

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of Executive on 11th September 2023

Tenant Engagement Strategy

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing

Classification	This report is Public
Contact Officer	Cathy Ford Tenant Participation Officer

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To consider approval of the Bolsover District Council Tenant Engagement Strategy.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 The Social Housing White Paper (2020) “The Charter for Social Housing” emphasises the importance of tenant engagement and sets out what the Regulator of Social Housing requires from landlords.
- 1.2 The paper refers to landlords taking a more tailored approach to engagement which better reflects the needs of different tenant groups and requires the landlord to demonstrate how they have sought and considered ways in which they can improve tenant engagement.
- 1.3 There is already a requirement for the Council to comply with the Regulator of Social Housing’s current “Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.” This is a set of expectations that focus on key elements of how the landlord must involve tenants. These include providing information, communicating in appropriate ways depending on need, setting out a clear way of how to complain and providing a wide range of how tenants can be involved and influence services.
- 1.4 In addition, the Social Housing White Paper outlines a set of requirements, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which came into force in April 2023. This is a statutory requirement for landlords to collect tenant satisfaction data on a number of housing related areas.
- 1.5 We do not currently have a strategy in place unlike many other social landlords. Such a strategy would help establish a clear approach to engagement and meet the requirements of the Regulator for Social Housing.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The strategy has been developed over the past 12 months with tenants of the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group who have approved both the strategy and the action plan. The Strategy is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 The Strategy sets out 4 clear objectives –
- To make tenants and leaseholder engagement an integral part of the housing service, ensuring that officers and contractors understand that it is a shared responsibility.
 - To strengthen and develop communication methods ensuring tenants are offered a number of ways to get involved and is accessible to all.
 - To be more accountable for the services we deliver by empowering our tenants to challenge us and to get involved in setting priorities.
 - To use customer feedback to improve our housing services and keep them informed about how their contributions have been used to drive continuous improvement.
- 2.3 There is an accompanying action plan which sets out the actions we propose to take to help us meet the four priorities and demonstrate to tenants and leaseholders our commitment to work in partnership with them to help shape and improve the services we offer. All actions listed in the action plan are aimed at achieving one or more of the above objectives. The action plan is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.4 The engagement framework includes a variety of ways in which service users can be involved. These form a ‘Menu of Opportunities’ and include ways to be involved at a more formal level where the time commitment required is higher, through to simply picking up and reading the newsletter. The strategy reflects our hope that offering digital and online channels of communication will increase the diversity of the customers that we engage with especially if they are able to do so from their own homes and at times that suit them.
- 2.5 The strategy and action plan will be monitored on a yearly basis by the Tenant Review and Development Group. This will ensure it remains current, relevant, and achievable and continues to meet the aims and objectives of the Council and its tenants.
- 2.6 The strategy was presented to Customer Services Scrutiny in June 2023, and members were supportive of the strategy. In addition, a period of tenant consultation took place between 26th June and 31st July 2023. No objections were received.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Tenant Engagement Strategy is required to ensure that we can continue to meet the requirement set by the Regulator of Social Housing and the expectations set out in the Housing White Paper.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 To not have an Engagement Strategy is rejected as it is a requirement for local authorities (under the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing) to involve and engage their tenants and therefore to do nothing would place the authority at risk of challenge.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Executive approve the Tenant Engagement Strategy.

Approved by Councillor Sandra Peake, Portfolio Holder for Housing

IMPLICATIONS.

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details: There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details: Whilst there are no legal implications arising from the report, it is a requirement for local authorities to involve and engage their tenants this is achieved by the Strategy.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment: Yes No

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details: N/A

Staffing: Yes No

Details: There are no staffing implications arising from the report

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies.</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No

District Wards Significantly Affected	(please state which wards or state All if all wards are affected)
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Details: Customer Services Scrutiny Tenant Consultation

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, and Environment.
<p>Customers – Providing excellent services.</p> <p>Supports Targets CUS.08 - Maintain high levels of tenant satisfaction with council housing and associated services.</p>

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Appendix No	Title
1	Tenant Engagement Strategy
2	Action Plan

Background Papers
<i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>
None