



**NEWARK &  
SHERWOOD  
*DISTRICT COUNCIL***

**Tenant Engagement Strategy**

**2023-2026**

**DRAFT**

## Tenant Engagement Strategy

### 1.0 Why we need a strategy

This strategy sets out how the Council will engage with tenants and leaseholders to seek out, listen and act on their views in the performance, delivery, scrutiny and development of housing services and provide assurance on how we will meet our legal obligations set out by the Regulator of Social Housing.

The voice and influence of tenants is essential to enhance every aspect of housing services, from rent collection to improving homes, undertaking repairs to managing estates and ensuring homes are warm and safe. This strategy sets out the framework of engagement available to tenants and the role of the tenant engagement team to support housing services to deliver effective engagement.

This strategy links into the Newark and Sherwood District Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2022-2027 and has a specific focus on tenant and leaseholder engagement, which will form part of the expected Social Housing Bill and is subject to regulation through the consumer standards by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Our approach to engagement is reflective of our values:

**Ambitious and forward thinking** - we seek to understand what is important to our residents and stakeholders so we can focus our energy on improving and innovating.

**Caring and compassionate** - through providing a variety of opportunities to get involved in a way that works for the individual, removing barriers to getting involved.

**Commercial and business-like** – seeking views on where we focus our resources to secure value for money.

**Professional and trustworthy** – engagement builds trust and transparency around decision making, demonstrating the Council's integrity.

**Welcoming and responsive** - through being approachable, open to feedback, suggestions and challenge around our services, performance and tenant satisfaction.

This strategy does not cover customer complaints and feedback. Consultation and engagement is the important process of listening to and working with communities to gather views and insight. Our approach to receiving feedback or raising a complaint is covered within the [Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy](#).

## **2.0 What is Tenant Engagement?**

Tenant engagement means different things to different people; other terms such as participation or involvement can be used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) defines tenant engagement as “involving tenants who live in social rented housing who receive services from their council landlord”.

The Consumer Standards and imminent Social Housing Bill both emphasise the importance of tenant engagement and places a legal duty on social housing providers to ensure that tenants' voices are at the heart of services, that tenants live in good quality houses, and have a route to complain when this isn't the case. It expects landlords to tailor engagement so all tenants can engage, through a wide range of ways such as surveys, focus groups or local events to the level they wish to.

Effective tenant engagement has many benefits: it can highlight existing and new services that are valued by tenants, provides feedback on how services feel for the user, so the Council can act on this feedback and provide service improvements, it improves value for money and better communication and relationships with tenants that are built on trust as well as using tenants' existing skills and building new ones. In turn, tenants feel happy about where they live and that they feel valued and listened to and their voice makes a difference.

## **3.0 Our Approach to Tenant Engagement**

In 2022, involved tenants designed a new approach to tenant engagement with the Council, that supports local conversations about local issues which are co-ordinated through the Council's decision-making structures at both operational and strategic levels.

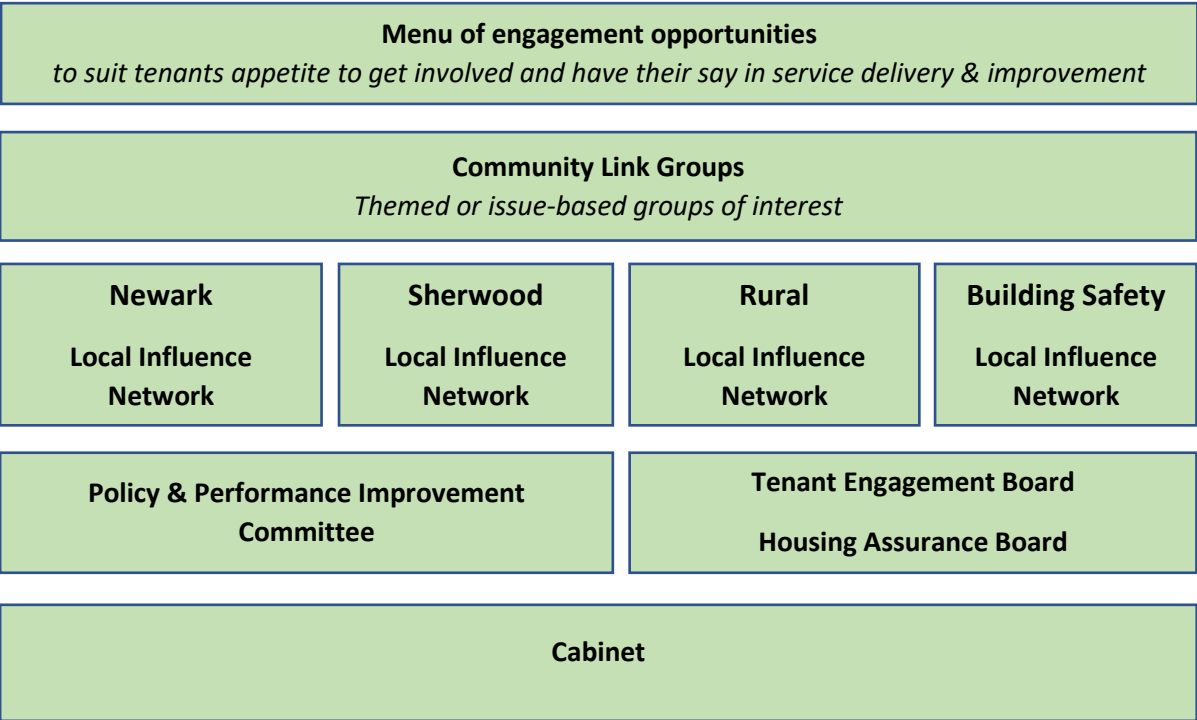
There is a menu of engagement opportunities dependant on the tenant's appetite and availability to get involved. More formal groups such as the community link groups and Local Influence Networks formalise engagement between communities and the council, with a dedicated Business Manager supporting each Local Influence Network and their chair.

Through the Tenant Engagement Board, the Local Influence Networks can direct their views, comments and feedback into the Council including their satisfaction with performance and services as well as identifying areas for action and investigation.

Comments and views can be raised through any of these mechanisms and the Local Influence Network chairs (who are tenants) present information to the Tenant Engagement Board for discussion and recommendations. The Tenant Engagement Board consists of representatives from Policy & Performance Improvement Committee and chairs of the Local Influence Networks. This engagement structure works both ways to provide information, scrutiny and recommendations for approval.

There are also opportunities to create service specific Local Influence Networks, at the time of writing this strategy, there is a Building Safety Local Influence Network that will focus on how the Council comply with safety standards and legislation including in this case, a service specific tenant engagement strategy for building safety.

The work of the tenant engagement board is regularly reported to tenants, residents, colleagues and members on how the tenants voice has been heard and used to improve or design services.



Tenants and leaseholders can be involved in a variety of ways including:

- Mystery shopping
- Scrutiny of services
- Contractor tender evaluation
- Responding to consultations
- Talking to colleagues about their experiences of services
- Ground maintenance champions
- Surveys
- Digital champions
- Service Improvement Activities
- Performance monitoring
- Estate Walkabouts

Information and opportunities for involvement will take place in a variety of formats including face to face, online, via surveys or social media channels as well as pop up events, taking into account where possible their preferred method of contact.

Further current opportunities to get involved can be found at [Tenant engagement | Newark & Sherwood District Council \(newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk\)](http://newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk) or email [getinvolved@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:getinvolved@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)

Involvement opportunities will be promoted at every opportunity and via social media, rent statements and newsletters available to the Council and via partners.

**4.0 The role of the Tenant Engagement Team**

The tenant engagement team will support business managers to lead on consultations, reviews or service proposals. The Consultation and Engagement Strategy operational guidance provides information on how consultations should be undertaken.

The tenant engagement officers can support with:

- Training and support for involved tenants
- Identifying interested tenants to participate
- Facilitating focus groups and small surveys
- Providing advice on undertaking tenant engagement
- Accessing Local influence network meetings and agendas
- Accessing community groups
- Planning community events involving tenants including 'pop up' events or tenant engagement events
- Accessing online survey tools and templates
- Co-ordinating consultations across the Directorate to ensure tenants do not feel over consulted
- Collating feedback and how we can use it
- Ensure outcomes and results from engagement are communicated through appropriate channels to tenants, residents, colleagues, members and other stakeholders.
- Developing and maintaining a culture of effective engagement within teams
- Maintaining and refreshing the tenant engagement database including an annual check in that the tenant wishes to remain in the database and how they wish to be involved.
- Regular reviews of how the tenant engagement structure is delivering for tenants

## **5.0 Tenant Engagement Action Plan and Engagement Calendar**

The Council's arrangements for engagement are reviewed every three years. An action plan sits beneath this strategy to set out the key activities to be undertaken to keep tenant engagement fresh, relevant and effective for tenants. This will be appended to the Strategy.

Oversight of Tenant Engagement is through an Annual Engagement Calendar which highlights planned consultation throughout the calendar year. This is a live document which updated regularly and can be found [here](#).

## **6.0 Support for Tenants**

To encourage participation, the Council will support tenants to utilise their existing skills and build new ones through training and personal development, covering reasonable costs of being involved including provision of IT to engage digitally as well as offer opportunities to attend tenant conferences or support with applying for boards or specific engagement groups at a local, regional, and national level.

There are many great sources of ideas to maximise engagement with tenants and the Council are members of Tenant Participation Advisory Group (TPAS) and Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) to help understand and share best practice.

## 7.0 Measuring our performance and impact

We will collate information about our performance and report through the Tenant Engagement Board and other forums as appropriate. We will share our performance widely with tenants, colleagues, members and other stakeholders including via our Annual Tenant Report.

We will:

- Collate number of tenants involved in every consultation to understand its reach
- The findings, outcomes and recommendations arising
- How the feedback has impacted on service delivery
- The number of new tenants engaged with Housing Services
- Obtain feedback at events to learn what worked well in the consultation and what would make it even better next time
- Keep our measures of impact under regular review to make sure they measure the correct things

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures contains a number of measures that will also help the Council to understand if it is hitting the mark with engagement. These are:

**TP06** Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenants' views and acts upon them

**TP07** Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them

**TP08** Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect

These will be collated and reported annually.

We will self assess our services to ensure they comply with the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and any future standards relating to engagement.

## 8.0 Approval, Consultation and Review Timetable

<b>Document title</b>	Tenant Engagement Strategy		
<b>Version number</b>	DRAFT	<b>Protective marking</b>	Official
<b>Lead Director</b>	Director Housing Health and Wellbeing		
<b>Lead Business Unit</b>	Housing Services		
<b>Lead contact</b>	Housing Services Business Manager		
<b>Date approved (SLT)</b>		<b>Date approved (Members)</b>	
<b>Reviews due:</b>			
<b>Consultation</b>			

Consultee	Date	Comments received	Material change requested (yes/no)
SLT	13/06/23		
Policy & Performance Improvement Committee	26/6/23		
Tenant Engagement Board			
Cabinet			