

Active voice, empowered residents, strong communities

Draft Resident Participation
Strategy 2016-19



What's inside

Get organised

4



Running local housing

6



Vibrant TRA halls

7



Quality engagement

8



Empowered and Resilient Communities

A key aim in our Camden Plan is to help communities across the borough to become more sustainable so that they can do more to help themselves and each other. For Camden, as a landlord this means a greater level of resident participation and more of the decisions about housing and neighbourhoods being taken locally in agreement with residents.

Doing this at a time when the public sector is downsizing creates some real issues and challenges. However, we believe that if residents, staff and councillors work as one team, we will be successful in delivering the right services and build stronger communities.

Our strategy sets out a framework for building empowered and resilient communities. This document describes what empowerment looks like and describes the ways that Camden tenants and leaseholders can make their communities great places to live.

To
support

...this document we will produce an annual action plan showing how we will be working with residents to build empowered communities across Camden.



How Camden residents can get involved in making your neighbourhood a better place to live

- Resident groups that give you a say
- Set up a gardening club
- Hold community events and fun days
- Scrutinise services
- Work with Camden to develop estate plans
- Manage where you live
- Do it yourself and get cash back
- Run your TRA hall
- Have your say, your way



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Eddie from Ingestre Estate Gardening Club says:

I've met quite a few new people since I've been working with the gardening club here, it's been great way to get to know the neighbours better.

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The winner of the under 16 category in the 2014 Camden in Focus photography competition

Get organised and get things done

Tenants & Residents Associations (TRAs)

You can join or set up a tenants and residents association (TRA). A TRA is a group of people who live in the same area and work together to represent the views of all tenants and/or home owners in their area to help make their neighbourhood a better place to live.

Camden provide funding, support and training to more than 100 TRAs in the borough.

Find out if there is a TRA near you and how you can get involved. If there isn't one, talk to them about setting one up or check out the Camden website. There are some free training programmes to give you the support and skills you need.

Contact **TP@camden.gov.uk**



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Camden Association of Street Properties (CASP) Chair Andrew Pierce says

CASP was formed in 2004 to represent the 6,000 Tenants and Leaseholders living in Camden Council street properties. Members have common aims and concerns and represent members in discussion with Camden covering issues like repairs, capital works, housing management, etc. CASP's committee meets monthly and communicates with residents through borough-wide meetings and newsletters.

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The Studholme TRA experience

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Studholme Court TRA, Chair Eddie Hanson says:

I recently completed my MBA in sales and marketing and saw this as an opportunity to help my community with my skills. I discussed the need to form a TRA for Studholme Court with my housing officer and the Resident Participation Team. The Council supported me to consult with our 53 residents. The feedback I got was very encouraging. “I felt the TRA would bring our community together, give us the opportunity to address common challenges and most importantly work with the Council to achieve goals. The support we have had in forming our TRA has been overwhelming.



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Castle Road young people and TRA committee members, pleased with their Walls on Walls project.



Kiln Place TRA Hall, before and after

Make a difference to resident's lives across the borough

District Management Committees (DMCs)

Each quarter, Camden TRAs send representatives along to one of the 5 District Management Committees in the Borough. DMC membership means that you are able to influence at a high level, housing policy, service delivery and area improvement. The Cabinet Member for Housing's presence at meetings, means that the views of DMCs are heard at Cabinet level.

The District Management Committee Experience



Fran Heron, Camden Town District Management Committee Chair says:

Despite its imperfections, I have a longstanding involvement with the formal tenant movement in Camden. I believe that Camden's five area based District Management Committees (DMCs) offer an opportunity for elected reps to work in partnership with LBC to improve the quality of life for many of its tenants in terms of improved services and value for money. The DMCs also provide a unique opportunity to help influence borough wide housing policy decisions and to hold Camden to account for implementing it's commitments.



Savings for the community

Community cashback

You can earn cash for your community by managing services like cleaning or grass-cutting. A community cashback agreement is a win-win. For the Council it can mean things go better because we have satisfied tenants who care about their home and environment.

For tenants it means up to £3,000 to help you get started. You can get more information about community cashback from

NFTMO (www.nftmo.com) or TPAS (www.tenantcentral.org.uk/community-cashback).



The Russell Chambers experience

The Russell Chambers Residents Association in Camden were the first in the country to sign a community cashback agreement in July 2013. They have been delivering improved cleaning services to the shared spaces of their flats. 94% of the residents voted to continue the arrangement in a recent survey.



DMC funded gardening work at St Paul's Crescent applied for by Camden Square TRA

Running local housing services the way you want

Tenant Management Organisations

Nearly 1,000 households in Camden are run by tenant management organisations. There is a high level of satisfaction amongst TMO residents. Better still, if they make savings, they can spend them in the community. The Government have recently made the process easier, so many more tenants can take up their Right to Manage.



Clarence Way residents voted to establish a TMO in 2015

The Abbey Road TMO experience



Mike Forde, Abbey Road TMO Chair says:

Our TMO, Abbey Road Housing Co-operative has been operating for over 24 years. Our success is due to residents and staff working together to devise and deliver excellent local housing services which reflect the needs of the estate. Over the years we have managed to make efficiency savings from our allowances which we have used on estate improvements and social activities creating a sense of belonging and stronger community



Working together to make improvements



Camden Housing Resident Scrutiny Group (CHRSRG)

Thirteen tenants and leaseholders from across Camden meet monthly to scrutinise housing services and make improvement recommendations to senior managers and the Cabinet Member for Housing. Once agreed, recommendations are implemented and progress monitored.

The scrutineers experience



Camden Housing Resident Scrutiny Group Chair Richard Walker says:

I joined the scrutiny group because I wanted to contribute to improving the service provided by Camden for leaseholders and tenants. We work with representative groups of residents to make sure that the Council is meeting tenants' and leaseholders' needs and providing value for money, we also look for areas where money might be being wasted. Over the past year we've reviewed the visits that housing officers make to new tenants six weeks after they move in, and we've also reviewed the housing complaints process.



Scrutiny Group

Vibrant TRA halls, great neighbourhoods

TRA Halls

Camden has over 70 TRA halls and community rooms. Our vision for them is that they are well used, well maintained, well run and open to everyone in the community.

They are already a wonderful community resource to host meetings events and clubs, but by rolling out wifi we aim to expand their possible use as venues for such as homework clubs, advice surgeries and community training.



Rita Thorpe, treasurer of the Kiln Place TRA said

Kiln Place TRA hall is a thriving community resource in the heart of our estate. Apart from being a meeting place for the TRA and DMC meeting we run fun day events, coffee mornings for elderly residents and fund-raising events on a regular basis. The hall can also be hired for children's parties. "Having recently been refurbished, the hall looks brilliant on the outside and inside now with a new roof, new lighting and external wall installation. It's given it a new lease of life"



Welcoming the voice of experience

Sheltered Housing Forum

Every two months each sheltered scheme sends two representatives to the Sheltered Housing Forum. The group meets in order to provide a forum to involve residents of Camden Council's sheltered housing in the future development of the service, and an opportunity for staff and councillors to inform and consult members about proposed plans and changes which might affect sheltered tenants.

Get involved:
camden.gov.uk/tp



Gordon Thirley co-chair of the Sheltered Forum says

I have been involved in the sheltered housing forum for the past 8 years during which time I have seen many changes. It is important that we (the representatives) are able to listen to our fellow tenant's worries and convey them to the panel and throw them open into the forum for discussion and hopefully resolve them. I have and do still at the age of 83 enjoy my work with the council and recommend it to all who can contribute



Consistently high quality engagement

Engaged and informed

This Resident Participation strategy demonstrates Camden's commitment towards empowering residents and local decision making about housing services. Our recognised resident groups provide great a forum for us to consult and obtain feedback about services, however we recognise that we do not have TRAs on all of our estates and that many residents prefer to offer their views to Camden personally.

This Strategy therefore fits within a wider approach to engagement at Camden, in which we offer a broad range of ways to give your views, whether face to face, by phone in writing or online.

Our aim is that all tenants and leaseholders will receive a consistently high quality of engagement from housing and other related Council services.

We will additionally ensure that you are always informed about how your input has influenced our decision making.

There are some free training programmes to give you the support and skills you need. Contact the Tenant Participation Service tp@camden.gov.uk.

