

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Tenant Engagement Strategy 2023 – 2026

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DRAGONFLY
DEVELOPMENT



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Foreword | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| District Profile | 4 |
| What is tenant engagement? | 5 |
| Why do we need a Tenant Engagement Strategy? | 6 |
| Our aims and objectives | 6 |
| Priorities | 7 |
| Why get involved? | 8 |
| How can you become involved? | 9 |
| Resources for tenant engagement | 11 |
| How tenants will be kept informed | 11 |
| Providing information about services and decisions | 12 |
| The Council's commitment to equality | 13 |
| Monitoring of the strategy | 14 |
| Contact us | 14 |





Foreword



Victoria Dawson

*Assistant Director
Housing Management*



Councillor Sandra Peake

Housing Executive Member

This strategy sets out our approach to tenancy engagement. We recognise that communication is key and by listening to tenants we can ensure we are meeting their needs and we can improve our services as a result. We want to increase tenant involvement and ensure we offer a variety of opportunities that are interesting, accessible to all and take into account different lifestyles and availability to participate.

We have approximately 5,000 council properties and we strive to provide safe and secure homes to our tenants. We have worked with tenants for a number of years and made positive changes as a result of their feedback. This strategy is key to expanding tenant involvement and has been devised with tenants, for tenants. I am looking forward to working with tenants to deliver the objectives set out in this strategy.

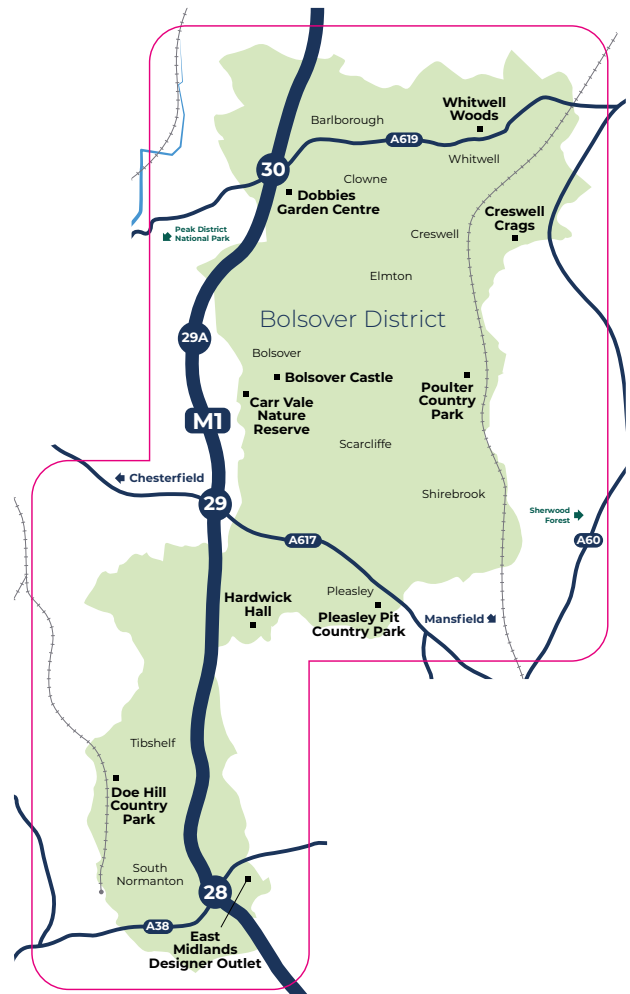


Ian Barber

*Director of Property and Construction,
Dragonfly Development Limited*

Dragonfly Development Ltd. is a company wholly owned by Bolsover District Council whose main role is to provide the housing repair and maintenance function to our Bolsover District tenants. This arrangement makes no difference to how tenants request or receive repair services from the Council, other than the Dragonfly Development Ltd. logo being present on our vehicles and on relevant documentation.

Along with our housing repair colleagues, our tenants are at the centre of everything we do. Our aim is to ensure our tenants inform, shape, and challenge our services through our review work. This strategy will guarantee tenant involvement into the future and will provide our tenants with the support required.





Introduction and District Profile

Our Vision – “making a difference to people’s lives by providing homes to be proud of ”

We recognise the benefit of involving tenants in the management of their homes and are committed to ensuring they have the opportunity to become involved in housing management matters, to the extent that they choose.

To further this commitment and intent, we have produced this Tenant Engagement Strategy in partnership with tenants who have volunteered

already, Councillors and officers, to promote and encourage the continuing, and further involvement of our tenants.

This strategy sets out our overall approach to tenant engagement outlining opportunities for tenants to be engaged in developing, shaping and monitoring our services and policies.

Our Vision is clear



Great Communities



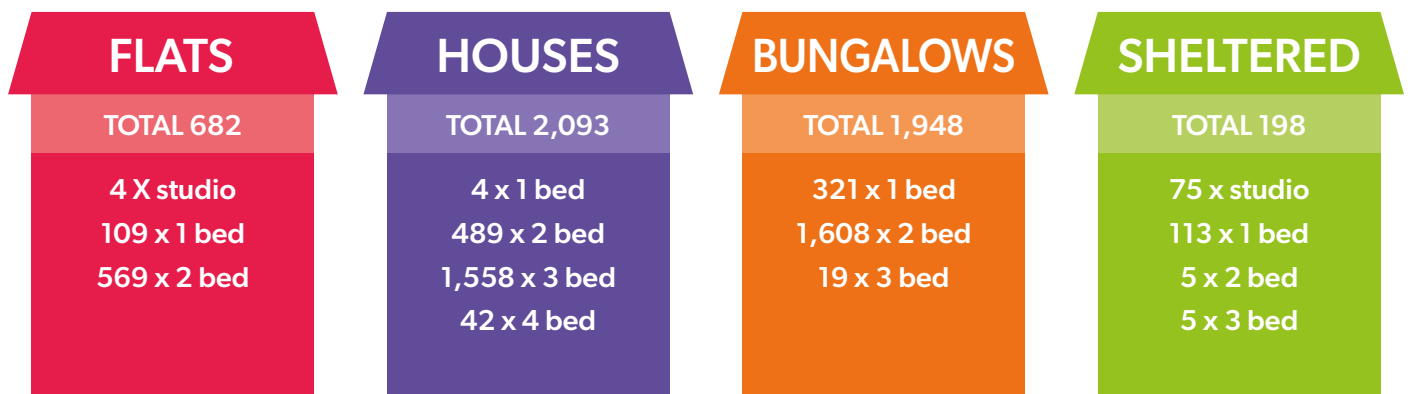
Excellent Services



Inspiring People

The Bolsover District is predominately rural, with four market towns of South Normanton, Shirebrook, Clowne and Bolsover.

We own 4,921 homes plus a further 125 that are occupied by leaseholders. 44% of the housing stock is designated for older persons.





What is tenant engagement?

Tenant engagement is about making sure tenants and leaseholders are at the heart of everything we do, it is a two way process of communication

Tenant engagement is about tenants taking part in the decision- making process, where possible and practicable, and influencing decisions about your homes, the services you receive and the areas where you live.

By working together, you are able to provide us with a valuable source of feedback which will help us continually improve our services and increase satisfaction levels.

“Engagement is an overall term used to describe tenant involvement, at any level”



Information – is the basis of good communication and strengthening council-tenant relationships. We will provide clear and accurate information relating to when and how decisions affecting services and future policies are made.

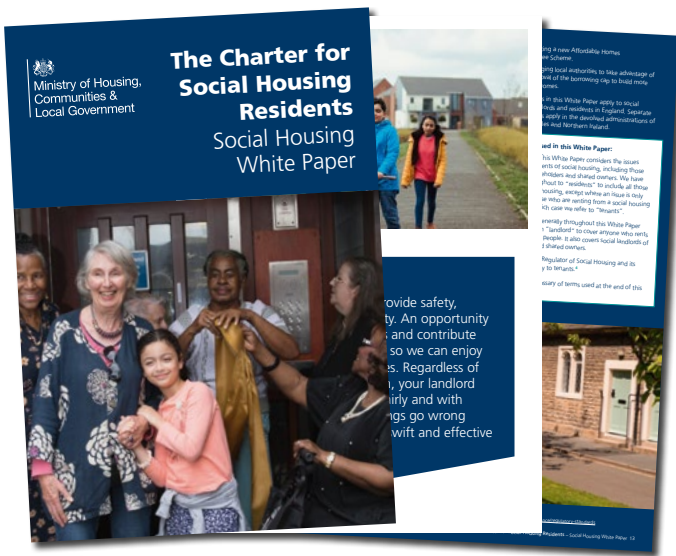


Consultation – is seeking tenants’ views and ideas, taking account of those views and providing feedback. We will provide opportunities for tenants to take part, and for your views to be heard and acted upon. We will make it clear, at the start of the process, what can and cannot be changed.

Participation – is where tenants actively engage in decision making, from planning through to implementation. It is the most interactive form of engagement and allows tenants to have a greater influence over decision making and service delivery.



Why do we need a Tenant Engagement Strategy?



The purpose of this strategy is to set out our plans for increasing involvement and ensure our service meets the needs of our tenants

We aim to create and promote a framework which encourages tenants and leaseholders to be actively involved in shaping, improving and scrutinising the housing service.

This strategy ensures that there are various involvement opportunities for all tenants and leaseholders, to become involved at the level they wish.

Our aims and Objectives

The Vision

To provide a range of ways for tenants to be involved in the work of our housing department, to work in partnership to drive continuous improvement and ensuring the service meets the needs of tenants.

Strategic Objectives

We recognise that tenant engagement can lead to real positive outcomes for residents, communities and the Council as landlord. We believe that tenant engagement should be at the heart of everything we do and this strategy seeks to offer a range of options to support and enhance tenants to be actively involved.

We will do this through a number of strategic objectives;

1. Make tenant and leaseholder engagement an integral part of our service, ensure our officers and contractors understand this is a shared responsibility.
2. Strengthen and develop accessible communication methods ensuring tenants are offered a number of different ways to get involved.
3. To be more accountable for the services we deliver by empowering our residents to challenge us and to get involved in setting priorities.
4. Use customer feedback to improve our housing services, and keep tenants informed about how their contributions have been used to drive continuous improvement.



Priorities

In order to meet these strategic objectives, the following priorities have been agreed with the Tenant Participation Review and Development Group.

Objective 1 - Make tenant and leaseholder engagement an integral part of our service, ensuring our officers and contractors understand this is a shared responsibility.

- Work alongside tenants to publish and promote the Tenant Engagement Strategy.
- Regularly monitor the strategy, to ensure it continues to meet its objectives.
- Introduce a framework which encourages tenants to have their say, offering greater levels of influence on services and policies.
- Ensure that internal procedures for involving tenants in decision making are fit for purpose, for example, any decisions taken demonstrate the level of tenant involvement in the process leading to the decision made.

Objective 2 - Strengthen and develop communication methods ensuring tenants are offered a number of different ways to get involved and is accessible to all.

- Ensure our menu of involvement is inclusive and allows tenants with specific needs to take part and promote equality and diversity throughout the housing service.
- Offer a range of options for engagement both traditional and technology based.

Objective 3 - To be more accountable for the services we deliver by empowering our residents to challenge us and to get involved in setting priorities.

- Produce an annual report providing an overview of the last 12-months.
- Empower tenants to hold us to account by providing appropriate information, training support and feedback.
- Publish and promote our service standards and ensure tenants know how to challenge them.
- Develop and support a resident led scrutiny process that will challenge the housing service and make recommendations for improvements.

Objective 4 - Use customer feedback to improve our housing services, and keep tenants informed about how their contributions have been used to drive continuous improvement.

- Publish and promote our tenants newsletter and encourage tenants to become actively involved with its production.
- Produce a You said we did article highlighting where customer feedback has made a difference to how we deliver services.
- Develop a range of ways to gather feedback, surveys, mystery shoppers, consultations.



Why get involved?

As a tenant or leaseholder you have first-hand experience of our services



“Ashbourne Court has been refurbished to a very high standard, the new accommodation is very well integrated and will provide quality homes for additional residents, plus a lot of thought has gone into providing mobility scooter storage for those who are less mobile.”

“The Woodlands is a lovely development, the properties are finished to a very high standard with up to the minute building technology providing very efficient homes, also it was nice to see each property has dedicated parking and are futureproofed with the addition of electric car charging points.”

Steven Bramley, tenant from Bolsover

By getting involved and having your say about what you think works well, or where you think we can improve, we are able to improve our housing services for everyone.

Being involved will give you the chance to:

- Be active in shaping our services
- Make your area a better place to live
- Give views on the services you receive
- Help us better understand the needs of tenants and leaseholders
- Be part of a group to review and improve services
- Receive relevant training





How can you become involved?

We recognise that people want to give their views or be involved in different ways

We are committed to ensuring that tenants and leaseholders are at the heart of our service delivery. This is an opportunity for you to be able to take part in the decision making process and influencing decisions about your home, the services you receive and the area in which you live.

We want to encourage as many tenants and leaseholders as possible to have their say, become involved and participate in the housing service.

Below are a number of opportunities to become involved. It allows you to decide the extent of your involvement with us.



Register of Tenants

Respond to surveys or comment on a specific service area in which you are interested, from the comfort of your own home. We can contact you by text, post, email or telephone.



Tenant Groups

Represent your community on a wide range of issues by being part of a tenants group in your area.



Community Representative

A representative who lives in a village location or specific area, where there are insufficient tenants to form a group. You may be consulted on any potential changes to the housing service, that may affect your community.



Repairs Action Network Team (RANT)

A group whose main focus is on housing repairs service. The group is led by the Housing Repairs Managers including subjects such as day to day repairs, empty properties and future work planning.



Tenant Networking Event

An annual event that takes place in the District and provide opportunities for you to drop in, have a coffee and a chat with officers and managers from a variety of services about housing options, repairs, and many other services we provide.



Tenant Scrutiny Group

The aim of the group is to carry out a range of in-depth investigations of our housing-related services and use their findings to challenge and shape the housing service.



Housing Focused Challenge Days

A one off event that will focus on a particular topic. Previous challenge days have included - appointments for repairs, empty properties, welfare adaptations, choice based lettings, anti-social behaviour, environmental works.



Senior Citizen Forum

These forums are held in the meeting rooms at each scheme. It is an opportunity to allow sheltered scheme tenants and housing services to work in partnership, to discuss services you receive and identify areas for improvement.



Leaseholder Forum

This forum is for leaseholder only. It identifies what improvements can be made to services to increase satisfaction levels and enables us to inform members of any future planned works.



Editorial Team

Being part of this team, you could suggest and/or review articles for our Tenants Newsletter (Bolsover Homes). You will meet with our Communications Officer and help with the production of the newsletter. You may even want to write an article of your own!



Community Grant Fund

This fund is open to tenants to apply for financial help towards the cost of arranging an event, activity or initiative which can help to bring people together in your community. You can apply for up to £500. This scheme is run on an annual basis.



Neighbourhood Walkabouts

Tenants are invited to attend estate inspections. It is an opportunity to meet officers and dates are published in advance in the tenants newsletter (Bolsover Homes) and on our website.



Communal Cleaning Inspections

We are planning to introduce a new communal cleaning programme for tenants living in flats that share communal areas. We are looking to recruit tenant inspectors, who can monitor the standard of cleaning, according to our contract specification.



Resources for Tenant Engagement

We aim to ensure that tenants have support to develop and sustain involvement within their communities

We believe it is important to provide sufficient resources to achieve the aims of the Tenant Engagement Strategy, and have allocated a specific annual budget.

Making it easy for you to get involved

We recognise that tenant involvement requires commitment from tenants and that there are barriers which may prevent tenants from being involved including transport cost, family commitments and training.

We are committed to offer practical support to ensure tenant involvement is a viable option for as many as possible

We will reimburse all reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred by tenants when attending events and meetings relating to their involvement activities. We will also pay for tenants to attend conferences and training courses where it is relevant to their involvement and benefit the wider tenant base.

How we will support our tenants to engage:



Provide suitable/accessible venues to hold meetings and provide refreshments.



Provide transport to attend training courses and sector conferences.

How tenants will be kept informed

In March 2022 we carried out an independent tenant satisfaction survey and we found 81% of tenants felt we were either good or fairly good at keeping tenants informed about services and decisions that affect them.

The survey also highlighted the preferred contact methods:

Letters

- 76% said letters are their preferred way of being kept informed
- Tenants 65* reported 71%

Phone calls

- 72% said phone calls are their preferred way of being kept informed
- Tenants 65* reported 74%

Emails

- 33% said emails are their preferred way of being kept informed
- Tenants 65* reported 25%

Text Message

- 38% said text message are their preferred way of being kept informed
- Tenants 65* reported 31%

Social Media

- 5% said social media is their preferred way of being kept informed
- Tenants 65* reported 4%



How we will provide tenants with information about services and decisions

We aim to use a variety of communication methods to ensure our services and published information is fully accessible

Tenancy Agreement – sets out the tenants’ rights to information about their terms of tenancy including our obligations as a landlord and access to housing related policies and procedures.

Tenants Handbook – provides additional information about tenancies including, rents, repairs and maintenance, and further information about the rights and responsibilities of tenants.

Tenants Annual Report – provides an overview on how we are performing and information relating to tenant satisfaction on all aspects of the housing service. It also includes financial information and allows tenants to see how we are spending income from rents.

Bolsover Homes Newsletter – we will produce three editions annually in Spring, Summer and Winter giving tenants the options to have the copies sent via post or by email. A copy will also be made available on our website.

Individual Letters –for important information affecting all tenants, such as the annual rent increase consultation or changes in tenancy agreements, we will send individual letters.

Council Website – we will continue to post local news stories and general council information on our website and signpost tenants to it through social media.

Social Media – we will continue to use our Twitter account to highlight important messages to our tenants.

Menu of Opportunity – we will continue to promote our menu of opportunity for tenants who wish to get involved at a greater level in helping shaping the way we take decisions about housing services.

To request information in a different format, please telephone 01246 242424 or use the online form on our website - www.bolsover.gov.uk

Bolsover Homes
Issue 3 March 2022 www.bolsover.gov.uk

| | |
|---|----|
| New rent payments | 2 |
| More new council homes | 6 |
| A day in the life...of a Tenancy Management Officer | 8 |
| Squeeze on your finances | 14 |



The Council's commitment to equality

We are committed to equalities, fairness and diversity. We have developed our Joint Equality and Diversity Policy and monitoring to provide structure and integrity to the way we work and serve our communities.

We do not discriminate and would like to encourage involvement from all who would like to get involved regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, religious beliefs or disability.

- Different religious beliefs
- People of different racial groups
- Men and women generally
- People with a disability and people without
- People of different political opinion
- People of different ages
- People of different sexual orientation
- People with dependents and people without

Equalities Statement

Bolsover District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community.

The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

Access for All Statement

You can request this document or information in another format such as large print or language or contact us by:

- Phone - **01246 242424**
- Email – enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk
- BSL Video Call – a three way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call Bolsover District Council with Sign Solutions, you just need wifi or mobile data to make the video call, or call into one of our Contact Centres.
- Call with Relay UK via textphone or app on **0800 500 888** - a free phone service provided by BT for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking. It's a way to have a real time conversation with us by text.
- Visiting one of our offices at Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton



Monitoring and reviewing the strategy

The strategy 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.



GREAT COMMUNITIES
EXCELLENT SERVICES
INSPIRING PEOPLE

Contact us and get involved

Have your say!

“Your Voice Matters – Get involved”

If you are a tenant or leaseholder and would like to find out more about any of the involvement opportunities we offer, you can contact us by

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Post | Tenant Participation and Liaison Officer, Bolsover District Council, The Arc, Clowne, Derbyshire S43 4JY. |
| Email | enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk |
| Phone | 01246 242424 |
| Social Media | Twitter @BolsoverDC |
| Face to Face | You can make an enquiry at one of our contact centres or ask any member of housing staff that may visit you. |
| Website | www.bolsover.gov.uk |

**We want to provide the best services we can,
and in doing so we need your help.**

I would like to take part in the tenants' participation venture. Please tick ✓ all that apply:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Come to an ad-hoc event - We hold events throughout the year and we take part in some community events. | | |
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| Meeting with other tenants - Work with us and other tenants to help develop the services we deliver. This could be about a specific topic on a challenge day or be part of a working group. | | |
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| Participate from home - Tell us what you think on housing related services that we provide, this could be a questionnaire or a policy to review. | | |
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| Formal Tenant Participation Review and Development Group - Be a tenant representative on this group with council members and housing manager team, which meets six times a year. | | |
|---|--|--|

If you would like to take part, please fill in the form and return it to us in the post.

Alternatively, you can complete the form online at www.bolsover.gov.uk or phone for more information **01246 593060**.

..... FOLD HERE

Catherine Ford,
Tenant Participation and Liaison Officer,
Bolsover District Council,
The Arc,
High Street,
Clowne S43 4JY



Please state your main areas of interest:

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Customer service and communications <i>(including the website).</i> | | |
| Anti-social behaviour and nuisance neighbours. | | |
| Rent arrears and rechargeable charges. | | |
| Repairs Working Group - improving the repairs service. | | |
| Housing Management Working Group – improving estates, your environment and looking at housing allocations and homelessness. | | |
| Sheltered housing. | | |
| Quality and safety of homes. | | |
| Complaints. | | |
| Equality and diversity. | | |
| Leaseholder. | | |

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|--|--|
| Name: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| | Postcode: | | |
| Contact: | | | |
| Email: | | | |



When you have filled in the form, detach it using scissors, fold in half, attach a postage stamp and return to us in the post.



All personal information provided to Bolsover District Council will be held in accordance with data protection legislation and will only be used for the purpose for which it was given.
Information on how we use personal data, including your rights as a data subject, can be found on our website www.bolsover.gov.uk, search privacy statements.