



Tenant Engagement Strategy

2026-2029

CONSULTATION DRAFT

**WORKING
TOGETHER TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**



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Foreword

Welcome to our refreshed Tenant Engagement Strategy. Over the life of the previous strategy, (2023–2026), we've made a number of improvements to how we listen to and involve tenants. This includes strengthening our tenant scrutiny work through our 'Challenge and Change' approach, creating more opportunities for you to have your say through Locality Group sessions and Independent Living Scheme Forums, and regularly reviewing our tenant newsletter, *Bolsover Homes*, to make sure it provides useful and relevant information.

In May 2024, we were one of the first housing providers to be inspected by the Regulator of Social Housing under the new Consumer Standards. Following this, we received a C2 grading.

Since then, we've been working on a range of improvements, especially around how we manage information and keep you informed. This includes updating our tenant records through the 'All About You' Tenant Census, and introducing clearer reports and posters so you can easily see how we are performing and how we handle complaints.

This strategy sets out our priorities for the next three years, including how we will continue to improve and adapt as we move towards new local structures through local government reorganisation.

Most importantly, you—our tenants—are at the heart of everything we do, and your voice will continue to shape how we improve our services.



Victoria Dawson
Assistant Director
Housing Management



Cllr. Phil Smith
Housing Executive
Member



What is Tenant Engagement?

Tenant engagement means giving tenants the opportunity to share their ideas, experiences and provide feedback on the services they receive. This is an opportunity to influence and shape service delivery. Engagement simply means tenants getting involved — in any way to suit you however big or small.

Why is Tenant Engagement Important?

Before making decisions or introducing changes, we need to understand what tenants want and how they feel about the services we provide. Listening is only the first step — true engagement means acting on what we hear.

Your involvement is essential for us to make changes that benefit our tenants and enables us to continually improve our services and achieve higher levels of tenant satisfaction.

Levels Of Engagement

There are four main levels of engagement with stakeholders, in this case our tenants:

Information – is the basis of good communication and strengthening Council-tenant relationships. We will keep you updated on decisions that matter, when they happen, how they are made, and what they mean for you, your home and community.

Consultation – is seeking tenants' views and ideas, considering those views, and providing feedback on how they have influenced decisions. We will make it clear, at the start of the process, what can and cannot be changed.

Involvement – is where tenants actively participate in decision-making, from the planning stage through to implementation. It is the most interactive form of engagement, giving tenants a stronger voice and greater influence over decisions and service delivery.

Collaboration – is the highest level of tenant engagement, where tenants play an active role in shaping and making strategic decisions. Their input is given equal weight alongside other factors. This includes contributing ideas, sharing feedback, and participating at Housing Liaison Board/committee that influence policies and service delivery. By collaborating, tenants help ensure that decisions reflect the needs and priorities of the communities they live in.



What will being involved achieve?

Our involved tenants have made a significant positive impact for all our tenants, because of their work to date. This has included:

- Working with Councillors and staff to review, create and make changes to policies.
- Being involved in Challenge Days and Locality Groups to review Comments, Compliments and Complaints processes, as well as the repairs service and repair priorities.
- Setting and monitoring standards for empty properties before re-letting.
- Helping to produce twice yearly newsletter for tenants called 'Bolsover Homes'.

Our primary aim is to ensure tenants feel empowered to share their views and experiences on our services and trust that their feedback genuinely shapes decisions about their homes and communities. We will ensure that tenants who want to be involved will receive appropriate support and

training to be able to actively and confidently participate. Building trust is essential as tenants are unlikely to engage if they believe their voices go unheard.



Why do we need a Tenant Engagement Strategy?

The requirement for the Council to have a clear approach to how it will work with tenants is defined at both a national level in regulations and at a local level in Council strategies.

A Tenant Engagement Strategy allows us to plan effectively, establish clear goals, and it serves as a guide to help us deliver the services you need and expect.

This strategy is designed with you in mind – our tenants and future tenants. Your feedback drives the changes and improvements we make. To uphold our commitment, our teams will actively listen, communicate clearly, and engage you at every stage of their work.

Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced significant changes to the Social Housing Sector.

It was introduced to improve the quality of social housing for tenants by tightening the regulations imposed on the social housing sector. As a result of the Act, the Regulator published a new set of consumer standards. The four standards became effective from 1st April 2024, and all Registered Providers are expected to meet these:

1. The Safety and Quality Standard
2. The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
3. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard
4. The Tenancy Standard

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard clearly states that landlords must be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so they can access services, raise complaints, influence decisions and hold them to account. The standard has six required outcomes:

- **Fairness and respect** – Registered providers must treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect.
- **Diverse needs** – In relation to the housing and landlord services they provide, registered providers must take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants.



- **Engagement with tenants** – Registered providers must take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered.
- **Information about landlord services** – Registered providers must communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.
- **Performance information** – Registered providers must collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord services.
- **Complaints** – Registered providers must ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly.

The Regulator for Social Housing is currently consulting on proposed changes to the **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** and **Consumer Standards Code of Practice**.

The proposed changes were published on 9th December with consultation running until 3rd March 2026. These changes are largely with regards to integrating recently published legislation and directions on government policies to the code. There are 3 areas:

- Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs)
- Competence and conduct requirements
- A new electrical safety checks Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM).

Officers have met and reviewed these and feel that they do reflect Governments expectations and that we will be able to collate the required TSM for electrical safety checks as we report this to the Regulator quarterly already.



Bolsover District Council Corporate Plan

Within our Corporate Plan 'Bolsover District: The Future 2024-2028', we have five priority areas for delivery within our Housing aim. One of the five directly affects our role as a landlord, and within that how we engage with our tenants:

"Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord"

Bolsover District Council Housing Strategy 2024-2029

Our current Housing Strategy identifies four priorities for delivery. Priority 1 – Providing Good Quality Housing – encompasses our actions as a landlord including our desire to have a clear framework for how we engage with and involve tenants in service design and delivery.



Our Vision

To create an inclusive, transparent, and accountable housing service where tenants have meaningful influence over decisions, shaping strategies, policies and services, which matter to tenants and are responsive to diverse needs. We will work in partnership with tenants to build trust, strengthen communities, and drive continuous improvement.

Strategic Objectives

We recognise that effective tenant engagement is fundamental to delivering excellent housing services and meeting the regulatory standards. This strategy aims to embed engagement into every aspect of our work. We believe engagement is strongest when its visible, diverse, enables influence and leads to fair and equitable outcomes for tenants.

We will achieve this through the following strategic objectives:

- **Objective 1** – Ensure two-way information and communication
- **Objective 2** – Provide accessible and varied ways to achieve meaningful engagement which adds value
- **Objective 3** – Empower tenants to influence and scrutinise landlord services, strategies, and policies
- **Objective 4** – Ensure tenants views are welcomed, respected and acted upon to drive continuous improvement

The subsequent pages outline our priorities under each of the objectives.

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Objective 1 – Ensure two-way information and communication

Priorities

- 1.1** Publish clear and accessible information about our services, standards, and performance so tenants can hold us to account.
- 1.2** Make tenant engagement a core responsibility across all housing services, ensuring officers, contactors, and partners understand and uphold this commitment.
- 1.3** Publish regular performance reports and “tenant-friendly” summaries, co-designed with tenants.



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| Key Milestones | What will this look like for tenants? |
|--|--|
| Ensure contractor contracts require a set % feedback from jobs completed (potentially minimum 10%) | Job completion surveys at point of completion or via email/text/QR code |
| Inclusion of Contractor performance alongside internal performance reports | Greater transparency on service quality. |
| Expansion of contact with Check It Change It Champions | More opportunities for you to have your say and influence how services are delivered, with at least four surveys a year and correspondence each quarter. |
| Tenant Engagement Officer (TEO) attendance at wider community events | Attendance at local Polish/community events with other Council staff Mobile/outreach service via a dedicated community van Joint engagement with Contact Centre Outreach |
| Embed and promote our Housing Service standards | Clear processes to challenge service delivery, through a range of communication methods. |
| Publication of quarterly performance posters | Tenant-friendly summaries of our day-to-day delivery co-produced with tenants |
| Launch of our Tenant Portal | A one-stop tool for tenants to manage their tenancy |

Objective 2 – Provide accessible and varied ways to achieve meaningful engagement which adds value

Priorities

- 2.1 Promote inclusive and representative engagement opportunities that reflect the diverse needs of our communities, offering a range of digital, face-to-face, and community-based options to suit different needs and lifestyles.
- 2.2 Breakdown barriers to participation by providing support, training and development, and reasonable adjustments for tenants with specific needs.
- 2.3 Use modern communication channels and technology to make engagement easier, faster, and using innovative methods.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Key Milestones</p> <p>Explore opportunities to increase communication by text/email</p> <p>Increased use of Council’s social media platforms to communicate key messages</p> <p>Development of Independent Living Scheme (ILS) representatives</p> <p>Develop direct consultation with tenants in s106 properties (houses bought from private developers to increase number of properties)</p> <p>Further develop analysis of feedback from New Tenant Satisfaction Survey to shape void and allocations processes</p> | <p>What will this look like for tenants?</p> <p>More interactive QR codes to enable direct feedback</p> <p>Regular programme of review by tenants for standard letters</p> <p>Greater use of news alerts via email/text from our gov.notify service</p> <p>Potential for development of dedicated Tenants pages or Apps</p> <p>Dedicated sessions within individual ILS. Develop joint meetings between ILS forums</p> <p>Purchase of additional stock from developers is directly influenced by tenant experience</p> <p>Opportunity to feedback on lettings process and influence experience for future new tenants</p> |
|--|--|



Objective 3 – Empower tenants to influence and scrutinise landlord services, strategies, and policies

Priorities

- 3.1 Support tenant-led scrutiny to enable change and recommendations for service improvements.
- 3.2 Provide tenants with coaching, and training to build confidence and skills for effective scrutiny.
- 3.3 Ensure we provide tenants with the information needed to fully participate in meetings and activities.
- 3.4 Co-production: Working with tenants to develop and deliver services, rather than officers deciding for them.



| Key Milestones | What will this look like for tenants? |
|---|--|
| <p>Ensure delivery of at least one Challenge and Change review per year</p> | <p>Opportunity to directly evaluate service delivery and make recommendations for change based on the evidence presented</p> |
| <p>Ongoing monitoring system for Challenge and Change review recommendations</p> | <p>News updates on service changes following tenant recommendations</p> |
| <p>Develop a core training programme for both new and existing involved tenants, building on learning from TPAS</p> | <p>Tenants have confidence to engage in both informal and formal activities</p> |
| <p>Enable tenants to have ongoing influence over content of meeting agendas and style of reports.</p> | <p>Joint Tenant/Councillor approval of report recommendations at Housing Liaison Board. Tenant influence over report content/layout and additional briefings where required to ensure the information is clear and accessible.</p> |
| <p>Regularly consult with our involved Tenant Database and Check it Change It Champions – including useability/readability checks on core tenant communications</p> | <p>Improved quality of information from Housing service, directly influenced by tenant feedback</p> |

Objective 4 – Ensure tenants views are welcomed, respected and acted upon to drive continuous improvement

Priorities

- 4.1 Gather feedback through multiple accessible channels (e.g. surveys, forums, complaints analysis)
- 4.2 Communicate how tenants' views have shaped and improved strategies, services and policies, and influenced decisions.
- 4.3 Analyse trends in complaints and satisfaction data to identify areas for improvement.
- 4.4 Ongoing review of existing communications to tenants across the entirety of the service.

| <h3>Key Milestones</h3> | <h3>What will this look like for tenants?</h3> |
|---|--|
| <p>Increase analysis of complaints data/trends to enable larger scale changes in delivery, where required.</p> | <p>Regular articles in Bolsover Homes newsletter on service improvements and reasons for compliments and complaint.</p> |
| <p>Create regular programme of surveys to Check It Change It Champions.</p> | <p>Regular articles outlining what 'you said' and what 'we did'.</p> |
| <p>Further develop tenant feedback following meetings/service reviews to ensure process of tenant engagement and tenant's experience is continually reviewed.</p> | <p>Tenants will be able to review documents/policies and core communications with feedback captured through surveys.</p> |
| <p>Development of regular customer survey/feedback process for Lifeline (joint with health providers)</p> | <p>Tenants are regularly asked to share their experience of working with the Council to ensure opportunities remain meaningful and accessible, where tenants can add value.</p> <p>Lifeline customers are able to shape service delivery and improvements as part of delivering an accredited service.</p> |



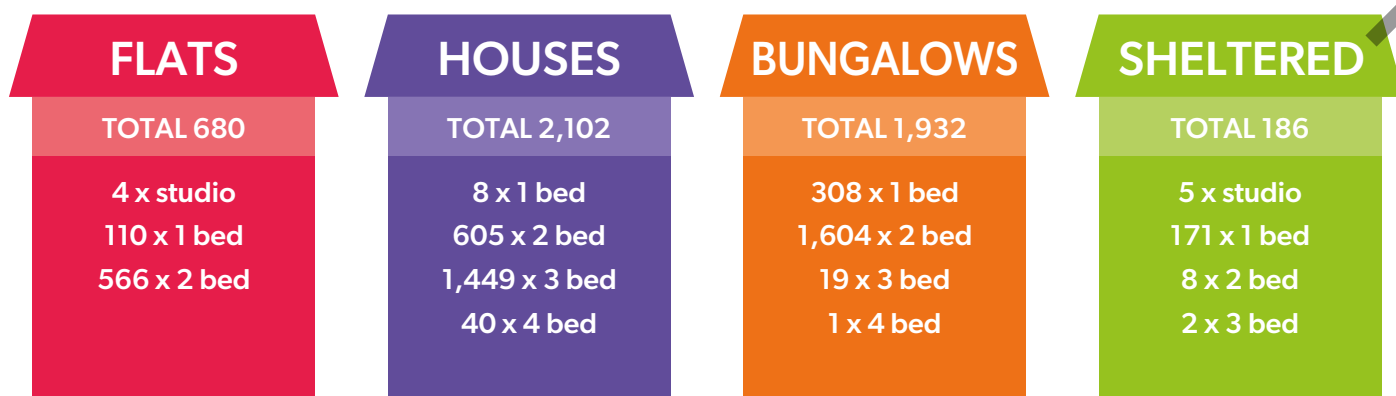
Knowing our tenants

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

- We own 4,900 homes (as at 31/03/26) plus a further 127 that are occupied by leaseholders.
- 46.9% of the housing stock is designated for older persons.
- 77.5% of tenants are satisfied that we listen to their views and act upon them.
- 86.8% of tenants are satisfied the we treat them fairly and with respect.



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*Updated Mar 2026

It's "All About You"

As your landlord, it's important for us to have an up-to-date understanding of your household and personal circumstances.

We recognise that health and personal situations can change over time, so it's essential that our tenancy records remain accurate. Keeping your details up to date helps us better understand your needs and identify any support or assistance that may be appropriate. As part of this, we also ask that you tell us your preferred method of contact, including how you would like to contact us and how you would like the Council to contact you. This helps ensure we communicate with you in the

way that works best for you. We're pleased to let you know that more than 50% of our tenants have already completed the All About You form. If you haven't had the opportunity to do so yet, we would appreciate it if you could provide your current household details. All information you share will be stored securely on your tenancy record in line with data protection regulations. Your details will not be shared with other council departments or any third parties.

Scan this QR code to complete the form online or visit selfservice.bolsover.gov.uk/service/Tenant_Census



How will we keep tenants informed?

We keep tenants informed through a variety of ways, some of which are listed below.

- **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 a minimum of two editions annually giving tenants the option to have the copies sent via post or by email. A copy will also be made available on our website.
- **Digital communication via Council website and Social Media** – we will continue to post housing service information and general Council information on our website and signpost tenants to it through social media. Follow our X, Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- **Housing Drop-In** – An opportunity for you to drop in at your Contact Centre or local community venue, have a drink and a chat with housing officers. These run across all four areas and are held approximately every eight weeks.
- **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.
- **Joint Networking Events** – These take place with neighbouring Districts and provide opportunities for you to meet with other tenants and officers and learn about housing services.
- **'Tea with Tenants'** – An opportunity for you to drop in at a local community venue, have a drink and a chat with officers from a variety of services. These sessions include staff from local health and care services and other partner agencies.
- **Tenant Portal** (*In Development) – Coming soon...The Portal will be a fantastic new digital way that tenants can access information about their tenancy account.



How can you be involved?

We wish to offer multiple engagement opportunities to encourage tenants to be involved in a way which suits their availability. The information below is a summary of the different ways you can be involved and an indication of the time commitment.

Consultation

Tenants involved at this level can choose between at-home involvement or in-person. For the in-person sessions you would need to be comfortable speaking in front of others in small group settings. Sometimes these meetings/events could be held in-person or online, as required, and could be daytime or early evening to enable attendance. Stakeholders at this level present a moderate to high interest in our services, however, a low to moderate influence.

- **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. Time commitment two hours, once or twice a year.
- **Independent Living Scheme Forums** – These forums are held at each scheme with a number of tenant representatives. It is an opportunity to allow independent living scheme tenants and housing services to work in partnership, to discuss services you receive and identify areas for improvement. Time commitment – one hourly meeting, four times a year.
- **Check It Change It Champions** – Being part of this team, you could suggest and/or review articles for our Tenants Newsletter (Bolsover Homes). We may send leaflets and documents we want to review and ask that you check these are clear and ask for your suggestions on what to include. Time commitment as and when it suits you.
- **Tenant Database** – This is our list of tenants who have registered to be involved. We will ask you to complete surveys or comment on a specific service area in which you are interested in, from the comfort of your own home. We can contact you by text, post, email or telephone. Time commitment as much or as little as you like.

- **Estate Walkabouts** (*In Development) – Tenants are encouraged to attend estate inspections. It is an opportunity to meet officers and dates are published in advance in the tenant's newsletter (Bolsover Homes), on our website and Facebook. Time commitment as much or as little as you like.

Formal Involvement

Tenants involved at this level need to be comfortable speaking in front of others in small group settings. Sometimes these meetings/events could be held in-person or online, as required, and could be daytime or early evening to enable attendance. Stakeholders at this level have a high level of interest and a moderate to high level of influence, they are seen as partners rather than mere recipients of information and are given the opportunity to provide input and influence the outcome.

- **Repairs Action Network Team (RANT)** - This group focuses on the housing repairs service. Supported by the Tenant Engagement Officer and Housing Repairs Managers, the group reviews performance of key areas such as day-to-day repairs, the re-letting of empty properties, and planning for future works. Time commitment – two-hourly meetings, held four times a year. Tenants involved receive information in advance so they can prepare for the meeting.
- **Locality Groups** – Represent your community on a wide range of issues. Time commitment – two hours, meeting twice a year.
- **Tenant Inspectors** (*In Development) – We are planning to introduce new tenant inspectors who can report issues in their communities, monitor the standard of communal grounds maintenance, report untidy gardens and fly tipping. Time commitment – ongoing throughout the year.



Collaboration

Tenants involved at this level need to be comfortable speaking in front of others in small group settings. You will be in situations where you can question officers/Councillors on service delivery and directly shape services. You will have sight of official documents and reports, so should feel comfortable reading larger documents. You will receive training and support on how to understand the information being provided. Stakeholders at this level have with high levels of interest, commitment and influence in services. They are active partners in decision-making, and their input is given equal weight alongside other factors.

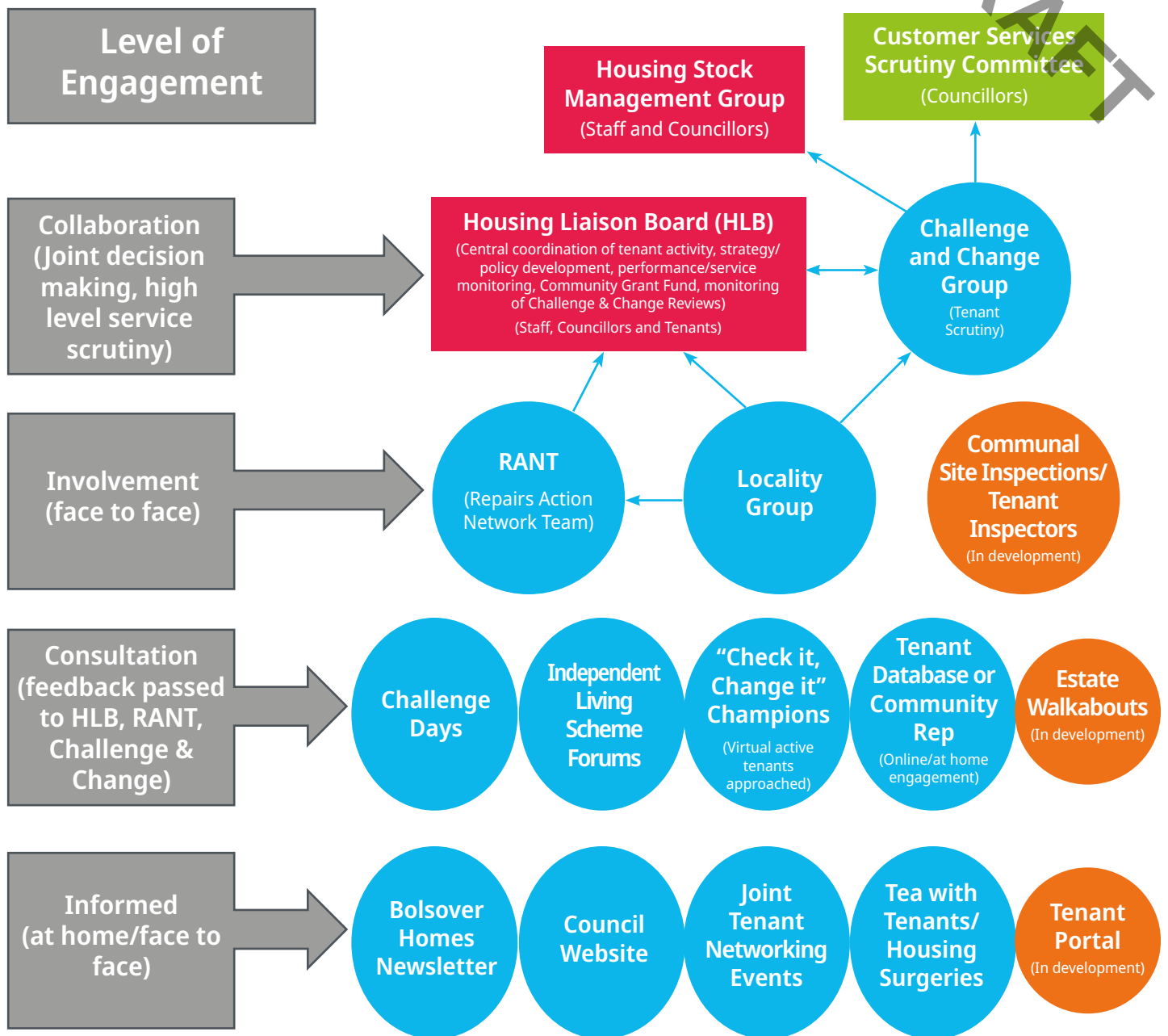
- **Housing Liaison Board** – This is our most formal option for tenant involvement. Tenants work alongside senior managers and Councillors to monitor service delivery, review performance and complaints data, ensure tenant engagement is

in line with legislative requirements, and review proposed policy/strategy changes prior to formal Council approval. Tenants involved receive information in advance so they can prepare for the meeting. Time commitment – a two-hourly meeting, four times per year, plus meeting preparation/reading.

- **Challenge and Change** – The aim is for tenants 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. Each review will be carried out by a small number of tenants who have signed up to this work area. Time commitment – two-hourly meeting every 6-8 weeks for the duration of the review. This opportunity for involvement requires the most time commitment and would require reading/reviewing information outside of the meetings occasionally.



Tenant Engagement & Governance Structure



Why get involved?

As a tenant or leaseholder, you have first-hand experience of our services. By getting involved and sharing your views on what you think works well, or where you think we can improve, we are able to improve our services for everyone.

Benefits

- Give your feedback and views on the services you receive
- Help us better understand the needs of tenants and leaseholders
- Be actively involved in shaping our services
- Make your area a better place to live
- Be involved at a level to suit you
- Add it to your CV – it shows skills and experience and volunteering commitment
- Meet new people, make new friends

Support available

- You will receive support and relevant training
- We provide suitable/accessible venues to hold meetings, at a variety of different times and provide refreshments.
- We provide transport to attend training courses and sector conferences.

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 wish to overcome these barriers to ensure we have participation from all parts of our communities.

We will reimburse all reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred by tenants when attending events and meetings relating to their involvement activities.

Sign up to join our Tenant Database:
<https://selfservice.bolsover.gov.uk/service/Opportunities To Help Shape Our Housing Service>



We're THE ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS **tpas** Members

Tpas is a membership organisation, dedicated to bringing tenants and landlords together to find solutions to improve services, save money and bring lasting change to communities.



As Tpas members, it means our tenants, staff, board members, and councillors, can access a range of services to help you become more involved in shaping the services we offer.

Find out more by scanning the QR code →



Monitoring Arrangements and Action Plan

Monitoring the Tenant Engagement Strategy

The Action Plan supporting this Strategy will be monitored on a six-monthly basis by the Housing Liaison Board. Further additional summaries of progress will be included as part of the wider regular service updates to Executive.

Key indicators of success will include:

- The number of engaged tenants
- The number of engagements held across the different tiers
- The number of Challenge and Change recommendations successfully implemented.
- The number of TSMs meeting or exceeding the national average

Reviewing the Tenant Engagement Strategy

The Strategy will be reviewed every year as part of

monitoring delivery of the Action Plan, with a full review and revision after three years.

This Strategy covers the lifespan of the current Corporate Plan and Housing Strategy and takes the Council beyond the expected local government reorganisation. As and when the Council is re-inspected by the Regulator of Social Housing the Strategy and Action Plan will require a mini review to take account of Regulator recommendations.





Equalities

We are committed to the creation of a fairer district for everyone.

We are committed to providing excellent services shaped by an understanding of the needs of different people and ensuring that how we deliver services promotes equality and challenges inequality. We will continue to work to understand our communities and to work effectively to reduce and eliminate all forms of discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations between all groups in society.

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.