

North West Leicestershire District Council

**Tenant & Leaseholder
Involvement Strategy
2018 - 2023**

1. INTRODUCTION

This strategy outlines North West Leicestershire District Council's (NWLDC) approach to involving tenants and leaseholders in the continuous improvement of services.

Tenant and leaseholder involvement is an integral part of the service development process and links to other areas of policy and service development such as community development, value for money, customer care, equality and diversity, and performance monitoring.

The tenant and leaseholder Involvement strategy sets out the council's strategic direction and priorities.

The council will aim to involve tenants and leaseholders in the management of their homes and to provide a responsive service, which meets tenants and leaseholders needs and aspirations.

The council is committed to involving tenants and leaseholders in what is happening on their estates and to their homes by promoting a two way flow of information and ideas between tenants, leaseholders and the council and strengthening consultation and involvement arrangements. In this way tenants and leaseholders will be able to inform, contribute to and influence decisions that affect them and the quality of the services they receive. To this end the council will work in partnership with tenants and leaseholders in reviewing key policies and procedures for service delivery and in setting standards for the housing service and for the management of their homes.

It is intended that this will be a five year strategy from 2018 – 2023 and an annual action plan will be developed each year by The Resident Involvement Team to ensure the strategy is implemented. This will also ensure the strategy is a live document and can be updated and/or amended as the annual action plan is developed.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

The council has developed a range of flexible involvement arrangements so tenants and leaseholders can choose the manner and level of participation that suits them. The level of involvement and participation open to tenants and leaseholders will range from informing tenants and leaseholders through written communication, through to tenant representation on working groups, interview panels and decision-making forums. A menu of involvement has been developed (see section 4) which details all involvement opportunities and the level of commitment each requires.

The tenant and leaseholder involvement strategy provides a framework for input and feedback from all stakeholders regarding the delivery of housing services.

The key objectives set out in the strategy adhere to best practice and value for money principles and provide a benchmark for effective tenant and leaseholder involvement.

The aims of this strategy are to identify the goals, which the council will work towards; these goals need to be specific and measurable. The strategy will also seek to:

- clarify the division of responsibility for tenant and leaseholder involvement at the strategic and operational levels of the council;
- extend the options for joint working between tenants and leaseholders, their representative groups, staff and elected members;
- provide a range of options for tenant and leaseholder to become involved in the review and continuous improvement of housing services;
- ensure that tenants and leaseholders are provided with adequate information with which to form views and decide on the issues they want to get involved with and how

3. INVOLVING ALL

Equality and Diversity

Equality of opportunity, access to services and celebrating diversity are key principles that are integral to all of the council's housing service delivery functions.

The council will strive to incorporate equality principles into all areas of working, including tenant and leaseholder involvement activities through the following:

- Use a range of methods to involve, consult and inform tenants and leaseholders in the review and development of services;
 - Encourage as many tenants and leaseholders as possible, particularly from groups who are not represented, to participate;
 - Ensure that we do not discriminate against any person on the grounds of age, race, ethnic origin, disability, nationality, gender and gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation, age, class, religion or belief, pregnancy and Maternity or any other matter causing a person to be treated with injustice;
 - Actively discourage any form of hate incident and to report any such incident to the proper authorities;
 - Ensure that the information we circulate to tenants and leaseholders is widely available, translated where necessary and provided in appropriate formats in accordance with our diversity policy;
 - Ensure that our meetings with tenants and leaseholders are held in premises where there is good physical access for people with disabilities and suitable for people of different faiths.
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4. OUR MENU OF INVOLVEMENT

How can I get involved?	Where do I get involved and how much of my time will I need to put aside?
<p>Empty Homes Inspector - Visit empty properties with staff to inspect and ensure that the property meets the required standards for letting to new tenants</p>	<p>Two hours a month, in the daytime, at empty council properties near your home. We can provide transport to and from the empty property and we will meet you there to inspect the property with you.</p>
<p>Working groups – Come along to regular working group meetings to help shape current housing services in the areas of repairs, housing management, housing support and performance and finance.</p>	<p>Two hours a month at the council offices in the daytime. We can provide transport for you.</p>
<p>Task and finish groups - Be part of a core group of people who will meet occasionally to discuss specific housing related issues</p>	<p>Meetings will be arranged as and when and we will contact you to check you availability. These can be daytime or evenings. We can provide transport for you.</p>
<p>In Touch Editorial Panel - Be part of a team who choose topics and images to go into the quarterly tenants newsletter In Touch</p>	<p>One hour a month, in the daytime, at the Council Offices. We can provide transport for you.</p>
<p>Tenant Scrutiny Panel - Become a Tenant Scrutiny Panel member and get involved in inspecting the housing service <i>(Please note - you cannot be in any other groups if you are in this group)</i></p>	<p>Your involvement can be from two hours up to 20 hours a month at the Council offices or within the North West Leicestershire area. Meetings and get together tend to be in the daytime. We can provide transport for you.</p>
<p>Recruitment panels – Take training so you can help us to recruit and select new candidates for positions within the housing service at the council</p>	<p>Up to six hours a day, in the daytime, at the Council Offices, as and when we undertake interviews for new candidates. We can provide transport for you.</p>
<p>Tenant and leaseholder Consultation Forum – Join the forum and help to shape housing policy decisions, future council projects, initiatives and services before they are formally agreed.</p>	<p>Two hours a month on Monday evenings, 6pm – 8pm, at the Council Offices, nine times a year. We can provide transport for you.</p>
<p>Tenants and Tenant and leaseholder Associations (TARAs) – Join a local TARA in your area to take part or assist in coffee mornings, bingo evenings, film nights, summer fetes and much more. Your local TARA will also meet regularly to discuss issues that are important within your local area. If there is not currently a TARA near you, we can talk to you about setting one up and we will support you to do this as well as provide funding every year</p>	<p>If there is already an established TARA in your area, this will be based at a local community building. Your involvement in your local TARA might be as much as ten hours a week if you want to get involved in running the group or as little as one hour a month if you wanted to attend meetings or drop in to coffee mornings for example. There is likely to be day time events as well as evening meetings and events.</p>

5. SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER TO BE INVOLVED

To encourage and support tenants and leaseholders to be involved the council will:

- Hold meetings at times convenient for tenants and leaseholders;
- Reimburse tenants and leaseholders for child and dependency care costs to enable attendance at meetings or consultation events;
- Provide refreshments at meetings and other consultation events;
- Hold prize draws for tenants and leaseholders responding to surveys;
- Provide translation or interpretation of documents/information at meetings as required;
- Reimburse reasonable travel expenses and/or provide transport to events or meetings;
- Provide grants to TARAs which meet the council's recognition criteria;
- Provide tenants and leaseholders training required to deliver high quality services and help to continuously improve housing services;
- Organise annual 'Pop Up' events across the district to reach out and engage as many tenants and leaseholders as possible;
- Attend regional tpas networking events to share and identify good practice;
- Develop and support feedback panels to consult and seek tenant and leaseholder feedback;
- Set an annual budget for tenant and leaseholder involvement activities and for this budget to be managed by the Tenants and Leaseholders Consultation Forum (TLCF).

6. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

There are **six key** objectives forming the basis of this strategy. A summary of these is set out below, in addition there is a table below detailing how we plan on achieving these objectives.

1. *Housing Services*

The council will ensure that tenants and leaseholders are fully involved in deciding and influencing policy and service standards. The council will achieve this by working in partnership with tenants and leaseholders in reviewing service delivery and in setting policies and procedures for the housing landlord services and the management of their homes.

2. *Resources and support*

The Council will ensure that tenants and leaseholders have access to support and to enable them to participate effectively. Support may include financial

assistance, professional advice, access to training, equipment and staff resources.

3. Developing the options for tenant and leaseholder involvement

The council aims to ensure that all tenants and leaseholders have the opportunity to participate and there is a range of flexible involvement arrangements for tenants and leaseholders. Participation can range from reading policy or procedure documentation in their homes to active involvement through Tenant Scrutiny or becoming an Empty Homes Inspector. The council will encourage and support tenants and leaseholders from under-represented groups to become involved. The Housing Service intends on developing alternative engagement activities to ensure as many tenants and leaseholders can be involved. These may include online based meetings and other cyber activities, the increased use of Social Media, developing a youth panel and engaging with local schools and colleges where appropriate.

4. Information and consultation

Access to information is critical for effective tenant and leaseholder involvement. Tenants and leaseholders need to know what is going on and tenant representatives need sufficient knowledge to understand wider issues that affect housing policy and practice. The council is committed to ensuring that information is provided regularly and in an appropriate format to all tenants and leaseholders and to members of recognised tenant and leaseholder groups.

5. Monitoring and measuring performance

Performance monitoring and review are essential to evaluate the performance of tenant and leaseholder involvement structures. The Council, tenant and leaseholder and tenant representatives must be able to assess how much progress is being made to further develop the existing structures and arrangements for tenant and leaseholder involvement and be able to see which areas are performing well, which new initiatives are working and what needs to be changed.

6. Neighbourhood management and tenant and leaseholder involvement

It is clear from the work of Government and the social housing sector that ensuring effective management of housing cannot be divorced from the need to revive local economies; empower and support communities to take a lead themselves in regeneration and community development initiatives and facilitate joint working between locally based agencies and service providers.

2. Resources and support		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Objective 2 To ensure tenant and leaseholder have the sufficient resources to allow for participation, recognising the time, effort and cost required.	To achieve this objective NWLDC will: . Review the current Involved tenant and leaseholder Expenses Policy and ensure it is well publicised to enable increased involvement and participation.		X			X
	Review existing criteria for recognition for Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs), including constitutions, the remit of groups, equality and diversity good practice, financial record, levels of active membership and benefit capture; linking this to funding and other resource support.		X			X
	Develop and agree a training strategy for tenant and leaseholder and tenant representatives based on a comprehensive training needs analysis and linking this to the annual work plan for tenant involvement. Establish clear guidance for tenant and staff training		X			
	Promote digital inclusion	X	X	X	X	X

3. Options for Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Objective 3	To achieve this objective NWLDC will:					
To develop a range of formal and informal options for tenant and leaseholder involvement that enables tenant and leaseholder to be involved in ways that best meets their needs and priorities and; to ensure existing representatives and groups are supported, encouraged and accountable	Ensure an up to date menu of involvement opportunities is in place for consultation, input and feedback to tenant and leaseholder individually and through their representative groups	X		X		X
	Develop a clear and agreed process of consultation methods to encourage participation and reflect the views of tenant and leaseholder from under-represented groups.		X		X	
	Organise and deliver a range of 'Pop Up' events over the summer months to promote engagement and reach out to tenant and leaseholder not currently engaged with the housing service. Staff should dress in casual wear for these events.	X	X	X	X	X
	Promote networking among TARAs with the aim of sharing knowledge, expertise and recourses.	X	X	X	X	X
	Promote the benefits of TARA events and activities using benefit capture forms and support and acknowledge the efforts of TARA volunteers.	X	X	X	X	X
	Review and agree appropriate mechanisms for feedback from tenant representatives, including Focus	X	X	X	X	X

	<p>Groups, satisfaction surveys and other consultative mechanisms.</p> <p>Establish a database of voluntary and community organisations and review regularly.</p> <p>Establish minimum standards for consultation with tenants and leaseholders in major repair and improvement programmes</p> <p>Develop online based meetings to enable increased attendance by young people, those in full time employment and parents with child care needs.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
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4. Information and Consultation		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Objective 4	To achieve this objective NWLDC will:					
To ensure that all tenant and leaseholder receive the information they need to be involved and participate, to the degree they want.	Incorporate a review of tenant involvement and participation activities in the Annual Report	X	X	X	X	X
	Review the Tenants Handbook and Leaseholders Handbook to ensure it is clearly written and understandable			X		X
	Provide key information in a range of formats	X	X	X	X	X
	Explore internet/web site development opportunities for tenant's comments and feedback.	X	X	X	X	X
	Provide a wide range of information at the Council Offices and local community facilities.	X	X	X	X	X
	Provide all new involved tenants and leaseholders with a copy of the tenant and leaseholder involvement Strategy, details of any tenant and leaseholder groups, consultation arrangements and other information	X	X	X	X	X
	Produce induction pack for new involved tenants and leaseholders.	X			X	
	Promote a buddy system where new involved tenant and leaseholder are allocated a tenant buddy to answer questions etc.	X	X	X	X	X
	Produce a tenant and leaseholder Involvement Strategy Summary.	X				

5. Monitoring and measuring performance		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Objective 5	To achieve this objective NWLDC will:					
To ensure that systems are in place to measure and assess performance in tenant and leaseholder involvement.	To use TP Tracker as the main data base for all tenant and leaseholder Involvement and consultation activities.	X	X	X	X	X
	Set targets and service standards for tenant and leaseholder involvement and assess these with staff and tenant representatives	X		X		X
	Monitor and review the tenant and leaseholder involvement budgets annually	X	X	X	X	X
	Monitor and review practice in equality and diversity and levels of involvement from underrepresented groups	X	X	X	X	X
	Regularly assess tenant satisfaction using citizen space for online and postage surveys.	X	X	X	X	X
	Record and evaluate all training provided to tenants and leaseholders and staff via TP Tracker	X	X	X	X	X

6. Neighbourhood Management and Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Objective 6	To achieve this objective NWLDC will:					
Encourage joint working with tenant and leaseholder and staff in developing District wide and locally based approaches to addressing needs and issues within the community.	Explore bringing local service providers, voluntary and community organisations and tenant and leaseholder together in a partnership to address cross cutting issues, for example anti-social behaviour.	X	X	X	X	X
	Ensure there is input and involvement in the development of community plans	X	X	X	X	X
	Develop and agree a protocol for joint working with local agencies	X	X	X	X	X
	Work with community partners to involve tenant and leaseholder in the process of designing and implementing a broad mix of initiatives that address local priorities and concern that can be aligned with the organisation's business plan and vision	X	X	X	X	X