

Count Me In: Involvement and Communities Strategy 2019 - 2022

**Related Policy / Procedure:
Housing and Support Strategy and Development
and Regeneration Strategy**

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1. Executive Summary

Our Count Me In Strategy for 2019 to 2022 sets out Swan's approach to Resident Involvement, Community Development, and Corporate Social Responsibility including Social Value.

This Strategy enables Swan to meet its co-regulation requirements and ensures that it can respond effectively to the items identified through the Governments Green Paper on Social Housing, the National Housing Federations (NHF) Together with Tenants and the Hackitt Review.

The Strategy aims to improve Swan's residents' life chances, to help build vibrant and sustainable communities and to help create places that our residents can call home. Its actions to achieve this are set out in the delivery plan in Appendix 1.

The Strategy has four key areas of operation:

- Championing our residents' voice
- Somewhere to feel at home
- Fulfilling your potential
- Giving something back

The Strategy is presented in three clear sections:

Where we are now:

This section provides an overview of previous performance and sets out the requirements for change.

Where we want to be:

This section sets out what our focus should be for the coming three years and how this links to and supports the objectives of the Corporate Strategy.

How we are going to get there:

This section sets out how the aims of the Strategy will be delivered, any financial or equality and diversity impacts and the delivery plan of how the strategy will be implemented.

2. Where we are now

2.1 Background

The Social Value and Engagement Strategy was developed in 2016. Since then there have been significant changes in both the Resident Involvement and Community Development (RICD) landscapes. The development of the Social Housing Green Paper and the Hackitt Review have raised the profile of effective RICD and the importance of ensuring that residents voices and concerns are heard and acted upon. The NHF's development of Together with Tenants is also helping to place further support behind the resident's voice.

Swan has always been passionate about the delivery of RICD and ensuring that our residents views are captured, listened to and acted upon.

This review of our Strategy has given us the opportunity to look at all our RICD delivery to make sure that we are offering the best that we possibly can. This will ensure that we are being innovative and inclusive in our delivery and that we are in the best possible position to respond to and address these new standards whilst aiming to lead the field.

Progress against the 2016-20 Strategy

The 2016-20 Social Value and Engagement Strategy focused upon supporting delivery of Swan's Corporate Strategy. Below are key highlights of what has been achieved through the last three years:

- The team secured £110,162 of external funding to support Community Development delivery, exceeding the target set in the strategy by £30,162.
- 586 individuals took part in our Employment and Training programmes with 130 of those moving into either employment or further education at the end of their courses.
- We helped to secure £300,000 from the Big Lottery for a partnership project with the Bromley by Bow Centre, Tower Hamlets Homes and St Andrews Health Partnership called East Exchange.
- 160 individuals passed through our digital skills programmes
- We delivered 84 community development projects aimed at improving the life chances of our residents
- In total 5,498 individuals benefitted from the projects that we delivered.
- Since 2016 our Scrutiny Panel delivered a total of six reviews and tackled a range of subjects including, Tenancy Fraud and Grounds Maintenance, helping to improve business delivery.
- In 2018/19, 677 residents took part in our resident involvement activities.
- We delivered three Swanfest events enabling us to consult with 762 of our residents on subject matters that were important to them, such as Swan's digital journey, and the development of our Count Me In Strategy.

2.2 Drivers for Change

Social Housing Green Paper – A new deal for Social Housing

This document was published in August 2018 and focussed upon five key areas:

- ensuring homes are safe and decent
- effective resolution of complaints
- empowering residents and strengthening the regulator
- tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities
- expanding supply and supporting home ownership.

Legislative and Regulatory requirements

The Count Me In Strategy takes account of key legislation such as:

- The Localism Act 2011
- The Welfare Reform Act 2012
- The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
- The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England

- The Digital Skills and Inclusion Policy April 2017

Hackitt review

Published in May 2018, this review was carried out following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire and looked to put in place recommendations to ensure that a tragedy of this scale could not occur again. Although the review focused upon fire safety, resident voice was a clear theme and the document put forward several suggestions including:

- Reassurance
- Access to information
- Resident involvement in decision making
- The role of resident associations

Together with Tenants

The changing landscape for RICD has led the National Housing Federation to launch its Together with Tenants campaign and draft charter. Together with Tenants builds upon its original Tenants Offer and focuses upon their ambition to build a collaborative, balanced relationship between housing associations and their tenants and residents.

Swan has taken the decision to become an early adopter and as part of this will:

- Work with tenants, staff and the Board / Operations Committee to consider how the charter can be implemented
- Will champion Together with Tenants with political stakeholders
- Endorse the Together with Tenants draft plan with other associations and across our networks.

3. Where we want to be

Our vision

Our vision is to create communities where people feel at home, and that enable them to thrive and to reach their full potential. By delivering this our residents will be empowered, have a voice, feel listened to and be able to see the impact that they can have.

3.1 Our Focus

We believe that in order to deliver our vision our Strategy needs to focus around four key areas of:

- Championing our residents' voice
- Somewhere to feel at home
- Giving something back
- Fulfilling your potential

3.2 Strategy objectives

The Count Me In Strategy has been developed to align with Swan's Corporate Strategy so that it can contribute to the delivery of our corporate mission. Swan is passionate about Social Value

and enhancing its customers lives and this is evidenced specifically through the Corporate Strategy themes of Customer, Growth, Innovation and Commercial. Count Me In's objectives have been developed to respond directly to these. This Strategy's objectives are set out below. The direct links to the Corporate Strategy are shown in the action plan attached to the Strategy.

Somewhere to feel at home

- Build community cohesion, by empowering residents to be more active in their local communities
- Deliver community facilities that enhance our local communities and are financially viable
- Become recognised as a leader and deliverer of best practice in our resident involvement and community development work.
- Support our Regeneration and Development team to secure new regeneration and development projects.

Championing our residents' voice

- Continue to build our digital engagement offer for residents
- Deliver upon the recommendations from the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants Charter, the Social Housing Green Paper and Hackitt Review
- Continue to meet our regulatory requirements in RSH Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

Giving something back

- Effectively capture the Swan Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) offer
- Develop volunteering opportunities for staff and residents that help to build stronger communities

Fulfilling your potential

- Provide a strategic and co-ordinated approach to employment and training that enables us to develop a Swan "offer" for residents

Somewhere to feel at home

A sense of place is incredibly important, and we know that by developing communities where people feel at home we can start to enhance our residents' lives. We want our residents to be given opportunities that enable them to thrive. We will empower them to make decisions about the projects that happen in their locality and will use activities such as participatory budgeting and asset-based community development to facilitate this.

We will deliver community facilities that enhance the local area by offering a range of activities that help to increase opportunities to meet other residents, learn a new skill or simply to take part in an activity that you enjoy. The centres will be an asset and will provide income to support our Community Development delivery.

We will look to bring communities together by celebrating similarities and will actively target social isolation through activities such as our Warm in Winter and Christmas Kindness campaigns.

We will work alongside our Development and Regeneration teams to help form strong communities that are actively engaged in shaping the development and regeneration that takes place in their locality.

Championing our residents' voice

It's important that our residents engage, give us feedback and help to shape services. We want to strengthen our residents voice to ensure that we are in the best position to respond to actions and themes that come out of initiatives such as Together with Tenants and the Social Housing Green Paper. We believe that we can enhance our involvement and engagement offer to capture a wider more representative range of our residents whilst also making it easier and more convenient to be involved.

We want to be aspirational in our engagement opportunities whilst leading the way for other providers and being a beacon of good practice.

We will enable our residents to give us feedback at a time and place that is convenient to them, on subject matters that they are interested about. They will be able to see the impact that their engagement has made and talk about the difference that they have made. We will ensure this happens by listening to our residents, capturing their feedback effectively and feeding back to them in ways that meet their needs.

Giving something back

Social purpose lives through Swan's core business and this is supported by a dedicated staff team who also want to make a difference and give something back to Swan communities. Through this new Strategy we will define and measure the total Swan CSR offer and will look to enhance this by providing a range of volunteering opportunities for staff and residents that enable them to have a direct impact upon our communities.

Fulfilling your potential

We will continue our commitment to employment and training but will develop and enhance our offer to residents. We will look to further increase our partners and partnerships and will utilise these relationships to the benefit of our residents, providing them with employment opportunities in their localities.

We will also look to remove barriers to employment and training by providing support and guidance around welfare benefits, CV writing and interview techniques.

We will look to exploit the opportunities that exist through our regeneration schemes and will actively track the local labour impact that we have.

We will develop bite sized courses that build confidence and inspire further learning, whilst also looking to support those who want to develop their own businesses and explore self-employment and entrepreneurship. We want employment and training to become accessible, fun and part of the unique Swan offer.

3.3 What will success look like?

Success in the delivery of this Strategy will enable us to meet our regulatory requirements (The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard (Key priorities are listed in Appendix 2)) whilst also allowing us to become leaders in the field of Resident Involvement and Community

Development. Successful delivery of the Strategy will improve our customers life chances and will build cohesive communities where people want to live and call home.

3.4 Outcomes

Our new Strategy will enable the Resident Involvement and Community Development Team to contribute effectively to the Swan Corporate Strategy and support Swan's Development and Regeneration Strategy. It will provide delivery that enhances our current resident offer and will ensure that we can meet our regulatory requirements.

Our key measures of success will be:

- Meet the targets set out in the Count Me In delivery plan.
- Achieve recognition for the RICD work that the team delivers.
- Achieve Community Development Grant Funding of £100,000 from external sources.
- Deliver a 4:1 ratio upon matched funding from partner organisations.
- Scrutiny Panel deliver two scrutiny reviews per annum with recommendations considered and implemented.

4. How we are going to get there

Delivery

In order to achieve our goals and to meet our targets we need to establish our implementation plan. Our approach to achieving this is set out below:

4.1 People

We will continue to invest in our staff by offering tailored training to meet their needs, sharing knowledge and best practice, watching and learning from the external market, including those outside of the housing sector. We will offer opportunities for staff to grow within the business and will develop career pathways for RICD team members.

We will raise the profile of the team through awards submissions and effective internal communications.

4.2 Systems

We will look to digitalise our processes to ensure that we can refine our services and make best use of our resources. We will look to develop a stronger digital offer for our customers, that enables them to meet virtually and to engage with us effectively.

We will continue to use systems such as TP Tracker allow us to track our successes and outcomes, whilst also being accountable for the work that we deliver.

We will look to implement digital options where possible to reduce cost and support the digital inclusion agenda, but will ensure that we work in partnership with customers and colleagues before implementation

4.3 Processes

We will develop and carry out baseline surveys of our communities undergoing regeneration. We will utilise these to help shape the regeneration moving forward, and to develop three year rolling delivery plans for each regeneration site. We will consult effectively and offer opportunities to shape and scrutinise our services to all residents. We will look to increase the ways and means through which residents can engage and will support this with incentives that help to drive up engagement.

We will be accountable in our delivery and will ensure that we can report effectively across need, cost, inputs, outputs, outcomes and long term change. We will utilise recognised reporting methodologies such as HACT and SROI to ensure that we are accountable.

4.4 Partnership

We will continue to build on our approach to partnership working. We will look to extend and strengthen existing relationships and look to engage with sectors, and partners we have not previously engaged with.

We will look to develop relationships that enhance and add value where possible, whilst placing ourselves as the preferred partner to others.

4.5 Financial and Performance Management

We will continue to ensure that we meet our financial targets. We will develop a suite of Key Performance Indicators and Local Performance Indicators that allow us to monitor and measure impact and we will report on these accordingly. We will continue to utilise Social Return On Investment and will look to develop this reporting to capture the work delivered through our regeneration and development partners.

4.6 Value for Money

We will continue to assess our services for value for money. We will ensure that our projects and initiatives are based on need and that they support the delivery of the corporate, housing and support and count me in strategies' priorities. We will understand the cost of delivery and will look to procure services and initiatives that deliver the best possible service.

4.7 Equality and Diversity

We will ensure that equality and diversity remain at the heart of our service delivery by ensuring that we maintain knowledge and understanding of our customers through baseline surveys of our communities. We will track engagement and involvement opportunities and adapt projects and initiatives to be as inclusive as possible. We will carry out Equality Analysis as required.

4.8 Monitoring

- The Strategy will be monitored via:
- the Housing Service Improvement Meetings
- the Resident Consultative Committees

- Operations Committee
- Resident Involvement Impact Assessment
- The Equality Scheme through the production of the annual Equality and Diversity report

4.9 Links to other Strategies

- Corporate Strategy
- Housing and Support Strategy
- Value for Money Strategy
- Regeneration and Development Strategy
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy

5. ACTION PLAN

Appendix1

Corporate Strategy Objectives	Count me in Strategy Objectives	Action	Lead	By when	Outcome (Measure of Success)
Customer	Somewhere to feel at home	Develop a rolling three-year community development plan which has geographical focus and supports the work of our regeneration teams	CDM	March 20 – annually	Actions identified, and embedded in the Community Development delivery plan
		Develop an annual programme of activities aimed at reducing social isolation	CDM	March 20 – annually	Annual programme developed and actions in place in the Community Development delivery plan.
		Explore utilising participatory budgeting and look to expand usage across all major Swan estates	CDM	June 21	Participatory budgeting in place and being used to fund local projects
		Roll out our model of Participatory City to estates undergoing regeneration	CDM	October 20	Participatory City model live on four estates.
		Develop a Swan Community Development offer that is applicable across all residents and locations. Work alongside the Supported Housing team to roll out	H of RI & CD and H of SH	Jan 21	Programme of joint projects developed and advertised to residents
		Continue with our commissioning model with partners to enhance the community development and CSR delivery	H of RI & CD	March 20	Further partners signed up for delivery and projects taking place
		Utilise our consortiums of external partners to enable Swan to access larger funding streams	CDM	March 22	Successful bids submitted

Corporate Strategy Objectives	Count me in Strategy Objectives	Action	Lead	By when	Outcome (Measure of Success)
Customer	Somewhere to feel at home	Develop digital stories around our customer base, that help to showcase the expertise and experiences of those living in social housing to help tackle the stigma around social housing	H of RI & CD	Sept 2020	Digital stories created
		Carry out and publish the annual impact assessment. Utilise the results to help shape future delivery	RI & SUO	April 20 – annually	Impact assessment created and published
		Deliver a ratio of 4:1 on matched funding across all community development projects	CDM	March 2022	Matched funding reported through Performance Pack
Innovation	Somewhere to feel at home	Tell our story, by using social media, external and internal communications channels to raise awareness of the work that the team delivers upon	H of RI & CD RI&SUO	March 21	Increased number of articles on social media, Swan's website and Cygnet
		Utilise awards as an opportunity to share best practise and raise our profile as a leader in the field	H of RI & CD	March 20	Award submissions developed and entered. Feedback reviewed
Growth	Somewhere to feel at home	Facilitate engagement opportunities in partnership with the regeneration and development teams ensuring robust evidencing of consultation	RI&SUO and CDM	Ongoing	Successful delivery of resident engagement events
		Support the regeneration and development teams in their bid processes	H of RI & CD	Ongoing	Evidence provided, and bids are successful

Corporate Strategy Objectives	Count me in Strategy Objectives	Action	Lead	By when	Outcome (Measure of Success)
Growth	Somewhere to feel at home	Create digital stories of the impact of the work that the CD team deliver to support bid applications	H of RI & CD	June 20	Digital stories developed and available for regeneration team to access
		Deliver against our regeneration promises for both Purfleet and Southend on Sea – Better Queensway	H of RI & CD	March 2022	Delivery milestones are achieved
Commercial	Somewhere to feel at home	Secure £100k of external funding to support community development activity	CDM	March 2022	Funding received and accounted for
		Ensure that our community facilities generate value through effective partnering. Monitor and measure impact and report both SROI – performance against income/ expenditure targets	H of RI & CD	March 20 – annually	Performance reported in Performance Pack
		Increase community hub usage to generate an income to support our community development delivery	H of RI & CD	March 2022	Operating surplus achieved
		Assess Social Return on Investment (SROI) for key projects. Review our key community development projects and publish outcomes through the annual VFM Statement	H of RI & CD	April 20 – annually	SROI reported in the VFM Statement
Customer	Championing our residents' voice	Develop a programme of digital training and support to help residents' transition across to the new tenant portal	R&SUIO	March 20 – annually	Digital inclusion action plan developed and actions embedded in CD delivery plan

Corporate Strategy Objectives	Count me in Strategy Objectives	Action	Lead	By when	Outcome (Measure of Success)
Customer	Championing our residents' voice	Develop a programme of digital training and support to help residents' transition across to the new tenant portal	R&SUIO	March 20 – annually	Digital inclusion action plan developed and actions embedded in CD delivery plan
		Promote and sign up residents to the new tenant portal	R&SUIO	August 19	Tenants details gathered ready for portal launch
		Develop innovative engagement options for our younger clients to ensure that they are able to have their say and find their voice	R&SUIO	August 21	Increase in numbers of younger involved residents
		Programme of digital engagement options identified and being utilised by residents, including virtual meetings	R&SUIO	October 19	Virtual meetings being offered and carried out
		Ensure that we effectively consult with and capture the feedback of residents going through regeneration and development processes	R&SUIO and CDM	On-going	Feedback utilised to support the planning process and applications.
		Strengthen the opportunities for residents to be involved in decision making around services that directly impact upon them	H of RI & CD	March 20	Menu of opportunities developed and shared with involved residents
		Work with Residents Associations to understand and develop a standard for feedback, that provides transparency and openness	R&SUIO	March 20	Standard in place

Corporate Strategy Objectives	Count me in Strategy Objectives	Action	Lead	By when	Outcome (Measure of Success)
Customer	Championing our residents' voice	Evidence resident impact, across the whole business by capturing and mapping involvement feedback effectively. Utilise this to report upon at Heads of Service meetings	H of RI & CD	April 20	Reporting delivered at Heads of Service meeting
		Formulate in partnership with residents and service users how Swan can effectively deliver against the NHF Together with Tenants' charter. Develop this feedback into an action plan	RI&SUO	September 19	Plan in place and being delivered against
		Support the Residents' Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise performance and processes, identify areas for improvement. Complete service reviews and implement outcomes	RI&SUO	March 20 – annually	Scrutiny Panel complete two service reviews annually
		Develop an action plan to address any gaps identified through future recommendations following the Green Paper on Social Housing	H of RI & CD	September 20	Plan in place and being delivered against
Customer	Giving something back	Develop a programme of volunteering opportunities for staff that enable them to work alongside our communities to enhance community cohesion and Swan's profile	H of RI & CD and H of PED	April 20	Volunteering opportunities in place
		Provide volunteering opportunities for residents that help to enhance their CV's and help to build community cohesion	E & TM	Sept 20	Volunteering opportunities in place

Corporate Strategy Objectives	Count me in Strategy Objectives	Action	Lead	By when	Outcome (Measure of Success)
Innovation	Fulfilling your potential	Continue to work in partnership with our regeneration and development teams to provide a programme of apprenticeship opportunities for residents to help meet our local labour targets	E&TM	March 20 – annually	Programme developed Residents identified and recruited to local labour positions
		Support Swan’s Factory by developing a “pipeline” of potential apprenticeship candidates through our work with local colleges including PROCAT	E&TM	Dec 19	Apprenticeship course in place. Swan’s residents attending
		Develop a strategy and delivery plan for the Employment and Training group, that sets out how they will deliver Swan’s “Offer” for residents	E&TM	Dec 20	Strategy in place and being delivered against
		Develop a “prepare for work” programme that supports our residents on their pathway to employment	E&TM	March 21	Programme in place and being delivered against
		Develop links with external training providers and partner agencies to create a programme of high-quality training and employment opportunities for residents and service users	E&TM	March 20 – annually	Training programme in place by March annually

Appendix 2

Key Priorities from the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

Required Outcomes

1.1 Customer service, choice and complaints

1.1.1 Registered providers shall:

- a. provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards
- b. have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

1.2 Involvement and empowerment

1.2.1 Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- a. the formulation of their landlord's housing-related policies and strategic priorities
- b. the making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- c. the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
- d. the management of their homes, where applicable
- e. the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and
- f. agreeing local offers for service delivery.

1.3 Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

1.3.1 Registered providers shall:

- a. treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- b. demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.

Specific expectations

2.1 Customer service, choice and complaints

2.1.1 Registered providers shall provide tenants with accessible, relevant and timely information about:

- a. how tenants can access services
- b. the standards of housing services their tenants can expect
- c. how they are performing against those standards
- d. the service choices available to tenants, including any additional costs that are relevant to specific choices

- e. progress of any repairs work
- f. how tenants can communicate with them and provide feedback
- g. the responsibilities of the tenant and provider
- h. arrangements for tenant involvement and scrutiny.

2.1.2 Providers shall offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint and set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about performance against the standards, and details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. Providers shall inform tenants how they use complaints to improve their services. Registered providers shall publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints. Providers shall accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's/tenants' behalf.

2.2 Involvement and empowerment

2.2.1 Registered providers shall support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for involvement and empowerment, including by:

- a. supporting their tenants to exercise their Right to Manage or otherwise exercise housing management functions, where appropriate
- b. supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them