

Tenant Involvement Strategy



2017-2020

This strategy establishes a framework for enabling Wealden District Council (WDC) tenants and leaseholders to be consulted and effectively participate in the decision making processes which affects them and the management of their homes.

We believe that tenant and leaseholder involvement can help us identify and address weaknesses in our service delivery, providing a mechanism for continuous & challenging service improvements.

The strategy will help us to develop more active tenant and leaseholder involvement, ensuring that there are opportunities for the views of all tenants and leaseholders to be considered in the development of Housing Service improvements and in increasing tenant and leaseholder satisfaction.

The Tenant Involvement Strategy will run from December 2017 until December 2020, with opportunities in each year of the life of the strategy to further refine and develop our strategic approach in consultation with tenants and leaseholders.

The Homes and Communities Agency as part of their standards for social housing providers require that landlords value tenants and leaseholders views, and incorporate them when developing the service. Therefore tenants and leaseholders views, will continue to be central to the continuing development of our strategic direction.

Our objectives are to:

1. Reach as wide a base of tenants and leaseholders as possible
2. Ensure that tenants and leaseholders involvement activities have clear service improvement objectives
3. Measure the impact of tenant and leaseholder involvement, for instance on value for money, service planning
4. Evaluate and improve value for money of all tenant and leaseholder involvement activities
5. Improve satisfaction with services measured through STAR, specifically those measuring how well tenants and leaseholders feel that their views are taken into account
6. Offer a wider range of opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to get involved, and identify ways for these activities to take place at a local level
7. Ensure that all teams providing core landlord services prepare plans for involving tenants and leaseholders in developing and improving their service. This is to be done using an agreed protocol to allow for measurement of impact and evaluation of value for money of the activity
8. Ensure that teams demonstrate how tenants and leaseholders feedback has been used to improve their services
9. Ensure that there is an open and transparent process for accessing opportunities for getting involved
10. Provide support and training to improve access and take-up of opportunities to become involved
11. Develop an action plan to deliver this strategy

Cover photos clockwise from the top – Retirement Living networking day. Retirement Living networking day - indoor bowling. Sunflower growing competition at Unity Community Garden. Alderbook Community Association planters.

Promotion of opportunities

We will provide a comprehensive and varied range of opportunities to get involved and where needed, will target specific groups, especially under-represented or seldom heard groups. We will:

- Offer a menu of opportunities and different ways to get involved
- Develop and maintain a database of tenants and leaseholders interested in involvement, including what they want to be involved in and how

Menu of opportunities currently in use:

- Being involved in Wealden Residents Action Group
- Joining/starting a Local Tenant, Resident or Community Association
- Becoming a Local Representative
- Compacts / local neighbourhood agreements
- Joining the Retirement Living Residents Group
- Attending Focus groups or meetings
- Mystery Shopping
- Responding to Informal Consultation
- Being part of a Scrutiny Group
- Networking events
- Training and skills for empowering involved tenants and leaseholders
- Neighbourhood inspections/walkabouts
- Reading group (for publications and newsletters)

Successful delivery of the Tenant Involvement Strategy

The approach to involving tenants and leaseholders has to be informed by feedback, best practice in the sector and government policy.

The action plan will need to be constantly reviewed to ensure we provide a service focused on making a difference and adding value for our tenants and leaseholders.

Evaluating the impact of tenant and leaseholder involvement

To ensure that tenant and leaseholder involvement activities are making a difference and the Council responds in terms of service development and enhancements, it will be necessary to evaluate the impact; therefore we will review involvement activities for:

- a) Effectiveness: has the activity achieved the objectives set by tenants and leaseholders and the Council?
- b) Popularity: were tenants and leaseholders attracted by the activity? Were there specific groups that engaged or did not engage in the opportunity?
- c) Access and Diversity: was it easy to get to? Did it reach the people it needed to reach? Did we get a good cross-section of people getting involved?
- d) Value for money: was the output, such as suggested improvements, savings or reprioritised spending, worth the input, including funding, tenants and leaseholders time, staffing and other resources?

To assist in measuring the impact we will:

Engage tenants and leaseholders in collecting information about the impact of their involvement.

To do this we will:

- a) Survey satisfaction with their involvement and also on their satisfaction with the services we provide
- b) Benchmark our performance against other landlords
- c) Make use of the scrutiny group to help us evaluate what works well and identify weaknesses and identify opportunities for improvement
- d) The Wealden Residents Action Group will also monitor the progress of this strategy and the associated action plan
- e) Use feedback to continuously improve services and to achieve consistently high levels of satisfaction
- f) Use feedback to help us shape and tailor services so that they are efficient and effective and help us achieve upper quartile performance in all service areas
- g) Use feedback to develop local offers
- h) Aim to continuously improve the level of service so that tenants and leaseholders receive an excellent service and involve them in setting challenging targets for improvement

We must have:

- a) Clear aims and objectives – All involvement activities will have clear aims, objectives and outcomes, with realistic timescales, to ensure that they feel empowered in an honest and open environment
- b) A wide range of tenants and leaseholders centred activities are available creating opportunities for meaningful engagement
- c) Provide regular feedback to tenants and leaseholders informing them how their influence has changed and improved services
- d) An action plan that is robust and challenging and is regularly reviewed to take into account new initiatives and good practice

Action Plan

Goal One: Involvement

All tenants and leaseholders have the opportunity to be involved.

To achieve this we will:

- a) Improve our digital methods of communication, including social media, to increase opportunities for tenant and leaseholder access
- b) Engage in more remote and issue based consultation
- c) Support tenants and leaseholders with specific needs to become involved and promote equality and diversity throughout the housing service
- d) Build opportunities for all tenants and leaseholders to be involved regardless of how they chose to get involved, how much time they can commit and when
- e) Develop the skills of our tenants and leaseholders so they can actively participate

Goal Two: Shaping

The housing service must be shaped by the needs of our tenants and leaseholders. To do this, we have to not just understand their needs, but know what is important to them. We can then target both our support and information to improve their experience.

We will:

- a) Work with tenants and leaseholders to collect and update information that will allow us to build a better picture of their needs
- b) Create opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to tell us what is important to them and use this to develop the housing service
- c) Develop a better understanding of how our tenants and leaseholders prefer to be communicated with
- d) Use the knowledge we have to target support to tenants and leaseholders that need it
- e) Work with tenants and leaseholders to develop ideas and services

Goal Three: Accountability

To make our housing service accountable to tenants and leaseholders, who have the right to understand why we make the decisions we make, and to help formulate the plans that affect them and the service as a whole.

To achieve this we will:

- a) Encourage tenants and leaseholders to challenge, shape and improve our service
- b) Demonstrate how we as a landlord have achieved value for money
- c) Showcase the impact our involved tenants and leaseholders have within the housing service via both digital and traditional media
- d) Help the scrutiny group to develop and use the panel to keep tenants and leaseholders at the centre of what we do through in-depth reviews of our service
- e) Establish a quarterly meeting for the representative group or groups to review our performance, the use of our budget and help shape our service plans
- f) Engage with involved tenants and leaseholders and established groups to develop and agree a structure for liaison with Wealden's Housing Service
- g) Feedback our performance across the service via the website, Threshold and the annual report

Contact details

 tenant.participation@wealden.gov.uk

 01323 443511 / 01323 443270

 www.wealden.gov.uk

If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, audio tape/CD or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk quoting ref D&P16360.10.17