2013 On-going		

Aims	Actions	Task	Time	Lead	Progress
2. We will ensure that there are opportunities to Involve & Influence	1. Develop a broad and accessible range of involvement	 Develop terms of reference and appropriate support documentation for all involvement activities Develop a clear expenses incentives 	2012/13		
	opportunities	 Develop a clear expenses, incentives and rewards policy Develop service and estate based involvement plans at STT and neighbourhood level and incorporate the 	2012/13		
00		use of informal feedback opportunities and the use of modern technology4. Review involvement activities annually with residents	2013/on- going		
7	2. Provide easily accessible information that is prepared in collaboration with residents	 Produce information in a variety of formats Develop communications and work with members to ensure customer facing information is subject to resident influence, plain language and customer 	2013/0n- going 2013		
		 focussed and ensure input into newsletter Work with residents to identify key areas of under-representation and develop a 'need to reach' strategy, including specialist partner support where 	2013/14		
		required 4. Design and deliver an annual staff roadshow and info. pack to ensure staff are well informed about involvement	2013/on- going		

	3. Provide a range of		2012/12
	opportunities for residents to exercise meaningful influence over strategic direction	 Terms of Reference to include clear statement about the 'scope of involvement' and decision-making responsibilities. 	2013
		2. Develop opportunities and training for residents to be involved in staff	
		 recruitment and procurement 3. Utilise the STT's in the development of service improvement plans and strategies 	2013/on- going
	4. Provide a range of		2013
	opportunities for residents to exercise	1. Engage with residents locally to build on local offers and develop neighbourhood	
	meaningful influence over local services	involvement plans2. Review local offer annually at neighbourhood level	2013/on- going 2013/on-
80		 Ensure local feedback informs the work of STT's and ITSP 	going
	 Understand and respond to the diverse needs of residents 	 Undertake local consultation of specific 'communities of interest' e.g. young people 	2014
		2. As action 2.2.3 above	2013/on-
		3. Develop and deliver twice-yearly equality and diversity (involving	going
		everyone) training for involved residents4. Develop systems and profile of residents to 95%	By 2015

Aims	Actions	Task	Time	Lead	Progress
3. We will make better use of Resident Intelligence	1. Capture meaningful intelligence from residents so that we have a clear view of our residents profile	 Action 2.5.4 above Undertake satisfaction survey to STAR methodology every 2 years Develop central database for customer comments, compliments and complaints and publish 'you said, we did' annually Develop central 'survey map' to ensure resident intelligence is systematically captured and used to improve services Introduce 'Head of Service' trigger for investigation of instances of dissatisfaction 	2015/on- going 2013 2013/on- going 2013		
	2. Use this information to influence its approach to Resident Involvement	 Provide TI&E STT with profiling, customer satisfaction and impact data annually and support them to develop future action plans Consult residents to establish levels of interest in tenant-led surveying Provide training and support for tenant- led approach 	2014/on- going 2014/15 2015		

Aims	Actions	Task	Time	Lead	Progress
				Loud	riogroco
4. We will deliver resident-led scrutiny and involvement that can demonstrate Value for Money for both residents and the organisation	 Involve residents in setting standards, performance indicators and targets and report on our performance 	 Utilise STT's and local involvement activities to negotiate resident-focussed service standards including performance indicators and targets and publish (leaflets and internet) 	2014/15		
		2. Systematically provide performance management and benchmarking information and provide training and support to STT members to engage in monitoring and review	2013		
		 Engage the TI&E STT in the development of an annual report to tenants 	2013/on- going		
0	2. Develop robust processes to ensure our accountability to residents for services	 Include clear expectations for organisational response and systems of redress in development of tenant-led scrutiny 	2013		
	3. Measure impact and efficiency	1. Actions 1.2.1, 1.2.2 & 1.2.3 above			
	 Support resident-led scrutiny 	 Establish project steering group Develop communications and promotion plan including negotiating relationships with key stakeholders and involvement groups 	2013 2013		
		3. Prepare initial support documentation	2013		

		 including role profile, terms of reference, application pack etc. 4. Design and deliver information and awareness raising sessions 5. Design and deliver recruitment & selection 6. Design and deliver initial induction 7. Design on-going training programme and design and implement succession plan 8. Initiate test-case scrutiny review 9. Report and refine 	2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013 2013/14		
Aims O	Actions	Task	Time	Lead	Progress
5. We will provide training opportunities that will empower residents to be involved in improving communities, neighbourhoods and homes.	 Support and resource RI&E skills development 	 Design and complete an RI skills and needs assessment annually Design and deliver and annual programme of training which meets identified need Agree and publish an annual budget for RI Action 2.1.2 above Review levels of support annually through the TI&E STT In consultation with residents develop a clear procedure for grants and other support Include a clear commitment to support groups to access external funding opportunities 	2013/on- going 2013/on- going 2013/on- going 2014/on- going 2013/14		

	2. Ensure that staff aware of the role of resident involvement, have resident involvement targets, and are positive about resident involvement ensuring that staff are skilled in RI	 Action 2.2.4 above Develop annual induction/basic staff training in RI Establish annual performance targets for all staff in relation to RI. Develop staff volunteering days to offer opportunities for staff to volunteer in support of local involvement/community projects Provide all frontline staff with advance copies of consultations to enhance neighbourhood promotion and support Develop an annual 'they said, we did' staff briefing 	2013/14 2013/14 2014/15 2013/on- going 2013/on- going
92	 Support and celebrate resident involvement 	 Actions 5.1.1 & 5.1.2 above Design and implement effective post- course evaluation for all RI training Develop and deliver annual resident involvement conference incorporating 'time awards' for involved residents 	2013/on- going 2013/on- going