



Proposed Tenant Influence Framework for Homes in Somerset

September 2026

TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

Background and introduction



Tpas were asked to work with tenants and staff from Homes in Somerset (after combining with Somerset Council), to design a new Tenant Influence and Engagement Framework designed to support the new Strategic Tenant Committee deliver against its Terms of Reference.

Throughout September “discovery sessions” were held with involved tenants, uninvolved tenants and staff to identify the key ingredients for successful tenant influence and engagement from their previous experiences.

Volunteers were then invited to attend a full day session with Tpas to learn about themes from those discovery sessions, the regulator’s expectations, TPAS National Engagement Standards and best practice to design a framework that they felt would work for Homes in Somerset as a larger organisation, with its new Tenant Committee.

This report summarises those findings, draft designs from tenants and staff, and Tpas’ proposals for a new Tenant Influence and Engagement Framework for Homes in Somerset to adopt and implement.

Discovery Session Feedback



Why Tenant Influence is important

1. Influence is linked to feeling safer at home and in communities
2. Tenant influence creates accountability for staff and tenants
3. Listening must lead to action
4. Tenant influence supports learning and service improvement
5. Decision-making is stronger when more people share experiences
6. Influence depends on relationships (*“one person made a difference for me”*).

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Experiences split into two main areas:

Collective influence: scrutiny, panels, committees, estate inspections, procurement involvement and community action.

Provides collective learning and accountability

Individual influence: being believed, having personal circumstances understood, receiving a response and seeing a problem resolved.

Makes HiS feel human and trustworthy

Discovery session feedback (continued)



Themes of positive experiences

1. A significant problem was recognised (serious or personal)
2. Someone listened and took ownership
3. The response went beyond the initial issue
4. Partnership working made it possible to solve
5. The outcome changed the tenants' relationship with HiS/SC
6. Changes reinforce the value of engaging

The best examples of positive influence share a clear sequence:

Being heard → being understood → action → visible outcome → greater trust

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Key Ingredients

- Listening
- Trust and Reliability
- Empathy and Respect (Being Human)
- Action and Impact
- Inclusion and Fairness
- Working Together

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Wishes for Homes in Somerset

- Continue putting tenants first and value their views
- Remain personal and human as you grow – don't turn us into a number!
- Treat tenants as people in their homes, not customers paying for a service
- Maintain clear, honest and realistic communication.
- Deliver what you promise
- Make sure tenant influence is heard and makes a difference
- Work together
- Preserve strong relationships and local knowledge
- Make it easy for tenants to reach the right person (customer service)
- Ensure fairness and consistency across the whole county
- Maintain affordable housing
- Continue learning and improving



Defining Tenant Influence



In order for any framework to be successful it must consider both elements below. Any landlord has the responsibility to understand tenant insights from within their own data and use these to strengthen or trigger proactive tenant influence opportunities.

PROACTIVE involvement of tenants.

For example, where a tenant completes a survey, makes a complaint or engages in a formal group.



Influence that may not be conscious or proactive. This is **where an organisation will notice** the expectations, experiences or needs of tenant through analysis of data, for example

The active minority

The silent majority

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You must be able to evidence the impact



Influence
Method

A group of tenant inspectors reviews the condition of homes when they are relet

OUTPUT

Traditional approaches to tenant engagement tend to count outputs as tenants shaping services. While this is true to a degree, the real evidence comes from the impact those outputs have.

New
Process

They create a new "empty homes" or "lettings" standard

OUTPUT

Changed
Satisfaction
Level

Tenant satisfaction with their new home increases

OUTCOME

The **INFLUENCE** is in the difference it makes to tenant services

Whatever your new framework looks like, it must be supported by a process in which Homes in Somerset proactively measure the outcomes of the things that change because of tenants giving their feedback (through the framework, or through general insights).

You must be able to evidence that a service is better, and that evidence must come from tenant feedback.

Strategic Tenant Committee Responsibilities



Overseeing and recommending to the Board, decisions relating to the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards

Transparency, Influence and Accountability

Fairness and respect
of tenants
Views taken into
account
Clear information
Complaints
Handling
Tenant Scrutiny
TSMs

Tenancy

Allocations and
Lettings
Tenancy
Sustainment
Clear eviction
processes
Mutual Exchanges

Safety and Quality

Stock condition data
Decent Homes
Standard
Health and Safety
Repairs and Planned
improvements
Adaptations
Damp and Mould
Risks

Neighbourhood and Community

Safe shared spaces
Estate Management
Local cooperation
Anti-social
behaviour
Domestic abuse
risks

Competency and Conduct

Staff competency
policy
Staff Code of
Conduct

PLUS: Annual HOS Self-Assessment, assurance against the framework, approving scrutiny recommendations, performance (including TSMs and KPIs)

MAKE SURE YOUR FRAMEWORK SUPPORTS THIS GROUP, NOT DUPLICATES IT



Designs from the group

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How the design process worked



The design group were given the feedback from the discovery sessions, the regulator's expectations, influence best practice expectations, definitions of influence and outcomes, examples from other organisations (of mixed structures, sizes and geographical locations), and an outline of the Strategic Tenant Committee remit.

They worked in three smaller groups to design a framework they felt would work for Homes in Somerset, considering all the above, and presented these to the wider group with an opportunity for them to ask clarifying questions.

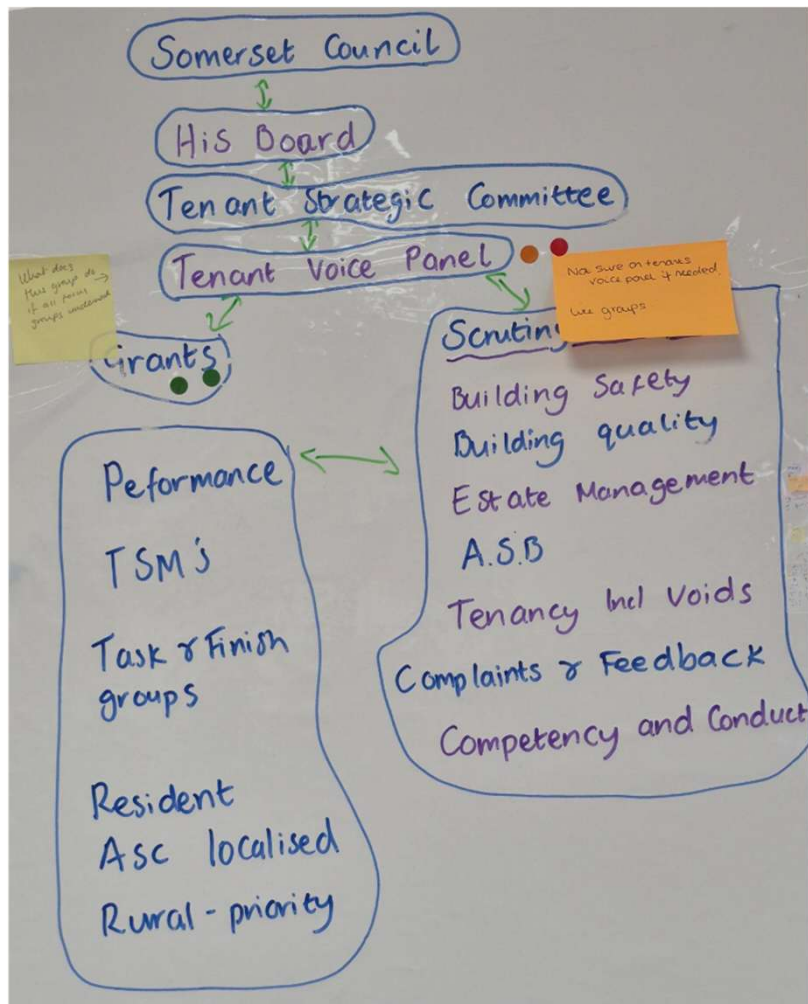
Each group then had the opportunity to review each of the other group's frameworks. They gave a green dot for the parts they felt were strongest, and an orange dot for elements that could be built on; adding some detail on a post it note.

Afterwards, we picked out the key things we should retain in the final framework.

The following pages show each design and comments, with a two proposed framework options designed by Tpas which aim to capture the strongest elements of the group's feedback whilst including choices that help Homes in Somerset to meet broader regulatory and best practice expectations.

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Design One



Not sure on tenants voice panel if needed. like groups.

What does this group do if all focus groups underneath

The Tenant Voice Panel (TVP) is the equivalent of TAG (from Somerset Council) or SIP (from Homes in Somerset). They are responsible for getting the tenant voice to the Committee and would work with the individual scrutiny groups below.

The TVP would oversee grants based on scrutiny options and would have performance, TSMs etc fed in. TARAs and local groups, particularly rural voices, would also feed in.

The wider group liked the range of scrutiny options to cover services. They questioned the purpose of the TVP, asking whether it would be needed with all the scrutiny groups, which could feed directly into the Committee to avoid duplication.

Design Two



Scrutiny should feed into
STC

Name
Needs
looking at

To much for one
focus group.

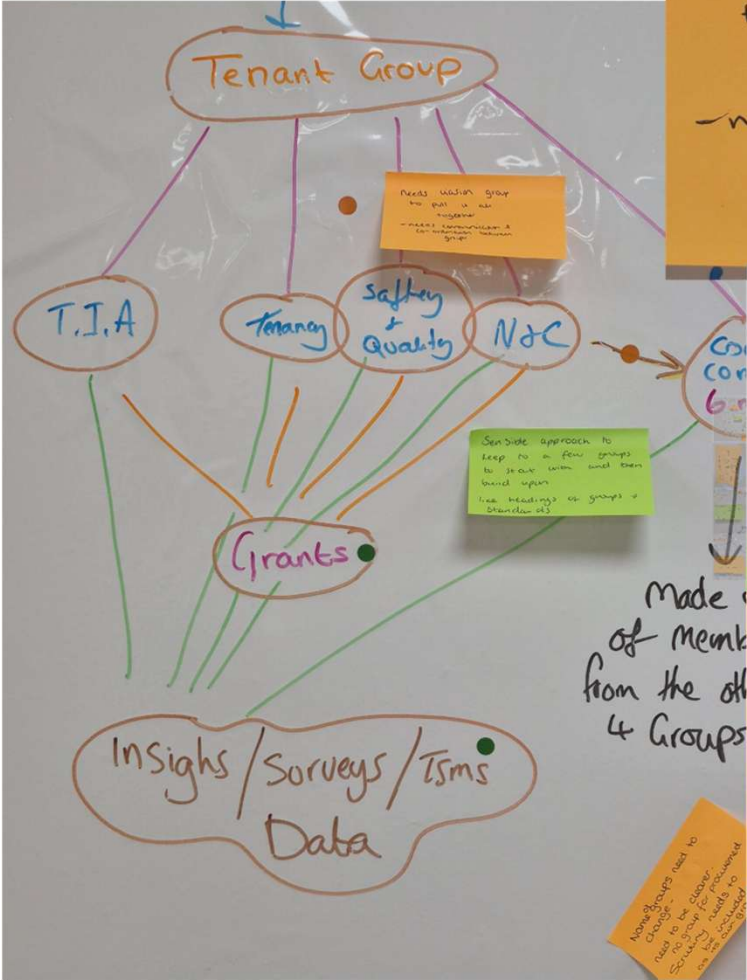


A scrutiny group would feed into the Committee, with focus groups dealing with scrutiny and their own sections (procurement, complaints etc). Task and finish groups would be ad hoc as required, for example to launch the new framework with the communications group.

Data would feed into every method and tenants, leaseholders, shared owners, rural and urban areas should all be represented.

The wider group liked the focus groups and task and finish group approaches. They felt scrutiny should feed directly into the committee and that Complaints and Customer Service was too broad for one group.

Design Three



Competence and Conduct Group (on right hand side) – 6 months. Made up of members from the other 4 main groups

Needs liaison group to pull it all together
- needs communication & co-ordination between groups

Sensible approach to keep to a few groups to start with and then build upon
like headings of groups → Standards.

Name of groups need to change -
need to be clearer.
no group for procurement
Scrutiny needs to be included as its own group.



There would be a focus group for each consumer standard that would feed into the Committee. Except for competence and conduct, which would be a task and finish approach up to sign off.

Each group would identify grants and actions from their work, and receive insights from surveys, TSM's and data relevant to their focus.

The wider group liked the grants and insights feeding into each group.

They felt there needed to be some link between all groups to co-ordinate/avoid duplication.

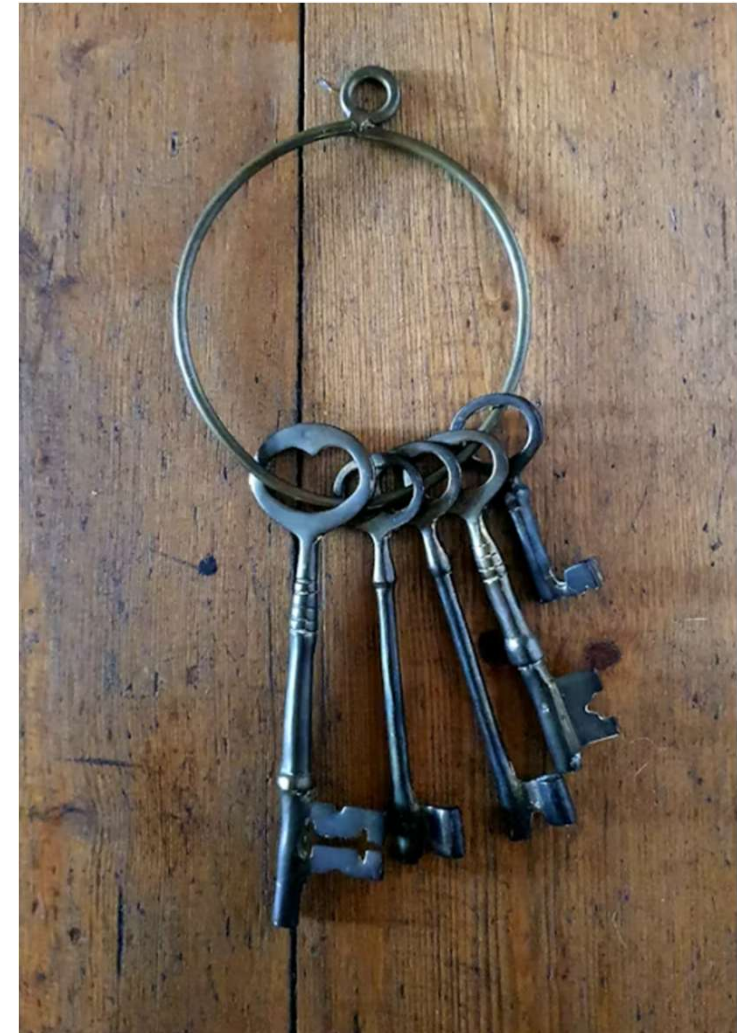
There were mixed views on the titles of the groups. Procurement and scrutiny were felt to be missing.

Key Elements To Keep

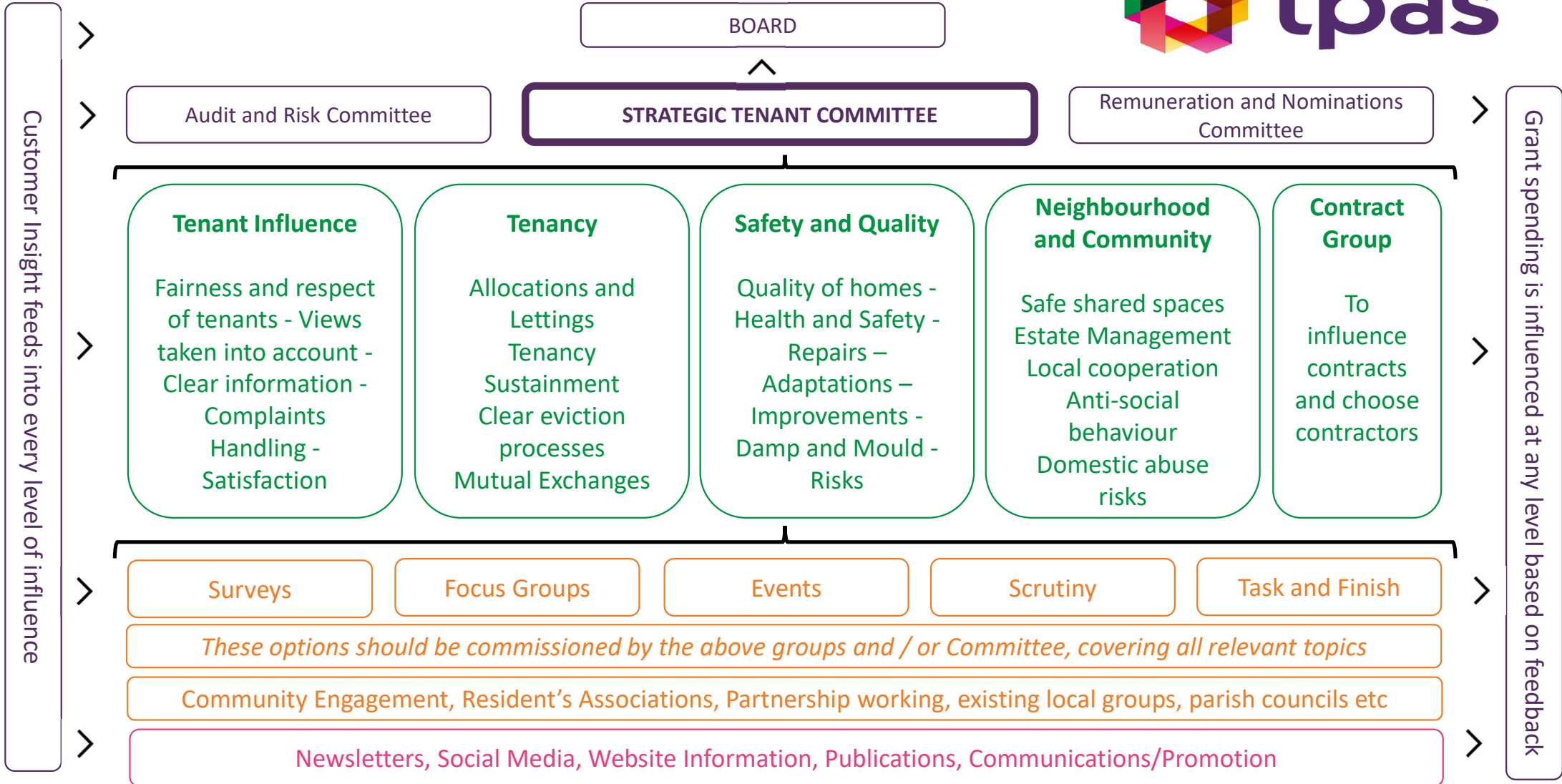
After all feedback, the group were asked to confirm what they felt the key elements were that we needed to keep within the final framework. They said:

- Simplicity / Transparency
- Flexibility (from HiS for focus groups)
- Allow for it to be a moving project (it may change)
- Ensuring appropriate knowledge and/or lived experience in each method
- It must be realistic to recruit to

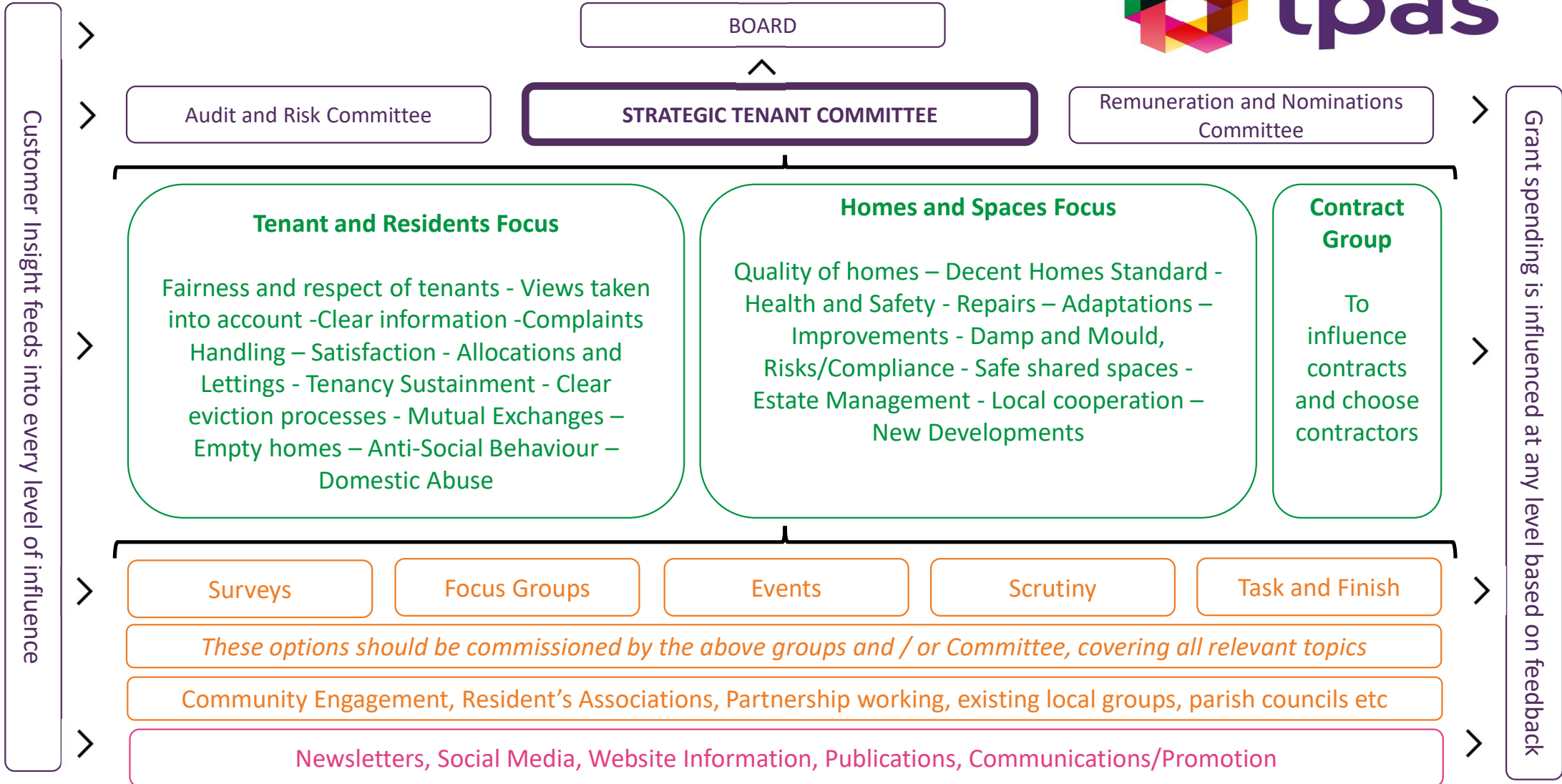
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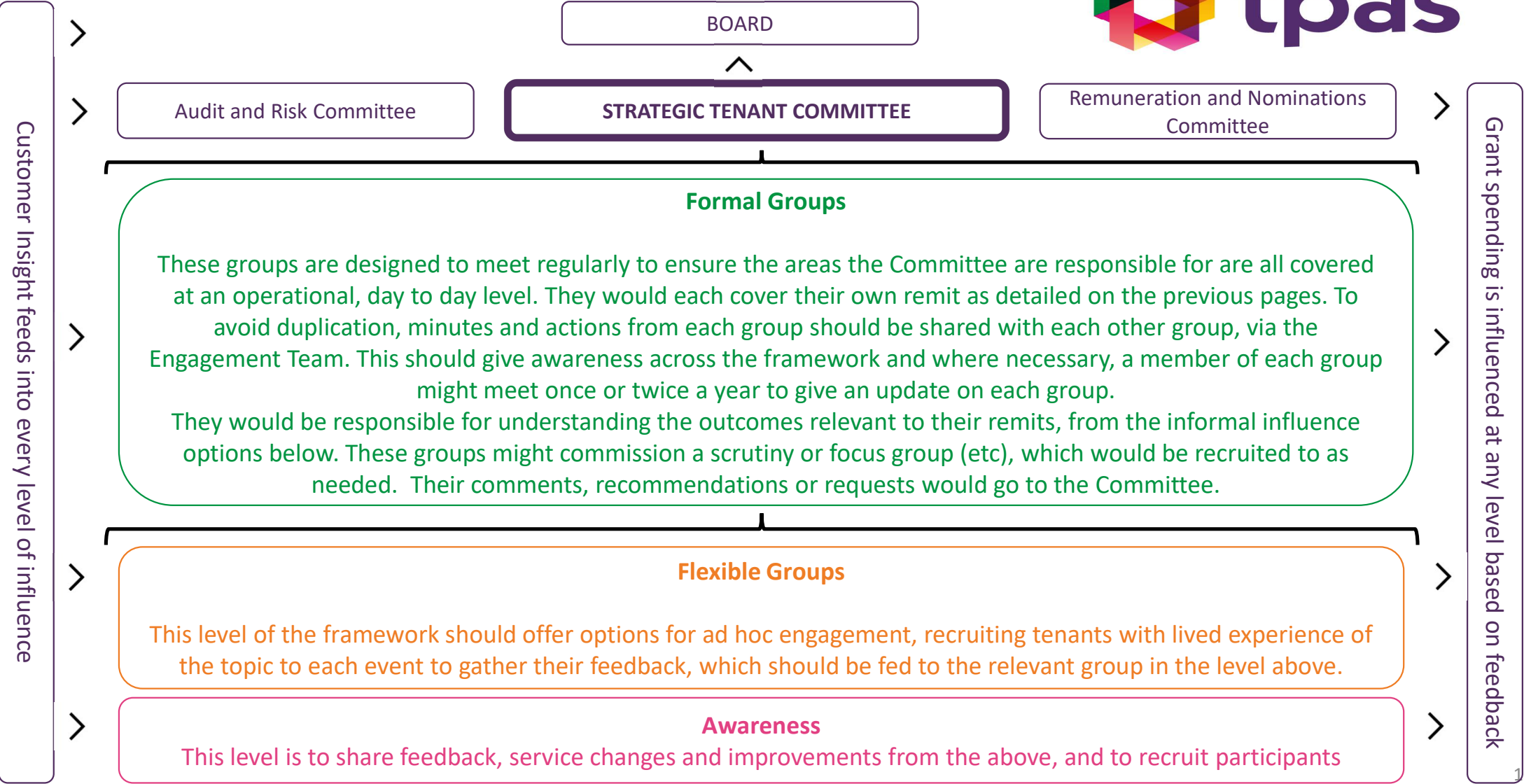
Proposed Option One



Proposed Option Two



Options Explained



Considerations for next steps

The options will be shared with the Design group, and afterwards with all tenants for comments for the Executive Team and Board to consider before the final framework is agreed.

Once agreed, Homes in Somerset must create a terms of reference (with tenants) for each formal group which confirms it's make up, frequency and duration of meetings, and it's confirmed remit. Procedures for the Engagement Team should also be created. Frequency, duration and membership may differ between groups depending on its scope and priority.

Flexible options will not need to be recruited to until they are needed, reducing the need to find a high number of tenants, leaseholders and shared owners to take part in the first wave.

It's recommended the success of the framework is reviewed after its first year to make sure its meeting the needs of Homes in Somerset; particularly to give assurance that all voices in all areas and characteristics are being heard.

