



# **Resident and Community Engagement Strategy 2021-2026**

## 1. Purpose

This strategy sets out how Red Kite define and continue to develop our community engagement work through five strategic themes. These themes are developed into clear and accountable measures for success within the RCES Strategic Themes Action Plan. Outlining the wider sector influences, the importance of a strong tenant voice and embedding the Social Housing White Paper in the Red Kite Group approach.

## 2. Responsibilities

Responsibility for achieving meaningful resident engagement is shared among the whole organisation.

PPP will monitor progress against the strategy via the strategic action plan on a quarterly basis. SLT and RRT will also receive quarterly reports.

The Chief executive will meet monthly with the Head of Resident and Community Engagement to monitor progress.

## 3. Legal Framework

The legal and regulatory framework that are relevant to the strategy are:

### **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard**

This is the document that outlines the expectations of the regulator in engaging residents in shaping services and holding the organisation to account.

### **Neighbourhood and Community Standard**

This document outlines the expectations of the regulator in relation to anti-social behaviour and community safety but touches on community partnership and measures that look to proactively prevent issues arising.

### **Social Housing White Paper – The Charter for Social Housing Residents**

Outlining the new charter and intentions to strengthen tenant engagement across the housing sector.

## 4. Key Principles

### 4.1 What does the regulator expect from community engagement?

A strong and consistent commitment to resident engagement has been at the core of Red Kite since the organisation came into existence. Our tenant-led approach forms the foundations of our organisation and is a thread that runs throughout the organisation. Developing this strategy presents an opportunity to review the core elements of successful engagement, reflecting upon our strengths and development areas.

In our journey to evolve and improve, it is key to come back to the regulatory standards. The table below outlines important elements of the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard (TIES) and Neighbourhood and Community Standard (NCS).

Which Standard?	Required outcomes
TIES 1.1.1 a	Provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards.
TIES 1.2.1 a-f	A wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in: formulation of policies, making of decisions about how services are delivered, scrutiny of the landlord's performance, management of repair and maintenance services.
TIES 1.3.1 b	Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.
TIES 2.2.1 b	Supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them.
TIES 2.2.1 d	Providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.
TIES 2.2.4	Registered providers shall consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.
NCS 1.2	Local area co-operation Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.
NCS 2.3.2 c	A strong focus exists on preventative measures tailored towards the needs of tenants and their families.
NCS 2.3.2 f	Provision of support to victims and witnesses.

This strategy has been developed with the TIES at the core of the approach and the regulatory guidance must always be key in decision making regarding development and direction of our engagement work. Looking ahead, the Social Housing White Paper points to future changes to strengthen the power of the regulator to ensure compliance with the standard.

#### 4.1i) The Social Housing White Paper

The Government published its long-awaited Social Housing White Paper on 17 November 2020. Called 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents', it comprises seven chapters, each relating to an element of the charter.

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| <p>1. <b>To be safe in your home.</b> We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.</p> |
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2. **To know how your landlord is performing**, including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly**, with access to a strong ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. **To be treated with respect**, backed by a strong consumer regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord**, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its board. The government will provide access to help, if you want it, for you to learn new skills to ensure your landlord listens.
6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in**, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership**, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

The most critical charter elements for this strategy are two, four and five. The Government have outlined clear intentions for stronger resident engagement and for organisations to be continually improving the way they engage with social housing tenants. Consumer regulation will be strengthened with a code of practice that clearly states what landlords are required to deliver. There is a key focus on providing more detailed performance information to tenants, focussing on values around transparency and accountability.

For Red Kite, this means engaging in conversations around the accessibility of our engagement structure, changing the structure of the engagement team to best reflect the priorities of the White Paper and considering how best to communicate performance and engagement successes beyond the annual report minimum.

The White Paper points to several actions that will come from the Government and RSH in the future, yet the aims of the White Paper are clear. This strategy outlines Red Kite's commitment to becoming an organisation that looks to proactively strive for best practice, going beyond basic levels of compliance during the five-year strategy period.

#### 4.2 **What is important to RRT over the next five years?**

The Resident Representative Team have worked to identify five key areas of focus that capture the most important aspects of engagement from a resident perspective. These focus areas outline the areas of concern, particularly when considering the challenges presented by the Covid-19 global pandemic.

4.2i) **Positive engagement with feedback and impact** – In order to ensure that residents continue to engage they must see the results of their time spent volunteering and know that their input is valued. Stronger communication of the difference that residents' views make to decisions and services needs to be promoted through multiple channels, such as newsletters and the annual report.

4.2ii) **Your voice matters** – Volunteers must feel valued and that their voice makes a positive difference. Support must be provided to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to engage with Red Kite, inclusive of all circumstances. A wider message

must be circulated to make sure our residents know that engagement activity is still taking place. We need to make sure tenants know that we want to hear their voice.

- 4.2iii) **Digital engagement** –Not everyone prior to the Covid-19 crisis was comfortable using digital communication and people will need proactive support and training to be more confident. Many of our tenants will find moving to online engagement daunting and will need a flexible and supportive approach. This may also mean they need to be provided with certain items – i.e. laptop, help with broadband, online training.
- 4.2iv) **Social interaction and connection** – Red Kite need to consider that for many tenants, who are engaged and involved with Red Kite, the social interaction is an important part of resident engagement. RRT do not want to lose this as a motivation for involving residents in a more digital world. We want Red Kite to consider how can the social connection can be maintained going forward.
- 4.2v) **On-going community support** – We must make sure the community team are fully staffed and keep up the positive momentum from Covid-19 with offering enhanced community support when it is needed. The team will need to consider how best to support people struggling with employability and financial security in the recession that follows the crisis.

These focus areas from RRT have been used to develop the detail within the action plan. Whilst the strategy and action plan set out the underlying principles that cover our engagement approach and aspirations, our engagement work will continually be moulded by our engaged residents through working closely with RRT.

### 4.3 **How will we respond to Together with Tenants?**

Together with Tenants is a National Housing Federation (NHF) project focussing on creating a stronger relationship between tenants, residents and housing associations. Following a lengthy period of consultation with 2500 respondents, in the NHF released a set of six commitments:

**Relationships** – housing associations will treat all tenants and residents with respect in all their interactions. Relationships between tenants, residents and housing associations will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.

**Communication** – tenants and residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from their housing association on the issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how the organisation is working to address problems, how the organisation is run, and information about performance on key issues.

**Voice and influence** – views from tenants and residents will be sought and valued and this information will be used to inform decisions. Every individual tenant and resident will feel listened to by their housing association on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear.

**Accountability** – collectively, tenants and residents will work in partnership with their housing association to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect their homes and services and the quality of the homes and services they provide.

**Quality** – tenants and residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed

**When things go wrong** – tenants and residents will have simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. Tenants and residents will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

The most critical commitments for this strategy are ‘voice and influence’, ‘accountability’ and ‘relationships’. These commitments are embedded within the strategic themes, with progress monitored through the action plan.

The National Housing Federation Code of Governance has been revised to include stronger requirements on accountability, decision-making and transparency – the principles that also drive Together with Tenants. The revised Code of Governance and the plans for national rollout of the charter will be a key external influencer in the development of tenant engagement at Red Kite. It will be critical for Red Kite to closely monitor and respond accordingly to over the strategy period.

#### 4.4 **Asset Based Community Development**

The Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach takes the view that all members of a community have something to offer and each of their skills and value should be discovered and supported. It recognises the human, social and physical capital that exists within local communities and supports community development by empowering communities to drive projects and initiatives. Fundamentally, positive health and social outcomes are limited when a culture of ‘doing to’ defines the Community Development approach.

There is a focus across four key areas:

<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Associations</b>	<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Place based assets</b>
Everyone has a value, a role to play and strengths to be harnessed.	People discover each other’s value by working together.	People organised around assets.	People live in an area for a reason. Each area has physical strengths that support community development.

Inclusive Growth (IG) complements the approach of ABCD, recognising that in order to fully support our communities, we need to be tackling wider social issues at the core of our community. The ABCD approach helps to ensure that we are finding the strengths in our communities and enhancing them. A commitment to inclusive growth reminds us of the importance of taking a holistic approach to our community development work.

#### 5. **Strategic themes summary**

This strategy is made up of five strategic themes which will underpin the work of the community engagement team over the next five years. Each strategic them contains success measures, a strapline and focus areas developed by RRT.

## **5.1** Theme 1: A strong tenant voice

We are committed to our tenant-led ethos and strengthening the tenant voice within our decision making.

*'We work with our tenants to find solutions together'*



### **Measures of success:**

- Evidence of tenant impact and influence
- Increased tenant voice in our annual reporting and AGM
- Implementing specific scrutiny reviews
- Increased investment in resident training and equipment
- Outreach to hear resident voice that extends beyond engaged volunteers

### **White Paper focus**

- Review professional training and development
- Government will deliver a new opportunities and empowerment programme
- Code of Practice on the Consumer Standards

### **What's important to RRT?**

- An active interest is shown in residents' opinions, ideas and concerns.
- Resident views are influential and are acted upon – views are valued.
- Red Kite are open and transparent in their responses to resident questions and concerns.
- All staff to understand the Tenant-led ethos – residents are not just a number.

## **5.2** Theme 2: An engagement structure fit for the future

Need to recruit volunteers, grow our pool of engaged residents and consider how we can alleviate the barriers to engagement.

*'Flexibility in the structure is essential for diversity within our engagement.'*



### **Measures of success:**

- Growing our pool of engaged volunteers
- Tiered and inclusive engagement structure
- Delivery of annual volunteering survey (internal and external)
- Taking time to understand the barriers to engagement that prevent more volunteer activity.

### **White Paper focus:**

- Landlords required to seek out best practice and consider how to continually improve the way they engage with residents.
- Safety and transparency to be covered explicitly

### **What's important to RRT?**

- Everyone is given the opportunity to be involved and support is given if needed e.g. ensuring disabled residents can participate.
- Residents feel valued and recognised for the contribution they make.
- The different expertise and experience of residents is valued and considered in how they are involved with Red Kite.
- Different voices are heard to represent the diverse population of residents. We must promote inclusion for all – not just the few.

### **5.3**

#### **Theme 3: Excellence in our Community Investment programme**

Developing our current community investment work to achieve a deeper and longer-term impact in our communities.

*‘Our investment is a catalyst for realising the potential in our communities.’*



##### **Measures of success:**

- Wider pool of applicants seeking Red Kite investment
- Deeper levels of resident involvement
- Increased awareness of impact across staff, residents and community
- Successful launch of new community investment structures following review

##### **White Paper focus:**

- Support the charter aim of a Good Quality Home and Neighbourhood to live in, in relation to community investment activity. Linking in with domestic abuse and ASB prevention and support.
- Consider mental and physical health and the link between health and housing.

##### **What’s important to RRT?**

- Clear information on what community investment is available to residents and how they can apply for it.
- Residents are involved in decisions on where community investment is made.
- Ensure the community investment is focused on the key needs of the resident population.
- There is openness and transparency in the community investment process.

### **5.4**

#### **Theme 4: Valuing our partnerships (internally and externally)**

Enhancing connections between engagement team and wider business, recognising that colleagues play a crucial role in supporting successful resident engagement. Recognising the value of our relationships with key local stakeholders, extending our networks to maximise our positive impact in the local community.

*‘To achieve positive change in our communities, we must work together.’*



##### **Measures of success:**

- Increased collaboration with frontline teams
- Supporting the successful implementation of the ‘Covid-19 Response – Poverty & Crime Strategy 2020-2023’
- Diverse partner network with increasing partner engagement
- Participation in core forums and partnerships that shape our communities most

##### **White Paper focus:**

- Building our resident voice into our partnerships, ensuring transparency and accountability
- Understanding that creating good quality neighbourhoods requires working collaboratively to realise the potential of our communities

##### **What’s important to RRT?**

- Promote the work done so far or work that will be coming up with our Partners
- Ensure that investment activity and partnership results in positive change for residents and their communities – if it does not, stop it – if it does shout about it.
- All staff to understand the Tenant-led ethos, and proactively promote to partners.



## **5.5** Theme 5: Celebrating our Community

Committed to realising potential of the entrepreneurs in our community. Making a positive impact on the local community in a way that goes beyond grant funding and partnership forums. Recognising our role as a catalyst and broker, bringing organisations and resources together to help realise the potential within our communities.

*‘Delivering events and supporting activities that make a lasting positive impact within our communities.’*



### **Measures of success:**

- Review approach to inclusion and diversity
- Supporting enterprise and innovation
- Celebrating and sustaining community relationships
- Actively identifying and growing the potential of our community

### **White Paper focus:**

- Using innovation in our events to seek engagement from a wider pool of residents.
- Using community activity as a catalyst for increased transparency and link to TIES for increasing the capacity for our residents to be able to hold us to account.
- Working with our partner network to connect with more of our residents, across a broad range of key service areas.

### **What's important to RRT?**

- Promotion of the positive work done to support and celebrate our community.
- Residents must be involved in shaping the direction and delivery of our enterprise work.
- Our events should form part of our approach to recruiting and retaining new volunteers.

## **6. References**

- The Red Kite Rules
- The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- The Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- The Together with Tenants Charter
- The Social Housing White Paper
- The Strategic Themes Action Plan
- Annual Target Mapping Action Plan

## **7. Related Policies**

- Covid-19 Response – Poverty & Crime Strategy 2020-2023

Staff roles listed in the **Competency Standards section** must be acquainted with contents of this document and have had documented instructions and training on its use. Authority to amend can only be undertaken by the **Process owner** with the relevant **Delegated approvals**.

For information on interpretations and instructions staff should contact the **Subject Matter expert** or **Process owner** and under no circumstances should any deviation be permitted without prior approval as above.

<b>Version:</b>	1	<b>Approved by:</b>	Board
<b>Effective Date:</b>	April 2021	<b>Approval date:</b>	April 2021
<b>Policy reviewer:</b>	Head of Resident & Community Engagement	<b>Policy owner:</b>	Head of Resident & Community Engagement
<b>Review period</b>	5 years	<b>Next review due by:</b>	April 2026
<b>Delegated approvals</b>			
<i>The 3 lines of defence have been checked within the framework and are valid</i>			
<b>Approved by EMT</b>	N/A	<b>Approved Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Approved by Board/ Committee/RRT</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Approved Date:</b>	<b>April 2021</b>
<b>Competency Standards</b>			
<b>Roles using this document</b>	All resident facing roles, Board	<b>Mandatory training frequency</b>	
<b>Associated legislation</b>		<b>Vocational training frequency</b>	
<b>Consumer Standards</b>	All Consumer standards but primarily Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard	<b>Other</b>	

<b>Lines of Defence</b>	
<b>Lines of Defence</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>Lines of defence 1</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strategy approved, with relevant cover sheet.</li> <li>2. All staff and Board briefed and trained on the strategy, forming part of inductions for new staff.</li> </ol>
<b>Lines of defence 2</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GROW team to provide exception report on training on monthly basis to Heads of Service and Strategy Owner.</li> <li>2. Any breach of the strategy reported to Strategy owner.</li> <li>3. Reporting of action plan progress to PPP on a quarterly basis. SLT and RRT will also receive reports.</li> </ol>
<b>Lines of defence 3</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Audit programme – audits will identify any housekeeping or deviation from progress relating to the Strategy</li> </ol>