

Report subject	BCP Homes Governance review, Resident Engagement and Communications Strategy and Resident Engagement for High-Rise Buildings Strategy
Meeting date	29 October 2025
Status	Public
Executive summary	This report presents the findings from the BCP Homes Governance Review and outlines an action plan aimed at enhancing the assurance, transparency, and accountability in the delivery of the council's housing management services, collectively as BCP Homes. The review highlights the importance of strong governance and resident engagement in social housing management. Key recommendations include strengthening the integration and oversight of the Advisory Board, developing a comprehensive resident engagement strategy, and establishing a formalised assurance framework. The Resident Engagement and Communication Strategy, along with the Resident Engagement for High-Rise Buildings Strategy, are central to this plan. These strategies aim to empower residents, improve communication, and ensure that residents' voices are heard and valued. The successful implementation of these strategies will be instrumental in achieving high standards of service and engagement, marking a significant milestone in BCP Homes' journey towards excellence. The report also includes a detailed delivery plan for the implementation of these strategies, ensuring that the council meets regulatory requirements and addresses residents' needs effectively. The strategies are designed to foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and active resident participation, ultimately enhancing the overall governance framework of BCP Homes.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: (a). Cabinet approves the Governance Review Implementation Action Plan at appendix 2; (b). Cabinet approves the Resident Engagement and Communications Strategy at appendix 3 and associated delivery plan at appendix 4;

	(c). Cabinet approves the Resident Engagement for High Rise Buildings Strategy at appendix 5.
Reason for recommendations	The recommendations for Cabinet approval are based on the findings and action plans outlined in the BCP Homes Governance Review. These recommendations are crucial for enhancing governance, transparency, and accountability within BCP Homes, ensuring regulatory standards are met and residents' needs are effectively addressed. i) Governance Review Implementation Action Plan (Appendix 2): This plan addresses key recommendations from the Governance Review, aiming to strengthen governance by enhancing the Advisory Board's role, developing a formalised assurance framework, and improving communication and feedback mechanisms. Implementing this plan will ensure greater transparency and accountability within BCP Homes. ii) Resident Engagement and Communications Strategy (Appendix 3) and Delivery Plan (Appendix 4): This strategy and its delivery plan are central to empowering residents and improving communication. They outline measures to enhance resident participation, provide transparent communication, and establish formal feedback processes. Successful implementation will foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and active resident participation. iii) Resident Engagement for High Rise Buildings Strategy (Appendix 5): This strategy is tailored to meet the specific needs of residents in high-rise buildings, ensuring they are informed and involved in building safety decisions. It includes measures to protect residents from safety risks and aligns with the requirements set by the Building Safety Regulator. Approving these recommendations will demonstrate the Cabinet's commitment to enhancing governance, transparency, and accountability within BCP Homes, ensuring residents' needs are effectively addressed.
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Kieron Wilson – Housing and Regulatory Services
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton – Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Kelly Deane – Director of Public Protection Seamus Doran – Head of BCP Homes
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. This report outlines the findings from the BCP Homes Governance Review and seeks approval of an action plan designed to enhance the organisation's overall position regarding assurance, transparency, and accountability in relation to the management of the Council's 10,700 rented and leasehold homes. A central element of the response to the review is the development of a comprehensive resident engagement strategy, which is detailed within the report and included as an appendix, together with a delivery plan for its implementation. Additionally, the report sets out a specific resident engagement strategy tailored for high-rise residential homes, in line with requirements set by the Building Safety Regulator.

Governance and Ownership

2. Ensuring there is assurance within the organisation that these standards are being adhered to is a key responsibility which must be observed by both the cabinet and the executive team to maintain the highest levels of transparency, influence, and accountability.

Regulatory Context

3. The Regulator of Social Housing's (the Regulator) regulatory standards for landlords set out the outcomes that registered providers in England must deliver for tenants. These include the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard which requires providers to be open with tenants, treating them with fairness and respect so they can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
4. As part of meeting the standard, the council must:
 - Engage with tenants and take their views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered.

Provide information about its landlord services and communicate with tenants and provide information to them so they can use these services, understand what to expect from the council, and hold the council to account.

5. There are also statutory requirements to consult with tenants on matters of housing management as set out in the Housing Act 1985.
6. Councillors are responsible for ensuring that the outcomes of the regulatory standards are delivered. The council is responsible for providing evidence to the Regulator when asked to demonstrate how the standards are being met and must let it know if there is any material failure in delivering the outcomes required.
7. The regulatory standards do not apply to leaseholders, however many of the services that are provided to tenants deliver the same outcomes to them e.g., dealing with anti-social behaviour and leaseholders are actively involved in existing resident engagement activities.
8. On the 16 July 2025, Cabinet considered a report on BCP Homes Tenants Satisfaction Measures and Housing Regulatory Compliance Update. This included a summary of work undertaken by the Housing Quality Network (HQN) to provide an independent assessment of how the council was meeting the requirements of the consumer standards. It found that it may not be able to provide the level of

assurance expected by the Regulator to demonstrate that it is meeting the outcomes of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard.

9. As a result of this finding, the Governance Review has been completed and the finalisation of the BCP Homes Resident Engagement Strategy development brought forward.

Governance Review

10. The BCP Homes Governance Review provides a comprehensive analysis of the current governance framework for BCP Homes, highlighting the importance of strong governance, transparency, and resident involvement in social housing management.
11. The approach to the Review has been comprehensive and inclusive, drawing on multiple sources of expertise, experience, and feedback. Central to the review are the requirements set out by the Regulator of Social Housing, which serve as the benchmark for all governance efforts. The review has been informed by a deep dive review conducted by Housing Quality Network in relation to the council's self-assessment of performance against regulatory requirements, offering both a critical external perspective and actionable insights. National models of good governance have also been examined to ensure practices reflect the best in the sector.
12. The review process has involved extensive consultation with the BCP Homes Leadership Team, staff, Advisory Board Members, councillors, and the Senior Council Leadership Team. Resident voices have been gathered through committee and panel discussions, ensuring that those most affected by decisions are heard and considered. This collaborative process aims to build a governance approach that is comprehensive, sustainable, and fit for the challenges ahead.
13. The Review outlines the current governance structure, including the role of the BCP Homes Advisory Board, which was established in 2022 to provide oversight, ensure compliance, and engage residents in decision-making processes. It also identifies key strengths, such as a clear commitment to regulatory compliance and established performance reporting mechanisms, as well as challenges such as the need for greater integration of the Advisory Board into the Council's formal governance structure and enhanced resident engagement.
14. The review proposes several recommendations to enhance governance and resident engagement. These include further embedding the Advisory Board within the Council's governance structure to strengthen transparency and accountability, developing a comprehensive resident engagement strategy, and establishing a formalised assurance framework that includes both internal and external audit support. The document also emphasises the importance of regular reporting to Cabinet and the Corporate Management Board to ensure continuous oversight and improvement.
15. The review makes the following recommendations;

Strengthen Governance Integration and Oversight: Further embed the Advisory Board within the Council's governance structure to enhance its role in strengthening transparency, influence, and accountability, and provide greater assurance.

Develop an Assurance Framework: Establish and implement a formalised assurance framework that includes both internal and external audit support.

Enhance Resident Engagement and Influence: Develop a comprehensive resident engagement strategy that empowers tenants and leaseholders to shape services and policies.

Improve Communication and Feedback Mechanisms: Establish transparent, two-way communication between the Advisory Board, Resident Committees, Panels, and the wider resident community.

Clarify Decision-Making and Delegation: Agree on a delegation framework for housing policies and strategies, identifying which decisions require Cabinet or Council approval and which are delegated to senior officers.

Build Capacity and Expertise: Ensure governance arrangements are supported by sufficient staff and specialist expertise to fulfil oversight responsibilities and regulatory requirements.

Enhanced Use of Data and Insight: To enhance the use of data and insight in informing strategy and policy, BCP Homes should focus on several key areas. While we have made strides in utilising data, the implementation of the new housing management system in 2026 presents a significant opportunity for further improvement.

Monitor, Evaluate and Sustain Improvement: Embed regular review and evaluation of governance effectiveness, aligning outcomes to the priorities of BCP Council, the Regulator, and residents.

16. The full review can be found at appendix 1.
17. The Review did not find significant issues within the current BCP Homes governance structure and as a result, no plans are being presented to make fundamental change. However, it did find that improvements are needed to strengthen connectivity, communication and function within each layer of the governance model, to meet the recommendations and enhance performance against Regulatory requirements.
18. Appendix 2 - Governance Review Implementation Action Plan, sets out key actions to address review recommendations. The plan strengthens governance by creating a clear governance map, developing the Advisory Board, increasing Cabinet and Corporate Management Board reporting, and improving the monitoring of service needs. An Annual Audit Plan Assurance Framework will support oversight.
19. Resident engagement will be enhanced through a Resident Engagement Strategy and delivery plan, transparent communication, formal feedback processes, and a quarterly forum for Resident Panel chairs.
20. Communication will improve through listing governance structures online, embedding resident feedback in decision-making, and consulting on revised Terms of Reference for resident groups.
21. Decision-making and delegation will be clarified with a published framework, regular reviews of policies and strategies, and staff and resident briefings.
22. Capacity and expertise will be developed via Advisory Board training, reviewing agendas and meetings, and assessing needs for independent members.
23. Ongoing improvement will be secured by annual self-assessment of regulatory standards and adding capacity for this work.

24. To ensure a golden thread runs throughout the governance framework, the plan will embed clear lines of communication and accountability from residents, through the Advisory Board, up to the Corporate Management Board and Cabinet, and back again. This integrated approach will ensure that residents' views inform strategic decisions and that feedback flows transparently at all levels of governance.
25. Collectively, these measures aim to strengthen governance, improve accountability, and ensure residents' voices are central to BCP Homes' management.

External Validation

26. Housing Quality Network were asked to review the Governance Review and Action Plan in order to provide quality assurance and external input. Their feedback is as follows; "The recommendations which BCP is adopting should significantly increase the effectiveness of its governance and ensure that the resident voice is heard. Many Councils are adopting similar models and setting up an Advisory Panel. This gives the Council some of the flexibility and focus of a board - with external input – whilst also maintaining the integrity of decision making by elected councillors (and through delegation to officers). It is important to continue with the development work to ensure that officers, residents and members understand:
 - The role of the board
 - Where board recommendations are recorded
 - Where portfolio holder and cabinet decisions are recorded
 - Where oversight of key performance and compliance issues takes place and is reported (so tenants can see it).
27. Following on from conversations with officers during HQN's earlier work, we recommend that you ensure staff are briefed on how and where decisions are made – and how to raise issues – and how to record them. Record keeping is extremely important. You should always operate on the basis of 'if it's not written down it didn't happen.'
28. This feedback has been incorporated into the final Review and Action Plan.

Resident Engagement Strategy

29. The proposed Resident Engagement and Communication Strategy at appendix 3 sets out how BCP Homes will engage and communicate with all of our residents and the Delivery Plan at appendix 4 sets out key priorities for delivery.
30. The council already provides residents with opportunities to have their say and influence and scrutinise strategies, policies and services. These are set out in the proposed strategy and include:
 - BCP Homes Advisory Board – whose membership includes residents, councillors and independent representatives with relevant housing knowledge and experience.
 - Residents Committee
 - People and Neighbourhood Panel
 - Communications and Access to Services Panel
 - Homes Safety and Energy Panel
 - Scrutiny Panel

- Reading Group
 - Annual Residents Conference.
31. These opportunities are promoted to residents through the council's website, Get involved with BCP Homes, BCP Homes News magazine, Facebook and by staff. These activities and other more informal community activities are supported by the Resident Engagement team. BCP Homes also works with the wider council Communities team.
32. The Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard sets out in detail what the required outcomes are for engagement with tenants. These include:
- Giving tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise landlord strategies, policies and services.
 - Assisting tenants who wish to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise landlord strategies, policies and services.
 - Providing accessible support that meets the diverse needs of tenants so they can engage with the opportunities above.
 - Working with tenants to regularly consider ways to improve and tailor its approach to delivering landlord services including tenant engagement. It must implement changes as appropriate to ensure services deliver the intended aims.
33. The standard also sets out the outcomes for communicating information regarding landlord services. These include:
- Providing tenants with accessible information about the:
 - a) available landlord services, how to access those services, and the standards of service tenants can expect.
 - b) standards of safety and quality tenants can expect homes and communal areas to meet.
 - c) rents and service charges that are payable by tenants, and
 - d) responsibilities of the council and the tenant for maintaining homes, communal areas, shared spaces and neighbourhoods.
 - Providing tenants with accessible information about tenants' rights in respect of the council's legal obligations and relevant regulatory requirements that it must meet in connection with their homes, facilities or landlord services it provides to tenants. This includes the rights of disabled tenants to reasonable adjustments.
 - Communicating with affected tenants on progress, next steps and outcomes when delivering landlord services.
 - Ensuring housing and neighbourhood policies are fair, reasonable, accessible and transparent. Where relevant, policies should set out decision-making criteria and appeals processes.

- Making information available to tenants about the relevant roles and responsibilities of senior level employees or officers, including who has responsibility for compliance with the consumer standards.
34. The standard also requires the council to take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants. To do so it must collect and use data and information to understand the diverse needs of tenants.
35. Whilst the development of the Resident Engagement and Communication Strategy has considered the regulatory requirements, it has also taken into account the views of residents and feedback that has been received from them through a variety of sources including through the involved residents' structure and the wider resident group through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's).
36. Residents' views included:
- Being kept better informed about progress of queries.
 - Providing their views through surveys and online engagement.
 - Encouraging younger and working age people to be involved
 - Receiving more feedback about the difference that resident engagement has made.
 - Use of hybrid meetings for residents who cannot attend in person.
 - Roadshow style meetings with activities for children so parents could attend.
 - Better communication on when neighbourhood inspections are taking place.
37. The strategy goes further than setting out how the council will engage with tenants, and it also includes leaseholders. It seeks to empower all of our residents to improve their services and neighbourhoods, by informing, listening and involving them. It aims to:
- Ensure residents are well-informed about the services and opportunities available to them and provide access to information and services in ways that suit their needs
 - Understand the views and needs of all our residents and act to improve and shape services around them
 - Engage residents in decision-making processes and support them to take an active role in their communities
 - Strengthen a culture within BCP Homes that values good communication and actively listens to our residents' views and needs
 - Make engagement activities as accessible as possible to different groups, ensuring inclusivity in all our communications, meetings and events
 - Enable residents to hold us accountable by being transparent in our processes and decision-making
 - Work together with residents, staff, and other partners to continuously improve services and engagement activities.
38. The guiding principles within the strategy will ensure that communication and engagement activities with residents are effective and meaningful.

39. The strategy explains the current approach to informing, listening and involving residents and the improvements that will be made. These include:
- An annual communications plan setting out key messages, objectives and methods
 - Regularly update residents on performance including trends in complaints and surveys. Set out how we will address poor performance and make improvements
 - Conduct regular tenancy reviews to understand who our residents are.
 - Develop a plan for resident engagement focused on areas of highest priority or lowest satisfaction
 - Develop and agree a set of service standards with residents so they know what to expect from us and can hold us to account
 - Provide community events, activities and volunteering opportunities to encourage poor residents to get involved.
40. There are targets within the strategy to demonstrate how effective the actions are in making a difference to residents including an increase in satisfaction through the TSM's.
41. The Resident Engagement Strategy is a pivotal component of addressing a key recommendation in the BCP Homes Governance Review, underscoring its significance in the broader journey of BCP Homes. This strategy not only addresses the regulatory requirements but also embodies our commitment to fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and active resident participation. By implementing this strategy, we ensure that residents' voices are heard and valued, thereby enhancing the overall governance framework. The successful execution of this strategy will be instrumental in achieving the high standards of service and engagement that BCP Homes aspires to, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to improve and evolve.

External Validation

42. Housing Quality Network were asked to review the draft Resident Engagement Strategy in order to provide quality assurance and external input. Their feedback is as follows; "The new strategy is well presented and clear with good commitments to listening to tenants. It's a strong sign of progress – and the reference back to the 2022 consultation is very helpful in that regard. There are no specific commitments or timescales, so it will be very difficult to prove that you have (or have not) delivered the strategy – except through increased resident satisfaction (which can be impacted on by so many other factors). The lack of any measurable outputs/outcomes makes it difficult to manage expectations."
43. The delivery plan at appendix 4 addresses the concerns relating to demonstrable outcomes and timescales, the delivery plan.

Resident Engagement for High Rise Buildings Strategy

44. The Resident Engagement for High-Rise Buildings Strategy should set out how residents are to be involved in and informed of building safety decisions. These

decisions are made by the accountable person and are about the management of the building and safety risks. This includes measures that are put in place to protect residents from safety risks, e.g., fire, structural failures and gas and electrical hazards.

45. As the accountable person the council must:

- Prepare a resident engagement strategy
- Act in accordance with the strategy
- Review and revise the strategy and keep a record of the reviews
- Consult residents about the strategy and take their opinions into account
- Tell residents about building safety work resulting from a building safety decision.

46. A strategy must be prepared for all occupied buildings.

47. The strategy aims to:

- Provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to be involved in decisions about their building's safety or to voice their concerns.
- Ensure we understand and consider the individual needs and preferences of our residents when we make decisions or communicate with them about building safety.
- Identify the core building safety information to be shared with residents and provide a variety of ways for residents to access it.
- Explain how more detailed information about building safety will be made available to residents on request.
- Establish how the strategy's effectiveness will be monitored and reviewed.

48. A copy of the strategy will be made available to all residents within the high-rise buildings. It will be reviewed:

- At least every 2 years
- After significant alterations to the property
- After any high-risk health and safety incident
- After any changes in building safety law or regulations

49. The council must also establish and operate a complaints system to allow residents and other users of the building to raise a relevant complaint about building safety. These will be handled in line with the BCP Homes complaints policy which adheres to the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

50. Residents will be consulted before any changes are made to the strategy and their opinions will be considered.

51. Residents in two of the council's high-rise buildings were consulted on the contents of the proposed strategy. This included visits to the blocks to speak face to face to residents.

52. Those residents that responded set out their preferences for the information that they would like to receive regarding their buildings. This included an explanation of

the council's responsibilities for the building as well as residents' responsibilities. Most respondents were satisfied with the current information that they received about building safety.

53. Residents said that they would prefer to receive information about their building by post but also through notice boards or screens in blocks. Most indicated that they had a good understanding of fire safety responsibilities and agreed with the actions.
54. Residents will be consulted again when Resident Engagement for High-Rise Buildings Strategy is reviewed.
55. The Building Safety Act 2022 was introduced to improve building safety following recommendations from an independent review of building regulations and fire safety after the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.
56. The Act created obligations for buildings in occupation and higher-risk buildings, i.e., those buildings that are over 18 metres tall or have seven or more storeys. This includes the need to have an accountable person. This is the person or entity that owns the building and will usually be the landlord. BCP Council is considered to be the accountable person.
57. There are six high-rise residential buildings within the council's housing stock.
58. Amongst other duties, the accountable person is required to prepare, submit and update a resident engagement strategy for high-rise buildings. This should set out how the council will engage with residents on building safety matters including measures that are put in place to protect residents from safety risks, e.g., fire, structural failures and gas and electrical hazards.
59. The accountable person can employ an individual to carry out the duties on their behalf, but they remain responsible for making sure that those duties are carried out and retain liability for a building's safety.
60. The proposed strategy can be found at appendix 5.

Options Appraisal

61. Not applicable.

Summary of financial implications

62. There are no new financial implications associated with the Resident Engagement and Communication Strategy as the resources required for implementation are contained within existing budgets within the Housing Revenue Account already approved by Cabinet and Full Council.
63. Within the Resident Engagement for High-Rise Buildings Strategy there is an aim to ensure that the council understands the individual needs and preferences of those living in these buildings. To enable this an additional post has been created and the additional budget requirement of approximately £48,000 has previously been approved.

Summary of legal implications

64. There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations from this report but failure to meet the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard

could result in regulatory action through the Regulator of Social Housing, emphasising the importance of these plans as a critical part of the maturity of BCP Homes as an exemplary provider of social housing.

65. The Resident Engagement for High Rise Buildings Strategy meets the legal obligations set out in the Building Safety Act.

Summary of human resources implications

66. The aims set out within the Resident Engagement for High Rise Buildings Strategy requires an additional role to help understand the individual needs and preferences of residents in those buildings.

Summary of sustainability impact

67. The strategies do not have any direct sustainability impact but BCP Homes will make use of on-line and remote engagement where appropriate to help reduce travel.

Summary of public health implications

68. Both strategies will contribute to public health as they set out how the council will engage and listen to residents on the services that are provided and on building safety.
69. The work that is undertaken through the Housing Revenue Account ensures that residents are provided with safe, warm and comfortable homes that they can enjoy. Residents have redress when things go wrong and can influence services so that the council meets their need.

Summary of equality implications

70. Equality impact assessments (EIA) have been carried out for both strategies and have been considered by the EIA panel.
71. The focus of the Resident Engagement Strategy is on helping residents participate in the decision-making processes and their communities and to access services. Participation is one of the six domains covered by the Equality Human Rights Commission's measurement framework. The strategy promotes digital inclusion. There is a risk that some groups may feel excluded but there is a range of mitigations in place to address this. All resident groups will benefit from the strategy.
72. The Resident Engagement for High-Rise Buildings Strategy positively impacts groups with protected characteristics by seeking to improve accessibility, ensure engagement activities are representative of those most impacted, promoting community cohesion and improving understanding of residents. All resident groups will benefit from this strategy.

Summary of risk assessment

73. There are no risks in implementing the recommendations but there are significant risks if both strategies are not in place in terms of meeting obligations set out in the regulatory consumer standards and the Building Safety Act.

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – BCP Homes Governance Review

Appendix 2 – Governance Review Implementation Plan

Appendix 3 - Resident Engagement and Communication Strategy

Appendix 4 – Resident Engagement and Communication Delivery Plan

Appendix 5 – Resident Engagement for High-Rise Buildings Strategy