

Have Your

Say

Resident
Engagement
with Housing
Services
2021 – 24



City of Westminster

City
for
All

As part of our *City for All* strategy, we are committed to ensuring Westminster remains a welcoming and vibrant place for people from all backgrounds to live.

Listening and acting on our residents' feedback, both tenants and leaseholders, is absolutely key for us to improve and tailor our housing services to meet your needs.

Learning from the previous ways that we have engaged with you, we are proposing a new resident engagement approach.

This would involve different groups to enable you to provide feedback on your housing services in a more flexible, inclusive and targeted way.

Before we make any changes, we want to hear what you think. That's why in this leaflet, we summarise why and how we are proposing to change resident engagement and give you the opportunity to provide your views.



How have we engaged with you in the past?

From 2016 – 2019, we engaged with you on housing services through:

- ✓ The Residents' Council, which focused on key strategic issues within the service, and had 12 residents as members; and
- ✓ Four Area Panels, which focused on identifying local priorities and fed them into the Residents' Council. Each panel had 12 residents as members including one who sat on the Residents' Council

We also provided support for local engagement through resident associations, sounding boards, resident voice groups and estate action plans.

Why are we proposing to change how we engage with you?

As a housing provider, we are required to consult you on how you want to be involved in improving and tailoring housing services every three years.

Over the past year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community has come together. Many housing residents have volunteered through Westminster Connects to help their neighbours and local community. Our resident engagement team have been there for our most vulnerable by delivering food, making welfare calls and helping residents who are out of work to find local employment.

While we have been unable to meet in person, we have had to change how we engage with you. We have developed new ways of working such as moving services online. As a result, we have reached more people and had many meaningful conversations about our services.

To build on our stronger sense of community and more effective ways of reaching you, we are proposing new options for resident engagement and want your thoughts. We intend this to be a much deeper partnership. It would take time to develop but we believe it could provide better results for us all.

Our vision

We are proposing to move towards a more flexible, inclusive and targeted approach.

This would involve open groups where residents and housing staff can all engage and provide feedback to address both service-wide and local issues. The groups would enable you to get involved on topics that interest you and we think would lead to more meaningful conversations, decisions and results. Ideas and feedback from the groups would feed directly into the service to be acted on – think of it as having a membership of your housing services.

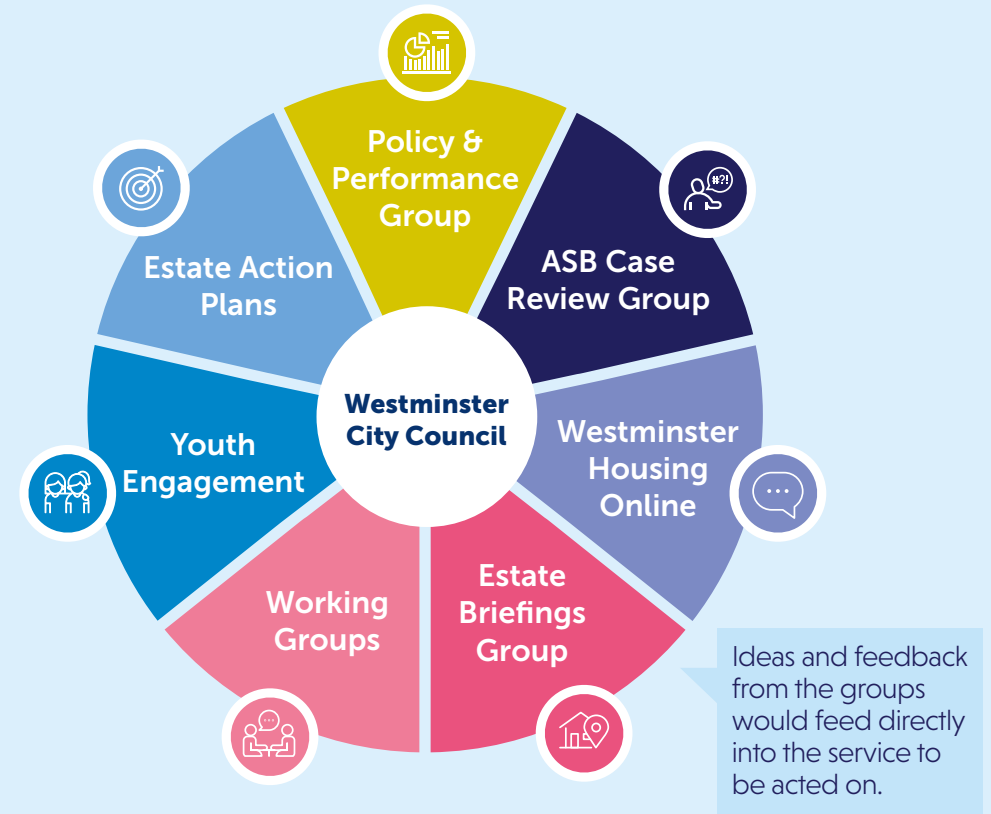
As part of the new approach, we would continue to make the best use of technology, as we have done over the past year, to reach more people. We will also re-introduce face-to-face interaction as soon as it is safe to do so.

The ongoing support we currently provide for resident associations, sounding boards, resident voice groups and estate action plans would continue.



Proposed approach

Below, you will find descriptions of the possible initial groups and how they could work. Depending on your views and interests, we may run two to four as pilots to make sure that your involvement helps shape the overall roll-out of the new approach.



Policy and Performance: This would be one of the first groups and, if you agree, would be the central hub for the new approach. It would empower residents to monitor and comment on our performance by scrutinising policies, strategic priorities, service standards and helping identify topics for working groups.

Working Groups: These groups would enable residents to take on a specific issue or project such as a review of a new or difficult process within the service. For example, this could involve: repairs, major works, greening, value for money or community events.

Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review: This group would inform our approach to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) management. Residents would review anonymised ASB cases and share feedback to build our understanding and expectations of both what it is to be a good neighbour and how to uphold that standard.

Westminster Housing Online: This online engagement group would enable a citywide 'big survey' group. Residents can subscribe to receive monthly surveys by email which can be completed online at a time that suits. This will help to build an in-depth picture of what you feel on the biggest issues.

Youth Engagement: This forum would consult young people and partners on the design of a tailored youth engagement approach. It would aim to provide a dedicated space for young people to share their ideas about our services.

Estate Action Plans: These plans would continue to help residents set local priorities for their estate, focusing on anything from new play equipment to how to tackle ASB. Residents can contribute to estate action plans by completing a dedicated survey online or by working with the local housing team as part of a resident representative group.

Estate Briefings: These would give residents the opportunity to hear and ask questions about the work of the housing team on estate action plans. Issues raised in the briefings would feed into and build the estate action plans.

Our commitments to you

We understand that being listened to and having your feedback inform and shape our services is important to you. That's why we would be committed to doing the following through the new proposed approach:

- ✓ Resident engagement would be open so that **any resident can sign up to participate.**
- ✓ There would be **no set time commitment** so residents can participate in a way that best suits them.
- ✓ Each group would lead on its own specific area of the service and **residents would chair most groups.**
- ✓ Senior housing managers would attend individual groups so **residents can make recommendations directly to the service.**
- ✓ **The senior housing manager and resident engagement lead for each group would be accountable for acting on feedback,** keeping residents informed and reporting to the Director of Housing. They would also provide regular updates on engagement outcomes to the Cabinet Member for Housing, their deputies and the policy and performance group.
- ✓ Efforts would be redoubled so that **information coming from all groups and actions taken would be communicated consistently to residents.**
- ✓ **Councillors would also be able to attend and participate in groups to see resident scrutiny in action.**

We know it is easy to promise, but improving housing, the environment and services is what matters, and doing so together with you. We would develop this work in stages so that we can measure and achieve success as we proceed.



Have your say

It is important that this new proposed resident engagement approach works for you. The success of the proposed approach depends on us, you and your neighbours working in partnership. The feedback you provide will inform how we approach resident engagement for housing services from 2021 – 2024.

Tell us what you think in one of the ways outlined below by **21 May 2021**.

To provide your feedback:



complete the feedback form online at westminster.gov.uk/housing/engagement



fill in the enclosed feedback form and post it back to us using the pre-paid return envelope – no stamp is needed



if you are unable to complete the feedback form online or by post, call us on **0800 358 3783**

After we have received and reviewed all of your feedback, we will update you on any changes we have made to make sure your priorities are at the heart of our new plans.

We are looking forward to receiving your feedback so we can shape our resident engagement to work for you from 2021 – 2024 and beyond.

Thank you for taking the time to read about our proposed approach and for providing your views.

If you would like to speak to us about the content of this leaflet in your own language, please contact Westminster Housing on **0800 358 3783**

