

Warwick District Council

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR HOUSING

2023 - 2027



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FOREWORD



I know that every one of the dwellings managed by Warwick District Council is a home and it's important to me and to the Council's Housing team that your home is a place where you feel safe, secure and able to live life fully.

To help achieve this, we need to understand what you think about where you live and hear your ideas for the future of your home and community.

This Resident Engagement Strategy is about putting you at the centre of the service and extending the existing opportunities to influence what happens and when. I believe working towards the priorities, co-designed with you the tenants, will make future engagement with the council more appealing, accessible and worthwhile.

The outcome of implementing this strategy will be a better-informed way of providing services for you and I look forward to working with you on this journey.

Paul Wightman
Portfolio Holder for Housing Services



Warwick District Council is committed to delivering a high-quality service and to do that we need to work in partnership with our residents and communities who are best placed to let us know what is working well and how we can improve the services they receive.

This strategy sets out five priorities to deliver resident engagement and will offer you a range of ways to have a say in how services are delivered and influence how the quality of these is improved.

We also want to ensure your voice is heard more clearly throughout the organisation and be transparent about how we are performing.

Resident engagement is an integral part of our culture and putting residents at the heart of everything we do will ensure we drive forward improvements together.

I would like to thank everyone who helped contribute to this strategy and look forward to bringing about real change in the way we work with our residents.

Lisa Barker
Head of Housing

INTRODUCTION

THE SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER "THE CHARTER FOR SOCIAL HOUSING RESIDENTS"

"A home should provide safety, security, and dignity. An opportunity to put down roots and contribute to our community so we can enjoy social and civic lives. Regardless of who you rent from, your landlord should treat you fairly and with respect. And if things go wrong there should be a swift and effective means of redress."

This Resident Engagement Strategy 2023 draws its inspiration from the positive relationships developed over many years with residents. It provides real and exciting opportunities for all residents to directly impact and influence services at Warwick District Council.

In this strategy the term 'resident' refers to anyone living in Warwick District Council-owned properties or accessing the council's housing service. This includes tenants, leaseholders and shared owners.

Published in November 2020, the now adopted, White Paper set out the ambition to work with the Regulator of Social Housing ("the regulator") to create a strong, proactive consumer regulatory regime, strengthening the formal standards against which landlords are regulated and requiring them to:

- Be transparent about their performance and decision-making so that tenants and the regulator can hold them to account
- Put things right when they go wrong; and
- Listen to tenants through effective engagement.

At the heart of this strategy are the seven chapters of the Government Charter:

That every social housing resident should be able to expect:

To be safe in your home. We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.

To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.

To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.

To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.

To have your voice heard by your landlord, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The Government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.

To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.

To be supported to take your first step to ownership, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

This Strategy also links closely to the Council's Business Vision "to make Warwick District a great place, to live, work and visit, and carbon neutral by 2030"

THE JOURNEY

In developing this Strategy, Warwick District Council commissioned the support of Tpas, the tenant engagement experts. This brought a wealth of experience into the approach and ensured an independent perspective.



1 SMART REVIEW

An honest in-depth self-assessment from people across Housing and Asset Management of the following areas:

- Governance and Transparency
- Information and Communication
- Scrutiny
- Resources for Engagement
- Business and Strategy
- Community and Wider Engagement
- Complaints

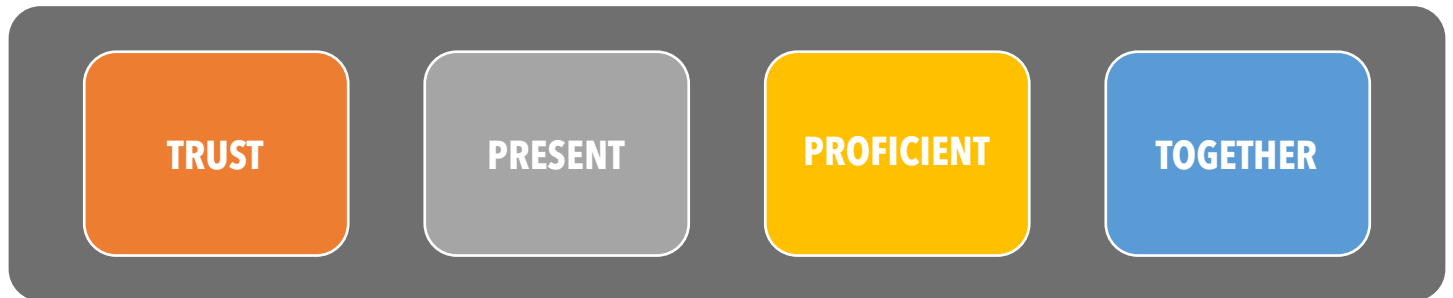
2 DISCOVERY

Using 'Appreciative Inquiry' sessions with residents, stakeholders and staff to research and understand what really matters to tenants and residents and what works well and why.

Quotes and Wishes from the **DISCOVERY** sessions.



Working together, we identified the factors that, if in place, sustain and develop successful resident influence.



3 DESIGN

Participants from the Discovery phase volunteered to co-create a future framework and it is their recommendations that inform the priorities for the Action Plan

4 DELIVERY

This strategy underpins and directs the delivery of the vision that emerged from this journey. The table below summarises current involvement opportunities which will be built on through the delivery of this strategy.

Designated Customer Involvement Team					
New Tenant Surveys		Post Complaints Surveys		Tenant Satisfaction Measures	
Regular Meetings at the Sheltered Schemes	Environmental Improvement Fund	Community Events	ARCH Panel	Website Testers	Support Gardening Clubs
Wellbeing and Advice Calls	Regular Home Visits	Policy and Procedure Consultation	Grant Schemes	Estate Walkabouts	User Guide Testing
NEWSLETTERS		ANNUAL REPORT		FLYERS	
				CONSULTATIONS	

Existing Menu of Opportunity

THE VISION

Our vision is that our residents will have every opportunity to engage with us in ways that suit them, delivering meaningful and outcome-focused resident involvement where they can influence and shape our current and future services.

Residents are at the heart of everything we do, and we want to make sure that we involve, communicate with, and listen to them effectively. We want to know and understand our residents and what they think about our services and their neighbourhood.

It is important that we ensure our residents' voice is heard by involving them and capturing the valuable feedback they have so we can use these insights to improve and develop future services. We will ensure we provide the right opportunities, in the right way and at the right time, and we will regularly review the way we involve residents to ensure it is effective and representative.

"Engagement can take many forms, but the crucial factor is that it is tailored appropriately. There will be tenants who want to proactively engage with the policies of their landlord, and others who simply want to know that their landlord is thinking of them in the way it implements change and is keeping them informed." - quote from White Paper.

We will work to ensure that resident engagement is embedded across the whole council and ensure our involvement work is aligned with our governance and business improvement activities. To help us achieve this vision we have set five key priorities supporting the identified themes of Trust, Present, Proficient and Together.



PRIORITIES

Resident involvement in preparing this strategy, combined with responses to satisfaction surveys, everyday conversations, complaints and compliments all influence the priorities outlined below.

Priority 1 - To highlight existing, and develop new, opportunities for resident involvement.

Aim: To use everyday interactions and co-designed new delivery methods to ensure all residents are aware of how they can be involved in shaping services.

Priority 2 - To increase the opportunities for residents to influence the service in a real and meaningful way.

Aim: To involve and integrate residents across the service at a very fundamental level, where decisions are being made.

Priority 3 - To ensure communication is delivered and received in ways that ensures that all resident voices can be heard.

Aim: To improve our understanding and knowledge of the needs of individual residents to ensure all are heard, listened and responded to.

Priority 4 - Transparent and Open Performance

Aim: To ensure all residents know how the service is performing and can challenge when things are not working as they should.

Priority 5 - To build respectful and trusting relationships between residents and staff

Aim: To enhance the skills and knowledge of residents and staff to optimise service improvements in an informed and co-operative way.

NEXT STEPS

The Priorities are supported by a dynamic Action Plan which itemises what needs to be done, by when and will be regularly updated to show progress.

A plan, however, is a starting point and will be added to and updated to reflect changes in regulation, residents' feedback, and the needs of the service.

Once agreed by Cabinet in August 2023, this strategy will be adopted and monitored by the newly formed strategic residents' group. The actions will then be assigned and become individual projects for resident and staff task and finish groups.

ACTION PLAN

Priority	Action	Achieved by
To highlight existing, and develop new, opportunities for resident involvement	To highlight existing, and develop new, opportunities for resident involvement.	September 2024
	Advertise and promote the revised menu of opportunity.	October 2024
To increase the opportunities for residents to influence the service in a real and meaningful way	Create a strategic tenant group (or Resident Influencing Vehicle) with direct influence on the design and scrutinising of service performance associated with the management, maintenance, repair and servicing of Warwick District Council homes and community spaces.	December 2023
	Develop an influencing strategy through the strategic tenant group (or Resident Influencing Vehicle) to capture and use quantitative and qualitative data to inform strategic priorities, service definitions, investment priorities, performance management and processes. Including a framework for consultation on policies and relevant procurement.	December 2024

Priority	Action	Achieved by
<p>To ensure communication is delivered and received in ways that ensures that all resident voices can be heard</p>	<p>Carry out a review of systems for ensuring resident interactions are logged, tracked and acted on, are fit for purpose and identify improvements. Systems should ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents and the staff responsible have a record of their interaction (e.g., repairs report, safety concern or information request from a resident group) • Residents and staff are clear about timescales for response to interactions. 	<p>September 2024</p>
	<p>Explore and develop methods of communication by social media.</p>	<p>May 2024</p>
	<p>Create a Website Watcher Group.</p>	<p>January 2024</p>
	<p>Carry out systems review to identify data gaps and develop a process for consistently completing the communication loop whatever the activity.</p>	<p>January 2024</p>

Priority	Action	Achieved by
Transparent and Open Performance	Prepare a report against new regulatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures to make performance visible and accessible to residents.	May 2024
	Develop and support a resident-led process to challenge the service and make recommendations for improvement in relation to Tenant Satisfaction Measures and reviewing our performance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code with our involved residents.	February 2024
	Offer support and training to those who want to engage in this way	January 2024
To build respectful and trusting relationships between residents and staff	Provide training to ensure the skills and knowledge of residents and staff to optimise service improvements in an informed and co-operative way.	December 2025
	Incorporate resident engagement into the induction and service-specific training program for staff.	December 2023



