

Agenda Item No:

Report To: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting: 25th January 2024

Report Title: Tenant Engagement Strategy

Report Author: Joanne Burns
Job Title: Tenant Engagement Officer

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Bill Barrett
Portfolio Holder for: Housing



Summary: The report presents the Tenant Engagement Strategy of Ashford Borough Council. The strategy sets out a clear organisational approach and commitment to tenant engagement in the borough. It sets out an action plan for the Housing Service to ensure that we meet the needs of our tenants and Regulator of Social Housing standards.

Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: All Wards

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to approve Tenant Engagement Strategy for Ashford Borough Council**

Strategy Overview: The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 sets regulatory requirements that all registered providers must adhere to, to drive improvements in the quality of housing and housing services for tenants. The Regulator of Social Housing has set standards and a Code of Practice for registered housing providers to ensure that they engage with tenants, taking their views into account in decision-making and about how their housing services are delivered.

The Strategy sets out the council's vision of "engagement before action" – involving our tenants by asking for their collaboration and input ahead of decisions being made about their housing service.

It presents our core commitments to improve communication and interaction with tenants, strengthen participation and empower our tenants, and be accountable and open to being challenged.

The strategy as presented will guide elected members, officers, and tenants in the role of the Engagement Team and the action plan to ensure the voice of tenants is heard. It

also ensures the Council has effective tenant engagement in place to meet its legislative and regulatory obligations.

Ashford Borough Council founded the Ashford Citizens Panel in 2023 seeking all residents' views and scrutiny, not just tenants living in our properties. It is our desire that our tenant involvement, driven by the engagement strategy, will help champion tenants within this wider remit.

Financial Implications:

The strategy and the rollout of its action plan will have relatively low financial and resource implications. Training is likely required to support engaged tenants and a variety of engagement communications and events are required.

Legal Implications:
*Text agreed by
Principal Litigator on
02/01/2024*

Although there is no statutory duty to have a Tenant Engagement Strategy, the adoption of one aids to guide Ashford Borough Council meet engagement standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing and set out to all officers, members, and the public how the authority will consider and deal with such matters. As such it appears pragmatic to maintain such a strategy, and from time to time review this when there is change to guidance, legislation or case law.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

See Attached

Data Protection Impact Assessment:

N/A

Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):

Although there is no statutory duty to have an engagement strategy, we do have a regulatory obligation under standards set by the Regulator for Social Housing to engage with and listen to tenants. A structured programme of engagement roll out ensures we can be held to account to make that happen. It is important to meet standards set by the Regulator, as it can take action against breaches.

The strategy sets out clear steps for how we will encourage and evolve tenant involvement in our housing service.

By not having a strategy we risk not considering the wider implications such as how decisions impact on our tenants.

Sustainability Implications:

None

Other Material Implications:

None

Exempt from Publication:

No

**Background
Papers:**

None

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Report Title: Tenant Engagement Strategy

Introduction and Background

1. Tenant Engagement is a broad term used to describe working with tenants to co-produce effective services that meet a variety of needs. It is about empowering tenants, residents, and communities to work with their housing provider to achieve shared aims.
2. Informal engagement already occurs daily whenever we speak, meet, or communicate with our tenants. However, there is no formal framework of how to ensure they have an effective voice and provide opportunities for them to participate and influence their housing service.
3. The Council should work in partnership with tenants to actively listen and take their views into account during decision-making about how services are delivered. It is also imperative that the Council meets engagement standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing under the Social Housing (Regulations) Act 2023.
4. There are currently two Tenant Engagement Officers, but there is no overarching strategy for the authority for them to follow. Therefore, the Tenant Engagement Team and Housing have worked together to produce this.
5. The primary aim of the strategy is to demonstrate a clear organisational approach and commitment to tenant engagement within the borough. It sets out an action plan and the obligations of the Tenant Engagement Team and the Housing Service as a whole.
6. The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the council's Tenant Engagement Strategy and recommend for approval by the Council.
7. A draft strategy, as presented in Appendix 1 highlights the aims, commitments and actions proposed.

Proposal

8. The strategy clearly sets out the Council's commitment to tenant engagement as well identifying approaches for this to take place.
9. The strategy includes the following elements:
 - a. Sets out our vision and commitments;
 - b. Identifies our guiding principles;
 - c. Defines an action plan for rolling out effective engagement; and
 - d. Identifies ways for us to engage, and for tenants to engage with us.

10. The Chief Executive is appointed as having overall responsibility for the strategy with oversight being provided by Members.

Equalities Impact Assessment

11. Members are referred to the attached Equalities Impact Assessment.
12. We recognise that our tenants have a wide variety of backgrounds and characteristics. A key guiding principle of the strategy is inclusivity, so we aim to ensure engagement provides all groups of people an opportunity to be involved with their housing service as much or as little as they wish. Activities and projects will be designed and reviewed to meet the considerations of gender, age, sexuality, disability, and ethnicity.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

13. The strategy has been developed in conjunction with the housing service, tenants and TPAS, a specialist in tenant engagement. A consultation was held with TPAS to bring together a focus group of tenants to discuss what is required for a new strategy. The findings and recommendations from those sessions have helped form our new vision, commitments and action plan set out in the strategy.

Other Options Considered

14. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 sets regulatory requirements that all social housing providers must adhere to drive improvements in the quality of housing and housing services for tenants. There is a requirement for all registered providers of housing to ensure that they take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

15. The strategy will ensure a clear organisational approach and commitment to carrying out tenant engagement within the borough. It sets out an action plan for us to be accountable to all stakeholders.

Next Steps in Process

16. The strategy will be made available on the council's website in an easy-to-read and engaging format. Accessible formats and other language documents can be produced upon request.
17. Following the publication of the strategy, the Tenant Engagement Team will consult further with tenants to co-produce engagement and techniques mentioned in the action plan, such as scrutiny panels.

Conclusion

18. Adoption of the Tenant Engagement Strategy provides a clear direction and shows the commitment by the Council in ensuring tenants are included in

decision-making and given the opportunity to influence the housing services that we provide.

19. The strategy provides reassurance for all stakeholders that we will dedicate resources to engagement and fulfil engagement obligations set by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Portfolio Holder's Views

21. We are committed to improving the quality of life and the standard of homes of our tenants and leaseholders. By effectively engaging and collaborating we can work together to improve our housing service. The strategy provides a clear plan of action for our team to help residents become more involved, hold their landlord to account and drive positive changes. It provides reassurance for all stakeholders that we will dedicate resources to engagement and fulfil obligations set by the Regulator of Social Housing. I am personally very confident that by engaging with our tenants moving forwards more regularly and in a more in-depth manner this will allow us to improve the various services we provide.

Cllr Bill Barrett
Cabinet Member for Homes & Homelessness

Contact and Email

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Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.
7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the

potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.

8. In terms of timing:

- Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
- Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Armed Forces Community

9. As part of the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Community made through the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant the council's Cabinet agreed in November 2017 that potential impacts on the Armed Forces Community should be considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

10. Accordingly, due regard should also be had throughout the decision making process to potential impacts on the groups covered by the Armed Forces Covenant:

- Current serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
- Former serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
- The families of current and former Armed Forces personnel.

Case law principles

11. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or

service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Lead officer:	<p>Joanne Burns Tenant Engagement Officer</p> <p>Rebecca Smith Housing Operations Manager, Income and Neighbourhoods</p>
Decision maker:	<p>Cabinet</p>
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	<p>The Cabinet is recommended to approve the Ashford Borough Council Tenant Engagement Strategy.</p>
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	<p>25th January 2024</p>
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the Ashford Borough Council's strategy for tenant engagement for approval.</p> <p>The strategy sets out our intentions and vision for tenant engagement to ensure that we collaborate and consult with our tenants and make them the centre of decision-making. It also ensures that the Council meets the engagement standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing.</p> <p>All tenants will be offered the opportunity to be engage with their housing service.</p>
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<p>The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 establishes regulatory requirements that social housing providers must adhere to drive improvements in the quality of housing and housing services. The Regulator of Social Housing sets consumer standards for landlords to be more accountable and engaged with their tenants.</p> <p>The strategy, as presented, will set out the Council's intention and vision to elected members, officers, and the housing service.</p>
Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect 	<p>TPAS (a housing specialist) consultation took place to analyse tenant engagement and to re-invigorate and refocus our service. Focus groups consisting of tenants and housing staff were employed to help inform a new vision and commitments for tenant engagement.</p> <p>A difference in views about engagement across protected characteristics was not apparent. There is a desire from tenants in general to input into decisions that affect them and their housing service.</p> <p>The strategy includes actions to understand the protected characteristics of our tenants to ensure opportunities to engage are equal and to ensure that we understand who our</p>

people with different protected characteristics?	tenants are. It aims to promote inclusivity across engagement activities.
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Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	None	Positive
Middle age	None	Positive
Young adult	None	Positive
Children	None	Positive
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	None	Positive
Mental	None	Positive
Sensory	None	Positive
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Positive
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	Positive
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	None	Positive
<u>RACE</u>	None	Positive
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	None	Positive
<u>SEX</u> Men	None	Positive
Women	None	Positive
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	Positive
<u>ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY</u> Regular/Reserve personnel	None	Positive
Former service personnel	None	Positive

Service families	None	Positive
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Mitigating negative impact: Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.	There is no negative impact to mitigate in relation to this strategy as this is an overarching document.
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Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?	
Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's Essential Guide , alongside fuller PSED Technical Guidance .	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	NA
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes

Conclusion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified. How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The due regard for equality has been considered throughout this report and no negative impacts are determined. There is no unlawful discrimination arising from this report. The proposal meets the aims of the equality duty. Monitoring will be completed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tracking and publishing of results against the action plan customer and satisfaction surveys and feedback housing staff feedback
EIA completion date:	16 th January 2024

2024-
2027

Tenant Engagement Strategy

Version: 1.0

Date: 2nd January 2024

Review date: 1st September 2026

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Executive Summary

Tenants should be able to influence how their home and housing services are managed. The voice of the tenant matters.

There has been a call for more accountability and transparency of the housing sector following the events of Grenfell Tower and high-profile cases involving disrepair. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 now sets regulatory requirements that all social housing providers must meet to drive improvements in the quality of housing and housing services for tenants.

From April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing introduces new consumer standards and will provide a Code of Practice for landlords to follow. These strengthen the accountability of landlords to their tenants and fulfil the obligations set out by the Act.

A keystone of re-dressing any imbalance between tenant and landlord is tenant engagement. Our engagement strategy, detailed in this document, signals an approach to genuinely listening to what our residents say and ensuring that their input directly impacts how we manage their homes and services. We want to reassure tenants that we are not creating this strategy solely due to regulatory changes, but because it is something that should always be in place and influence everything we do.

This strategy sets out our intentions and vision for tenant engagement, for both tenants and leaseholders, and how we aim to enact that strategy.

Our vision is **Engagement Before Action**. A pledge to ensure that we collaborate and consult with our tenants and that they are at the centre of decision-making.

Three core commitments are key to ensuring we meet that vision:

- **Improve communication and interaction**
- **Strengthen engagement, participation and empower tenants**
- **Be accountable and open to being challenged**

Introduction

About ABC Housing

Our Housing service sits under the Caring Ashford tenet of our Corporate Plan. This is the long-term aim of providing welcoming and safe places and offering a high quality of life, where everyone is valued and respected. To enable homes that are affordable to local people on low incomes and ensure that homes and neighbourhoods in the borough meet the needs of local people of all ages, incomes, and abilities to live sustainably and safely.

Ashford Borough Council owns and manages some 5000 properties. This portfolio consists of a variety of property and ownership types, ranging from independent living schemes to leasehold properties. Our range of affordable housing options ensures that our diverse population of tenants and leaseholders have somewhere that they can call home.

About the Regulator of Social Housing

Providers of registered social housing in England are governed by the Regulator of Social Housing, which seeks to promote a housing sector that can deliver and maintain homes of appropriate quality to meet a variety of resident needs.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has provided extended powers to the Regulator to set standards for providers to achieve, and from April 2024 these standards as well as a Code of Practice will be published. Providers are expected to reach all standards and can be held accountable by their tenants and the Regulator for non-compliance.

One of the revised standards that the Regulator is setting is the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. This states that landlords must be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect. Part of this standard directly refers to engagement with tenants, with registered providers required to take tenants' views into account in their decision-making and how their services are delivered.

Background

What is Tenant Engagement?

Tenant engagement has been defined by TPAS, who are experts in tenant engagement, as “being about working with tenants to co-produce effective services that meet a variety of needs... It’s about empowering tenants, residents, and communities to work with your organisation to achieve shared aims”.

Our engagement approach

The need to re-invigorate and refocus the engagement strategy of the service became evident in 2022. A consultation was held with TPAS to bring together a focus group of tenants and housing officers to discuss what is required for a new strategy. The findings and recommendations from those sessions have helped form our new vision and commitments set out in this document.

It was clear from the consultation that the lack of resources of dedicated engagement staff to drive the culture and training internally for engagement, as well as activities with tenants, limited the reach of any tenant involvement. Without sufficient mechanisms to evidence and scrutinise activities, engagement could not be recorded, lessons learned, and success promoted.

In 2023, the Housing service employed two full-time Tenant Engagement Officers, demonstrating the focus on re-energising our tenant involvement. They will drive forward the engagement strategy with our tenants and housing staff and ensure that we are fulfilling engagement obligations set out by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Ashford Borough Council founded the Ashford Citizens Panel in 2023 seeking all residents’ views and scrutiny, not just tenants living in our properties. It is our desire that our tenant involvement, driven by the engagement strategy, will help champion tenants within this wider remit.

An annual survey of tenant satisfaction now takes place and will form a part of a scrutiny package enabling our tenants and the Regulator to hold us to account on a variety of areas. Two specific survey questions will allow us to quantify and track how effective our engagement is. How satisfied tenants are with being informed and how satisfied they are that we listen to tenants’ views and act upon them.

Our Vision

Engagement *before* action. We want tenants to be at the centre of decision-making.



We want to ensure that the view of every tenant and leaseholder counts and that they have an effective voice.

Our residents must be at the heart of our Housing Service, and we must collaborate to drive positive changes in our communities and enhance what we do. We must consult with them *before* decisions are made.

”

**Engagement
before
action**

We will measure and monitor the quality and reach of our tenant engagement throughout the year to ensure that each contact provides value to both residents and our service.

Our Commitments

Our strategy's 3 commitments



We have three core commitments that are key to ensuring that we reach our vision of 'engagement before action' and to ensure that all engagement is effective, purposeful, and meaningful.



1 Improve communication and interaction

- We will look to reduce and remove barriers to engagement and provide engagement opportunities that are accessible to all
- We will actively listen and ensure our communications are clear
- We will facilitate discussions with residents to find solutions and help us to make better decisions



2 Strengthen engagement, participation and empower tenants

- We will create a supportive environment and encourage open and respectful communication
- We will collaboratively problem solve and encourage idea sharing
- We will acknowledge ideas and opinions and create a space where people feel valued and able to contribute



3 Be accountable and open to being challenged

- We will monitor the impact of our decisions and provide opportunities for people to challenge us
- We will welcome feedback, both positive and negative, to help improve our service
- We will be available to address issues that arise

Our Guiding Principles

Effective engagement to power positive communities.

Every engagement activity and contact we have with our tenants and leaseholders, no matter how large or small, will follow our guiding principles.



A positive culture across our Housing service and beyond is required to foster collaboration and trust with our tenants and their homes.

Action Plan

Performance goals to monitor and measure progress.

To ensure accountability and to track how our engagement strategy is progressing, we have set out specific actions with timescales for their completion. All 34 actions are driven by our '3 Core Commitments' and are underpinned by our guiding principles of engagement. Our action plan provides manageable, practical steps to ensure tenants feel informed and satisfied that we listen to their views and act upon them.

Tenant Engagement, along with Housing Management and tenants will review the list annually to scrutinise whether the actions have taken place and evaluate reasons why any have not. We will publish updates on our goal attainment to ensure that we are accountable for all that we do.

	Action	Core Commitment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1	Share engagement strategy: externally with tenants and leaseholders, internally with Housing and Councillors	1 & 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Review existing engagement communication with tenants and leaseholders – Housing newsletters, emails, letters, webpages	1	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3	Agree annual budget for engagement work with Housing Management	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Promote culture internally of encouraging tenant and leaseholder input in the development of Housing services	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Plan

	Action	Core Commitment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
5	Develop tenant engagement area of website to provide information on engagement projects, how to get involved and Housing Newsletters	1	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6	Create an engagement framework for Housing services to ensure projects requiring tenant input and collaboration work are clearly defined	2	<input type="checkbox"/>		
7	Revise Housing webpages to improve customer journey and access to information	1	<input type="checkbox"/>		
8	Publicise opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to meet and engage with the Housing team and participate in community events	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Tenant profiling to increase understanding and to provide tailored services	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Write and agree Terms of Reference and policies for tenant and leaseholder groups to be set up to collaborate and scrutinise Housing services	2	<input type="checkbox"/>		
11	Create a variety of ways for tenants and leaseholders to get involved with Housing services—formal/informal/more in-depth/ad hoc	2	<input type="checkbox"/>		
12	Encourage sign-up to tenant and leaseholder groups to scrutinise Housing services	1 & 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Plan

Action	Core Commitment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
13	Establish skills training programmes for those involved in our tenant and leaseholder groups in areas such as how to scrutinise effectively, computer and group meeting skills	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Set up and roll out key estate improvement groups with tenants and leaseholders - Estate Champions/Estate Mates to provide a valued voice for their area	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15	Implement a Repairs and Maintenance Scrutiny Panel with tenants, leaseholders, and Repairs Team	3	<input type="checkbox"/>		
16	Implement a Building Safety Working Group with tenants, leaseholders, and Asset Team	3		<input type="checkbox"/>	
17	Set up group with tenants and leaseholders to provide feedback and help influence draft reports, letters, and documents sent by Housing	1 & 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18	Identify and explore creation of special groups for underrepresented areas e.g. young mothers, senior citizens	2		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Provide a variety of events for tenants and leaseholders to boost community involvement with Housing such as family fun days	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Plan

	Action	Core Commitment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
20	Develop Tenants Portal to offer opportunities to engage with Housing services and improve communication	1 & 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
21	Update Tenant and Repairs handbooks to ensure relevant and easily accessible for tenants and leaseholders	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Improve digital inclusion for tenants and leaseholders in accessing Housing information in a digital environment	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Improve Asset Team communication with tenants and leaseholders to ensure involvement and awareness of planned works	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Improve Developments Team communication with tenants and leaseholders to ensure awareness of new ABC housing developments and how to influence them	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	Set up and implement Rate My Estate feedback for tenants and leaseholders for caretaking services in communal areas	3		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	Engage with young people living in our homes to provide support for issues relevant to them	2		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

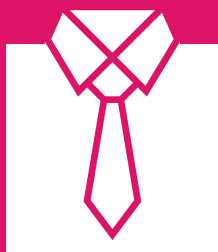
Action Plan

	Action	Core Commitment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
27	Continued engagement with Independent Living sites	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	Review Housing policies and procedures to ensure relevant and up to date	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	Regular publishing of actions taken, and lessons learnt on Housing complaints	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	Promote successful projects and you said/we did with tenants and leaseholders to provide transparency	1 & 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	Annual Housing Tenant Satisfaction Surveys implemented and improvement plans generated from results	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	Drive implementation of client care satisfaction surveys to be issued at the conclusion of any matter such as repairs, anti-social behaviour, planned maintenance works, etc.	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	Utilise data and statistics from repairs and planned maintenance works to track performance and help drive improvements for tenants and leaseholders	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34	Review Engagement Strategy with management and tenant group every 3 years or when new legislation implemented	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How to Get Involved

We will provide a selection of ways for tenants and leaseholders to be involved and share their voice.

A range of engagement options will allow for residents to collaborate as much, or as little, as they wish. There will be options for those that are able to commit more time and become champions for their area, but also options for those that wish to get involved on an ad-hoc basis or only regarding specific areas of interest. All interactions with our tenants and leaseholders will help shape what we do.



Formal

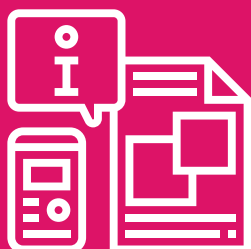
These will involve the most commitment from residents.

Groups will be set up to strategise, scrutinise and support projects.

Informal

Less time commitment is required.

A variety of ways to voice opinions and provide feedback.



Communication

For residents preferring to receive information and updates.

Options to participate as and when the tenant desires.

Involvement Options

A selection box of ways for everyone to get involved in engaging with their Housing service.

This menu of involvement options is not limited to those detailed below and will be developed over time as we gain a greater understanding of our what our tenants and leaseholders want.



Formal Meetings

- Scrutiny panels
- Focus groups
- Leaseholder panel
- Special interest groups
- Local meetings



Informal Engagement Activities

- Community events
- Satisfaction surveys
- Estate Walkabouts
- Rate My Estate
- Competitions
- Litter picks



Online Involvement

- Surveys
- Feedback forms
- Consultations
- Social media
- Tenants Portal



Publications and Updates

- Email updates
- Current and relevant webpages
- Newsletters
- Annual reports
- Survey feedback
- Reports and statistics



Activities and Tools

- Mystery shopping
- Workshops
- Staff presentations
- Training and support
- Community Heroes

Conclusion

The importance of a strategy to help lead our engagement cannot be underestimated, not only from a regulatory perspective, but also from our tenant's point of view. We must listen, understand and work together to improve our services and to make the homes, lives, and communities in the borough of Ashford, better.



Contact

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