

REPORT TITLE: DRAFT HOUSING TENANT ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

28 FEBRUARY 2023

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Paula Ferguson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing

Contact Officer: Janette Palmer Tel No: 01962 848 120 Email jpalmer@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

'Listening better' is a priority identified within the Council Plan.

This is a key document which presents an approach that maintains and builds on the existing strong legacy of strong engagement with tenants and proposes new ways of working to make it easier for more tenants to influence the service they receive.

It sets out the structure and actions that the council will use to improve the current service, and which will enable the council to meet the requirements of the recent Government social housing white paper.

The council is keen to identify ways to capture the views of a wider group of tenants not interested in committing to regular time-hungry engagement opportunities but who may prefer to step in and out when subjects particularly interest them or would prefer to provide feedback to any council officer or operative they have a conversation with.

This report sets out the draft engagement plan (Appendix 3) that has been developed with tenants and officers following consultation and research. As part of the partnership approach to the plan's development, we would welcome members' views and comments on the proposed content.

The aim is that the new tenancy engagement plan will benefit tenants by making it easier for them to make their views known and for services to be better shaped around an understanding of what's important to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Business and Housing Policy Committee are asked to comment upon the Tenant Engagement Plan content.

1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (If applicable, please include below some detail to state that option(s) will need to have a legal and financial assessment) (to be reviewed by Monitoring Officer and s151 Officer)

1.1 Initiatives included within the Improvement plan build on existing activities and therefore are additional to current service provision. This will impact on the team resources and may require additional administration support to release the Tenant Involvement Officers and allow them to focus on more complex tasks.

1.2 Customer insight and good data management has been a recurring message from the plan research activities. Investing in a resource to lead on this function would equip the service meet future demands and operate with improved efficiency and effectiveness.

1.3 The Social Regulation Bill has been amended to ensure that all staff of Registered Providers meet new competency standards defined by the Regulator. A more senior role within the Tenant Involvement team where the post holder is required to hold a relevant professional qualification could aid compliance although details of this requirement are currently unknown.

2 CONSULTATION

2.1 Ensuring residents' voices are heard is a central theme of the Government's social housing white paper which was developed in conversation with tenants across the country and tenants from Winchester were part of this conversation.

2.2 'Listening better' is a corporate priority for the council and is at the heart of everything it does. Consultation is therefore key to the development of a plan that sets out the approach to 'listening better'.

2.3 Comprehensive engagement has been a core part of the process of developing the plan and has been made up of numerous activities. Details of each stage, the objectives and outcomes have been set out in Appendix 1.

2.4 What has been achieved through these consultation activities?

- The outcome is a plan which should deliver effective engagement because it is built around what tenants have told us i.e. when and how they want to engage, what makes it easier and understanding what prevents them from sharing their views.
- The impact is an approach that makes it possible for the voices of tenants from all households to be heard.
- The benefit is better services as they will be designed around an understanding of what's important to all tenants or they'll have a better and clearer understanding of why meeting expectations isn't always possible.

- 2.5 A summary of the various consultation activities through which the plan was developed is provided below:
- TACT Briefings – introducing the topic and approach to developing a Tenant Engagement and Communication Plan
  - Involved tenants and officers invited to attend sector events to enable them to make informed choices regarding the plan content
  - Surveys – sent digitally to all customers the council holds emails address for and hard copies to a sample to collect views on the tenant involvement team work programme priorities, satisfaction with services and what's important to tenants
  - Series of summer focus groups arranged around tenant availability to specifically discuss how to listen better
  - Learning from other focus groups such as the carbon efficient housing group on related themes
  - Involved tenant surveys on what they see as the benefits of having an engagement plan and whether they'd consider an independent review worthwhile
  - Debrief with tenants following attendance at sector events to discuss learning and what should feature in the plan
- 2.6 The content of the draft plan was discussed with TACT on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and the Tenant Involvement Steering Group on 25 January. Their feedback was:
- Additions to be made to the list of engagement options as follows:
    - An event along the lines of a conference; themed to a current issue such as 'Cost of living – find out what help's available' or 'How can we help?'. (*nb. Event title to be agreed as term 'conference' no longer used in response to tenant feedback*)
    - New homes surveys
    - Talking to elected members
    - Talking directly to a TACT representative
    - One off community events organised around a subject of local interest
  - Coffee, cake and chat programme –

- The previous title was changed to refer to 'coffee and cake' in response to what TACT said worked well to encourage people to come along
- TACT asked that this activity be explained further - 'what this would look like?' – current thoughts are a programme of visits to places and groups to reach those households currently underrepresented and asking 'If you are a council tenants – how's that going? Venue suggestions include Tesco on Saturday morning, food pantries
- Good promotion and communication in advance will be key
- Suggestion that TACT are asked for their suggestions on where to go – but it felt better to go to all tenants for suggestions
- The Tenant Involvement Steering Group provided further benefits to being involved which have been added to the plan.
- The Tenant Involvement Steering Group suggested a survey which asks 'Tell us what went well, when have you felt listened to / an example of where being engaged has made a difference'.

### 3 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Completed at meeting on 17.01.23 with service leads. Attached in Appendix 2.
- 3.2 The assessment group agreed that as the premise of the plan is to improve the representative profile of engaged households by having measures in place to tackle the things which may prevent people from sharing their views with the council; it in itself aims to ensure all households are equally able to influence the service they receive.
- 3.3 The plan aims to improve engagement with under-represented groups especially younger households.
- 3.4 Outcomes from impact assessment:-
  - Further detail added to section within the plan on 'Making engagement accessible'
  - Improvement plan action 'Coffee, cake and chat' amended to highlight that this activity will focus on underrepresented groups first.

### 4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

#### 4.1 The Charter for Social Housing Residents

The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper focuses on tenants having their voice heard by their landlord. Landlords are

expected to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually improve the way they engage with social housing tenants.

The white paper makes reference to engagement being tailored appropriately to meet all tenants' needs – the charter states that 'some tenants want to proactively engage with the policies of their landlord, and there are others who simply want to know that their landlord is thinking of them in the way it implements change and is keeping them informed.'

#### 4.2 Tenant Involvement Review

The Tenant Involvement team have been talking to tenants and researching how to improve and meet the needs of tenants and the requirements of the white paper. This plan is the product of that work. Winchester City Council has a strong history of engagement and the plan aims to maintain and build on this legacy by expanding the options available to make it possible for more tenants to have their voice heard.

#### 4.3 What tenants told us

In August the tenant involvement team held focus groups with residents of council stock to talk about how the housing service listens to views. The headline messages from these sessions on where to focus improvements were:

- Tenants should be shown respect - by the council and anyone delivering services on their behalf
- Good communication throughout - both for repairs works and outcomes from policy / strategy conversations
- Problem ownership and accountability
- Well trained professional staff – that can deal with both the simple and the complex

#### 4.4 What we learnt from sector leaders

Officers and involved tenants have attended housing sector conferences and workshops for ideas as to how we can improve the ways tenants can share their views with the council. The headline messages from these events were:

- Staff on site are engaging with tenants every day – there's a need to capture that information as it's so valuable
- Engagement is part of the day job for every team
- What works is - minimal effort for the tenant, options that allow tenants to step & step out depending on their interest in the topic – few want face to face activities that require longer-term commitment.

- Good feedback is key
- Be honest and transparent
- Keep it simple and language human
- It's about talking to ALL tenants not just those on scrutiny and other panels

#### 4.5 The objective of the plan

The council together with tenants set out what the new Tenant Engagement Plan should achieve – specifically for the council 'to know our customers and their priorities and shape our business on balanced feedback'.

#### 4.6 Areas for improvement

The review activities identified areas for improvement, and these are set out on page 8 of the draft plan and include the introduction of new tenant engagement options as follows:

- Developing a systematic method of collecting the feedback made to front line staff and ensuring this information is actively used
- Regular customer care call - 'How are things?'
- Contact with all new tenants within 12 months of starting their tenancy to find out how things are going and to identify any emerging issues that can be resolved
- Programme of calls to random selection of tenants from whom we don't hear from by officers from all teams
- Investigate text messaging surveys
- Coffee, cake and chat – a programme of visits to where people already meet across the district
- Leaseholder and Right to Buy satisfaction surveys

#### 4.7 Monitoring and review

A Tenant Involvement Steering Group with tenant, officer and member representation has been set up to measure the performance of the tenant involvement service and delivery of the plan.

The Steering Group will use the Regulator for Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) along with local agreed indicators to measure success.

Following the Grenfell Tragedy, the Government has set up the National Residents' Panel as part of a series of reforms, to improve tenant engagement and the regulation of the social housing sector. Winchester City Council is fortunate enough to have a tenant representative willing to give their time to be part of this national panel and they are also part of the Tenant Involvement Steering Group. This will help to ensure that the council has access to ideas on how to continually improve going forward by learning from residents of providers across the country what service aspects work for them.

#### 4.8 Next Stages

- Apply changes from Business and Housing Policy Committee feedback
- Commission a review by an independent organisation for further suggestions on how to improve
- Present amended plan to TACT in May for final endorsement

### 5 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5.1 The plan options and priorities have evolved in response to resident feedback, research and learning from other providers and sector leaders. Priorities and direction have been developed through discussion with service users and council officers along with research into good practice and initiatives of sector leaders.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

##### Previous Committee Reports:-

[CAB2987 - TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY – Cabinet Housing Committee – 22.11.17](#)

##### Other Background Documents:-

[The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper - Chapter 5 – To have your voice heard by your landlord](#)

Winchester City Council Tenant Compact - finalised 2022

#### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Consultation Details

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – Draft Tenant Engagement Plan – 2023 -25

Appendix 1Consultation Details

- TACT presentation – Feb 2021
  - Objective – discuss proposals for Tenant Involvement service work programme with the suggested priority of:
    - A service review to establish the changes needed to meet the requirements of the white paper Charter for Social Housing
    - In partnership with tenants; develop a plan to ensure compliance, address gaps and improve reach and effectiveness
    - Consider how to address falling numbers interested in face to face engagement
  - Outcome –
    - TACT support for Tenant Involvement Team work programme
- Digital Survey sent to all tenants with an email address (4,198), 273 responded, response rate 6.5%) – Tenant Involvement team priorities – Sept 2021
  - Objective – test wider views on Tenant Involvement service work programme
  - Outcome – white paper work confirmed as priority for wider tenants along with improved tenant information
- Tenant Involvement Steering Group Briefing – Feb 2022
  - Objective – establish a joint stakeholder group of tenants (all TACT members invited to be part of the group), officers and members to monitor performance of tenant involvement service delivery
  - Output – group membership and terms of reference agreed, raised awareness of new tenant satisfaction measures regime and requirements of regulator ahead of in house review activities
  - Outcome – forum developed ready to
    - test findings from tenant involvement review activities
    - discuss and propose approach to address service shortcomings
    - monitor progress
- Research and peer networking opportunities – tenants invited to attend national events by sector professionals
  - Objective – involved tenants could discuss current and planned approach with peers and sector leaders and make informed judgements about the content of the plan
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey – Feb/March 2022
  - Response rate - the online survey sent to 4, 265 addresses was completed by 472 tenants, hard copies sent to 47 sheltered tenants (random 10% sample) completed by 26 by sheltered tenants. The total number of returned tenant surveys is 498 – 12% response rate.

- Objective – refresh satisfaction data, baseline performance score, and ask for suggestions for ‘listening better’
  - Outputs –
    - 64% satisfied that the council listens to them (19% no view)
    - 61% satisfied with opportunities sharing views (26% no view)
  - Outcome – Housing DMT determined priority was to explore further tenant views in relation to being listened to
- Listening to views – Focus Groups – Aug 2022
    - Objective – understand why tenants are dissatisfied as feel not listened to and find out how to improve
    - Outputs – see 4.3 for key messages
    - Outcome –
      - Improvement plan actions designed around key messages
      - ASB proposed as next Scrutiny topic
      - New tenants committed to regular engagement
- Tenant Involvement Steering Group Meeting – Aug 2022
    - Objective – review findings of research with tenants to start to frame tenant involvement plan
    - Outcome – ASB agreed as next scrutiny topic
- Officer and Cabinet member meeting – Aug 2022
    - Objective – review findings of research and feedback from TI Steering Group with officers
    - Outcome –
      - Ask tenants what they see as the benefit to them of having a Tenant Engagement and Communication Plan to enable the Improvement Plan to be framed around their priorities
      - offer TACT the option to commission a review by an independent organisation
- Involved tenant and officer debrief – Oct 2022
    - Objective – discuss learning from sector events and what to include in plan to improve service delivery. See 4.6 for headline messages
    - Outcome
      - Name change from Tenant Engagement Strategy to Tenant Engagement plan as more meaningful to tenants
      - Request for involved tenant survey to test for support for a review by an independent organisation
- Involved tenant survey – Dec 2022
    - Objective –
      - find out whether involved tenants support a review by an independent organisation
      - raise awareness of draft Tenant Engagement Plan
      - test views regarding what should be the benefit to them of having a Tenant Engagement Plan
    - Output –

- 16 responses (37 emails, 6 hard copies - sent – 37% response rate)
  - 2/3rds supported an independent review
  - Outcome –
    - Benefit of strategy confirmed
    - Consider testing views on independent review with wider tenant group or whether the council's independent review meets needs of both tenants and officers
- TACT presentation – 19 Jan 2023
  - Objective – start the debate regarding the content and priorities of the draft plan
  - Outcome –
    - see section 2.6
    - Confirmed that the council's independent review meets needs of both tenants and officers
- Tenant Involvement Steering Group discussion – 25 Jan 2023
  - Objective – debate the content and priorities of the draft plan and feedback received from TACT
  - Outcome – see section 2.6

## Appendix 2 - Winchester City Council Equality Impact Assessment

### Section 1 - Data Checklist

When undertaking your Equality Impact Assessment for your policy or project, it is important that you take into consideration everything which is associated with the policy or project that is being assessed.

The checklist below is to help you sense check your policy or project before you move to Section 2.

		Yes/No	Please provide details
1	Have there been any complaints data related to the policy or project you are looking to implement?	No	<p>No formal complaints at WCC.</p> <p>Comments made about ensuring other options are available for people to express their views are known and options to obtain information in addition to digital routes. Nationally its recognised that younger households are not proportionally engaged. This is an issue for many providers.</p> <p>Nationally – Govt social housing white paper looks to ensure housing providers find a way of reaching all households. The white paper states (page 47) that ‘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’</p>
2	Have all officers who will be responsible for implementing the policy or project been consulted, and given the opportunity to raise concerns about the way the policy or function has or will be implemented?	Yes	<p>The plan has been developed not only in consultation with officers, but also in partnership with Housing senior leadership team (DMT), tenants, leaseholders and members.</p> <p>Officer consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DMT Tenant involvement service review discussions – March 2022</li> <li>• 25 August 2022 – Service Lead debate regarding content of first draft of plan</li> <li>• 2 Nov 2022 – Tenant Engagement service lead planning meeting</li> <li>• 04 Jan 23 – revised draft of plan emailed to service leads</li> <li>• 11 Jan 23 – revised draft of plan emailed to team leads</li> </ul> <p>Appendix – 2 of Business and Housing Policy Report - BHP40 – provides comprehensive details of the consultation activities along with the outcomes.</p>

3	Have previous consultations highlighted any concerns about the policy or project from an equality impact perspective?	No	Feedback centres around communication and listening to service users in delivery of services rather than elements of the HTEC Plan.																								
4	Do you have any concerns regarding the implementation of this policy or project? <i>(ie. Have you completed a self assessment and action plan for the implementation of your policy or project?)</i>	No	No concerns about implementation. Self-assessment frameworks have been used for gap analysis.																								
5	Does any accessible data regarding the area which your work will address identify any areas of concern or potential problems which may impact on your policy or project?	Yes	<p>Profile of involved tenants reported annually at TACT AGM shows a disparity between customer profile and those involved in that older households are disproportionately engaged.</p> <p><b>Table 2 – Number and profile of involved tenants</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="869 823 1998 1203"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="869 823 1167 1018">Profile element</th> <th data-bbox="1167 823 1339 1018">All Tenants 12.05.20<sup>8</sup></th> <th data-bbox="1339 823 1603 1018">Profile of tenants actively involved through <b>Meetings</b></th> <th data-bbox="1603 823 1998 1018">Profile of <b>Digital survey</b> respondents, tenant only (Nb only one survey sent to ALL tenants in 2021 – Tenant Involvement Priorities)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="869 1018 1167 1054">Number</td> <td data-bbox="1167 1018 1339 1054">6, 376</td> <td data-bbox="1339 1018 1603 1054">24</td> <td data-bbox="1603 1018 1998 1054">273</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="869 1054 1167 1091">16-34</td> <td data-bbox="1167 1054 1339 1091">12%<sup>8</sup></td> <td data-bbox="1339 1054 1603 1091">0</td> <td data-bbox="1603 1054 1998 1091">6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="869 1091 1167 1128">35-54</td> <td data-bbox="1167 1091 1339 1128">31%<sup>8</sup></td> <td data-bbox="1339 1091 1603 1128">13%</td> <td data-bbox="1603 1091 1998 1128">14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="869 1128 1167 1165">55+</td> <td data-bbox="1167 1128 1339 1165">54%<sup>8</sup></td> <td data-bbox="1339 1128 1603 1165">88%</td> <td data-bbox="1603 1128 1998 1165">80%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="869 1165 1167 1203">DOB unknown</td> <td data-bbox="1167 1165 1339 1203">2%<sup>8</sup></td> <td data-bbox="1339 1165 1603 1203">0%</td> <td data-bbox="1603 1165 1998 1203">0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="797 1203 2011 1383"><sup>8</sup> Orchard Report 12.05.2020 Satisfaction surveys results are that younger households generally have lower levels of satisfaction compared to older households. Therefore, key theme of the plan is to find a way that works for younger households to express their views.</p>	Profile element	All Tenants 12.05.20 <sup>8</sup>	Profile of tenants actively involved through <b>Meetings</b>	Profile of <b>Digital survey</b> respondents, tenant only (Nb only one survey sent to ALL tenants in 2021 – Tenant Involvement Priorities)	Number	6, 376	24	273	16-34	12% <sup>8</sup>	0	6%	35-54	31% <sup>8</sup>	13%	14%	55+	54% <sup>8</sup>	88%	80%	DOB unknown	2% <sup>8</sup>	0%	0%
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6	Do you have any past experience delivering similar policies or projects which may inform the implementation of your scheme from an equality impact point of view?	Yes	Plan replaces the previous Tenant Engagement Strategy 2017 – 2019.
7	Are there any other issues that you think will be relevant?	No	

## Section 2 - Your Equality Impact Assessment form

Directorate:	Your Service Area:	Team:	Officer responsible for this assessment:	Date of assessment:
Operations	Housing	All housing teams	Janette Palmer	17 January 2023

	Question	Please provide details
1	What is the name of the policy or project that is being assessed?	<b>Housing Engagement and Communication Plan 2023-2025</b>
2	Is this a new or existing policy?	Product of a review of the previous Tenant Engagement Strategy and Tenant Involvement Service in preparation for meeting the requirements of the Govt social housing white paper.
3	Briefly describe the aim and purpose of this work.	Know our tenants and their priorities and shape our business on balanced feedback.
4	What are the associated objectives of this work?	More people from a wide range of households find it easy to tell the council their views and understand what the council has done in response and why. Views are captured from those for whom a formal engagement option isn't how they want to share what they think with the council. Engagement with a wider range of households.
5	Who is intended to benefit from this work and in	Tenants, leaseholders, licensees, members and the council

	what way?	
6	What are the outcomes sought from this work?	Representative engagement – reaching younger households Listening better - making it possible to shape our business on balanced feedback.
7	What factors/forces could contribute or detract from the outcomes?	Lack of adequate resourcing i.e. formal engagement routes use a disproportionate amount of the engagement resources available. Stakeholders fail to respect the value and outcomes of less formal engagement activities. Current profile of involved tenants not representative of wider customer group and therefore doesn't meet the balanced feedback requirement.
8	Who are the key individuals and organisations responsible for the implementation of this work?	Tenant Involvement Team All other housing landlord service teams
9	Who implements the policy or project and who or what is responsible for it?	Janette Palmer Housing Policy and Projects Manager

### **Summary**

The premise of the plan is to improve the representative profile of engaged households by having measures in place to tackle what may prevent people from sharing their views with the council and ensure all households are equally able to influence the service they received.

The **Housing Accessibility statement** is a key document as it sets out the measures housing takes to make it easy for all households to use its services. This has recently been updated and is now in the implementation phase.

The Housing services will make reference to the above and the council's **EDI Statement of Policy and Plan** and '**Listening Better – our approach**' throughout service delivery.

Potential disadvantage, based not only on the protected characteristics but due to other household limitations, may occur as follows:

- Written activities - can impact on those with poor literacy skills, those with translation needs, those with sight impairments
- Face to face activities – can impact on
  - Rural communities due to transport availability and cost
  - Disabilities – physical, hearing, sight, mental health conditions
  - Language

- Digital based activities – impact on those with poorer digital skills and lack of access to equipment and broadband connections to use
- All activities – impact of time restricted households – e.g. carers of all groups, those at work, those with multiple commitments

**Special communication/accessibility arrangements** are standard for engagement activities. As part of implementation process for engagement activities its standard practice to give consideration to measures required to ensure no-one has been excluded as a consequence of the approach taken. These considerations will be bespoke to the audience and the activity. Examples can be provided of this e.g. fire safety project, tenant satisfaction survey.

Other measures

- At the point of **sign up** asking service users about communication and other needs that may impact on service delivery, recording details on the Housing Database
- Customer **portal** allows households to keep their personal information and needs updated
- Independent organisation being invited to carry out an **audit of approach**. Good practice frameworks will be used for this health check as well as approach being mapped against the requirements of the white paper for social housing which focuses on ensuring housing providers reach all households
- **Accessibility messages** – invitations for involvement activities include statements around contact us to see how the council can help if you want to be involved but need help
- Monitoring of **complaints**
- Monitor the profile of engaged tenants
- **Housing Excellence Group (HEG)** –
  - HEG Training Programme – focus on meeting diverse needs and compliance with the Equality Act.
  - Action plan – service improvements based on good practice and learning

Outcomes from impact assessment:-

- Add further detail to section on plan 'Making engagement accessible'
- Improvement plan action 'Coffee, cake and chat' amended to highlight that this activity will focus on underrepresented groups

Please select your answer in **bold**. Please provide detail here.

10a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of <b>race</b> differently in a negative way?	Y	N	
10b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Translated fire safety surveys. Interpreter contact for Tenant Satisfaction Survey Monthly festival details provided in the Housing Local Brief for consideration when planning events.		
11a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of <b>sex</b> differently in a negative way?	Y	N	
11b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?			
12a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of <b>disability</b>	Y	N	
12b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	<p>A variety of measures are in place for various groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lip reading guidance for TACT meetings</li> <li>• Hearing loop provision</li> <li>• Plain English writing &amp; readability tests</li> <li>• Venues e.g. Walton room – meets needs of several disabled group – ground floor access, lifts, support virtual engagement, microphones for hearing impaired, near local transport provision.</li> <li>• Reimbursement of transport costs / taxis provision</li> <li>• Timing of meetings based on bus timetable, bus pass restrictions, household commitments</li> <li>• Large print provision</li> <li>• Home visits</li> <li>• Face to face surveys</li> <li>• Hard copies</li> </ul>		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hybrid meetings or those who can't or prefer not to be present in the room</li> <li>• Dietary arrangements for catering</li> <li>• IT equipment loan</li> <li>• Contact with advocates and others for survey completion and as representatives at meetings</li> </ul>		
13a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of <b>sexual orientation</b> differently in a negative way?	Y	<b>N</b>	
13b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	<p>Code of conduct for volunteers to respect all those who attend formal meetings</p> <p>General qualities tenant training arranged and offered to involved tenants in committee roles (2022) but not taken up or completed by those tenants.</p> <p>Staff training to respect all groups.</p>		
14a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of <b>age</b> differently in a negative way?	Y	<b>N</b>	Premise of the plan is to improve the representative profile of engaged households
14b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	<p>Current profile not representative, younger households under represented the aim of the plan is to tackle this gap</p> <p>Improvement plan action 'Big conversation' amended to highlight that this activity will focus on underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Monitoring to ensure balanced and representative; reported to TACT AGM. See section 5 for table on profile of involved tenants.</p>		
15a	Could the policy or project have the potential to affect individuals or communities on the basis of <b>religious belief</b> differently in a negative way?	Y	<b>N</b>	
15b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do	Care taken when booking and referring to venues used for		

	you have for this?	face to face activities that names don't indirectly give impressions that events are not open to all i.e. use Middle Brook Street centre rather than Hope Church. Reference festival information in local brief when looking at the timing of events.		
16a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of <b>gender reassignment</b> differently in a negative way?	Y	N	
16b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Corporate roll out of optional revised email signature format to include pronoun reference. Nov 2022. Use of gender neutral language. Changes to MRI (Housing) database to include title option Mx.		
17a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of <b>marriage and civil partnership</b> differently in a negative way?	Y	N	
17b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?			
18a	Could this policy or project have the potential to affect individuals on the basis of <b>pregnancy and maternity</b> differently in a negative way?	Y	N	
18b	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Respond to requirements of breast feeding mothers at face to face activities.		
19	Could any negative impacts that you identified in questions 10a to 15b create the potential for the policy to discriminate against certain groups on the basis of protected characteristics?	Y	N	See Summary above
20	Can this negative impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for certain groups on the basis of protected characteristics? Please provide your answer opposite against the relevant protected			Race: Sex: Disability: Sexual orientation:

	characteristic.	Y	<b>N</b>	Age:
				Gender reassignment:
				Pregnancy and maternity:
				Marriage and civil partnership:
				Religious belief:
21	How will you mitigate any potential discrimination that may be brought about by your policy or project that you have identified above?	See section `Making engagement accessible` of the plan. The premise of the plan is to improve the representative profile of engaged households by having measures in place to tackle what may prevent people from sharing their views with the council.		
22	Do any negative impacts that you have identified above impact on your service plan?	Y	<b>N</b>	

Signed by completing officer	Janette Palmer
Signed by lead officer	

**Appendix 3 –  
Winchester City Council - Draft Housing Tenant Engagement & Communication Plan  
(HTEC Plan) 2023 -2025**

<b>Quote from Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing</b> To be confirmed	<b>Image</b>
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**The Council Plan 2020 - 2025 priority – Your services, your voice**

We want to have high quality, good value services that are continuously improving to address the changing needs and expectations of residents, tenants, visitors, businesses and non-profit organisations across our district –and are accessible to all, whatever their circumstances.

We want our residents to have the opportunity to make their voice heard and be able to see and understand how the council makes it decisions.

- What we want to achieve**
- Know our tenants and their priorities, and shape our business on balanced feedback
  - Make it easy for **all** tenants and other residents to share their views
  - Understand tenant priorities so they either become our priorities or we explain why they can't be
  - Tenants are respected, their views are valued and listened to
  - Tenants feel able and confident that it's worthwhile sharing their views with the council

<b>Image</b>	<b>The benefit to tenants of the Housing Engagement and Communication Plan</b>  'Listening better' is at the heart of everything the council does.
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Getting engagement right means better services for tenants as they will be designed around an understanding of what's important to all tenants or they'll know the reasons why meeting expectations isn't always possible.

### Putting the Plan together

The council finds out what's important and what needs to be done to improve how we listen using many routes including the following -

- Talking with tenants and other residents
- Surveys online and hard copy
- Focus groups
- Research of good practice by other housing providers and leaders
- Tenants and housing officers going to conferences and workshops
- Regional partnership events with other housing providers
- Gap analysis and self-assessment against good practice frameworks

### Learning

#### Key message

The council has a good structure for engagement through traditional methods. Future activities will maintain this while focusing on finding informal engagement methods to make it easier to capture views from a wider group of tenants.

#### Other messages

- Listen
- Provide engagement options that require minimal effort for tenants
- Make it easy for tenants to step into what interests them
- Have a menu of engagement options that offer something for everyone's level of commitment
- Find a way to capture the valuable comments that on site staff pickup
- Engagement is part of the day job for every team - generate a positive ethos to respect this
- Good feedback on what has changed as result of listening
- Honest and transparent when things can't be changed
- Be honest about where you're failing
- Know who the tenants are and what's important to them and design services around them
- Go to tenants rather than expect them to come to the council
- Find different ways to listen especially from those we don't hear from
- People want to easily share local issues

### How the Plan will be delivered?

- **Methods of Engagement**  
Tenants able to share their views with the council in the way that best fits their life circumstances, their interests, the time

they have available and what they want to get out of talking to the council. (see pages x & x)

- Maintain what's working well in the existing structure
- Introduce new options to improve approach to informal engagement
  
- **Customer insight**  
Invest in data management to make it easier to design services around what's known about tenants
  
- **Respect and value**  
Improve awareness that engagement is central to everyone's role
  
- **Performance**  
Use the Regulator for Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) along with local agreed indicators to measure success.
  
- **Monitoring**  
The Tenant Involvement Steering Group has been established with representatives from tenants, housing officers and elected members to check performance and delivery of the plan. The Tenant Involvement Annual Report presented at TACT AGM will set out the progress made including details of tenants' views have influenced service delivery. TACT agendas include a standing item to report back on the outcomes of consultation activities.
  
- **Review**  
The delivery of the Tenant Engagement Plan will be monitored by the Tenant Involvement Steering Group. This group has representatives from the housing service, Cabinet member with responsibility for housing and tenants.

<p><b>Communication principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen</li> <li>• Use straight forward language</li> <li>• Use various methods/formats to meet all needs</li> <li>• Consult on subjects where tenants have a genuine opportunity to influence the outcome</li> <li>• Only arrange engagement activities when we have something to tell you</li> <li>• Commit to testing out what we hear to check whether it's a majority view</li> <li>• Explain bad news as well as communicating achievements and successes</li> <li>• Give comprehensive feedback when issues are complex to show what options have been considered and why</li> </ul>	<p><b>Housing Engagement Charter 2023 – 2025</b> Expectations, roles and responsibilities;</p> <p><b>Tenants and leaseholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will report any issues relating to their specific tenancy direct to Winchester City Council through the appropriate means.</li> <li>• To adhere to the relevant Terms of Reference (and Code of conduct) for involvement.</li> <li>• Ensure complaints are channelled through the formal complaint system.</li> </ul> <p><b>WCC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will treat all service users with respect</li> <li>• Test out individual feedback with a wider tenant group</li> <li>• Ensure it is accepted that tenant engagement is the responsibility of all housing teams.</li> <li>• To communicate effectively and work toward developing better working relationships with tenants.</li> <li>• Will provide training opportunities relevant to tenant's roles.</li> <li>• Work in a flexible way to adapt to the needs of tenants.</li> <li>• Arrange meetings that are virtually enabled at locations and times that represent the whole district.</li> <li>• Respond to tenant queries, constructively and in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Senior management and Service leads will attend meetings when appropriate.</li> <li>• To adhere to the relevant Terms of Reference (and Code of conduct) for involvement.</li> <li>• To feedback annually achievements of the Tenant Involvement Team.</li> <li>• To be compliant with regulatory requirements in relation to tenant involvement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Councillors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors are responsible and accountable for policy and strategic decisions and ensuring legal requirements are met.</li> <li>• A councillor will (either individually or through council systems) consult, communicate and address the needs of tenants when policies are amended and developed.</li> <li>• Be honest, listen and be non-judgmental when approached by tenants for a change of housing plan.</li> <li>• Be supportive and strengthen links with tenants to promote an understanding of local community issues.</li> <li>• Support an Equality and Diversity policy.</li> <li>• Will attend tenant meetings as and when appropriate.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>The benefit to tenants of being involved</b></p> <p>In addition to benefits for the individual, by becoming involved tenants will also improve the service provided to all tenants by sharing their experiences and opinions on service improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence the service tenants receive</li> <li>• Acting as an advocate for those living in council housing</li> <li>• Finding out what's happening and why</li> <li>• Work to change things for all tenants</li> <li>• Work to improve where you live</li> <li>• Meet others with shared views and experiences</li> <li>• Talk directly to decision makers</li> <li>• Building knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Being able to direct others to where they can get help with their queries or concerns</li> <li>• Understand how the council values tenants' views</li> </ul>	Image
<p><b>We value your contribution</b></p> <p>Listed below are just a few ways the council shows its appreciation of the time and commitment given by tenants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love to Shop vouchers</li> <li>• Annual prize draw entry for those who've completed online surveys</li> <li>• Activity specific prize draws</li> <li>• Refreshments and seasonal thank you events</li> <li>• Investment in training</li> <li>• Opportunities to attend national engagement events fully funded</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making engagement accessible</b></p> <p>Here are some of the things we do to find solutions to things that may prevent people from sharing their views with the council. Get in touch with Tenant Involvement Team (contact details at the end) to discuss arrangements needed if you are interested in being involved but the options available don't meet your needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport costs and provision</li> <li>• Training to develop skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Hybrid offer – on line option for face to face meetings</li> <li>• Equipment loan – laptops</li> <li>• Hearing loop provision in meeting rooms</li> <li>• Respect known communication needs – for example - large print, translation, arrangements for lip readers, plain English</li> <li>• Outreach workers &amp; tenants' advocates welcome to share views on the behalf of others</li> <li>• Accessible venues</li> <li>• Evening and weekend activities</li> </ul>

### How can I get involved? Existing Menu of engagement options

Activity	Overview	Frequency	Level of Commitment
Transactional surveys – Repairs & maintenance, Anti-social behaviour, Complaints, Temporary accommodation, Tenancy team, New Homes	Completed by customers about services that have recently received to gauge satisfaction, identify shortcomings and learn how we can improve	As required	Low
Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Survey commissioned to collect views from a random sample of tenants to improve our services and see how we perform compared with other housing providers.	Annual	Medium only if included in sample
TACT (Tenants and Council Together)	<a href="https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/tact-tenants-council-together">https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/tact-tenants-council-together</a> This is the formal district-wide tenant forum. TACT has formal representation on council committees and meetings that discuss, approve and scrutinise housing related issues.	4 to 6 formal meetings and informal social gatherings a year	High Very high for committee roles
Service Delivery Groups	There are two Service Delivery Groups (SDGs). • Housing Management SDG • Repairs and Maintenance SDG These groups monitor the progress, performance and targets of the various areas of the council and raise tenant issues when necessary. They are also a forum for officers to discuss proposed service changes in detail.	Four meetings a year.	High
Tenant Involvement Steering Group	A group with representatives from tenants, housing officers and elected members to check performance and delivery of this plan	2 meetings a year	Medium
Online survey	All tenants have the opportunity to participate in consultations without the requirement to be part of a physical group	Online Involvement. Average of six surveys a year. Tenants can choose which to complete.	Low Step in only if interested
Mini survey	Short 1 or 2 question survey following up on an engagement activity	As required	Low Step in only if

			interested
Focus groups	Small informal face to face groups organised to discuss a specific topics or new ideas	As required	Medium Step in if interested
One off community events	Events organised around a specific community interest or concern; local residents are invited to come along and talk to the council	One off opportunity	Low
Scrutiny	A small group of tenants who undertake a specific and detailed examination of a particular service area to see if the service is performing to the benefit of tenants.  Example – Grounds maintenance scrutiny exercise – tenants formed a task and finish group that collected evidence, visited sites, talked to tenants, the council and contractors to collect information about the service and make recommendations to the council how it could be improved.	Task and finish activity Several meetings and activities within a set timeframe.	Very High Training provided to those involved before activity starts
Members	Residents are able to feedback their views directly to members.	Lead by individual	Low
TACT Representatives	The option for tenants to talk to a TACT representative about issues or concerns.	Lead by individual	Low
Readers Panel	The Panel look at all written material produced by council Housing Services to make sure it is easy to read, can be understood and does not contain any unnecessary jargon.	As required – online or postal	Medium
Mystery Shoppers	Help test the services the council provides.	As required	Medium
Grounds Maintenance Monitors	Work with Housing Estate Services to help maintain the local area by monitoring the grounds maintenance service.	As required	Medium
Contract procurement	Work with the council when it's looking to engage contractors to provide certain services such as cleaning.	Task and finish activity Several meetings, activities within a set timeframe.	Medium to high
Estate Improvements	Consultation with the local community regarding proposals for area Improvements such as communal garden space, installation of a door entry system, improved lighting and additional parking.	Task and finish activity	Low Step in only if interested

## Improvement Plan

### New – options for engagement (in addition to the above)

Outcome	Activity
Comments made to staff on site and in tenant homes are captured	Developing a systematic method of collecting the feedback made to front line staff and ensuring this information is actively used. Report back to tenant
Views are captured from those who are reticent to make contact	Regular customer care call - 'How are things?'
Make it easy for tenants to share their views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant Involvement Team tenant 12 month anniversary phone calls</li> <li>• Programme of calls to random selection of tenants from whom we don't hear from by officers from all teams</li> <li>• Investigate text messaging surveys</li> <li>• Coffee, cake and chat – a programme of visits to where people already meet across the district and asking 'How are things?'. Focus on underrepresented groups.</li> </ul>
Collect feedback from Leaseholders	Leaseholder and Right to Buy satisfaction surveys
Monitoring cleaning contracts	Work with Housing Estate Services to help maintain the communal areas by monitoring the cleaning service.
Community Engagement Officers	Work together with the local community (people and parish) to empower them to input to the decision making process within the council and to 'have a say' about their local environment (crime & disorder concerns, estate issues). Work in partnership with those with responsibility for matters outside of housing's remit.
Carbon neutral heating tenant/member panel	Establish a working group to play an active part in discussions around future heating provision and meeting carbon neutral targets

### Other Improvement Actions

Outcome	Activity
Know who our tenants are - understand differences between tenant communities	Improve approach to collection, management, analysis, application of customer insight data and use to inform service delivery and priorities
Community spirit generated	Work with corporate community team to promote community & neighbourliness
All those providing housing services are respectful and courteous.	Briefing sessions with all teams providing housing services
Tenants are confident to challenge council's performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an engagement and scrutiny training plan</li> <li>• Refine induction processes for involved tenant groups</li> </ul>

Fit for the future engagement structure	Consider commissioning sector leading organisation to carry out a health check of the engagement structure
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**More information and details of how to get in touch**

[Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement - Winchester City Council](#)

Phone: **0800 716 987**

Email: [tenantinvolvement@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@winchester.gov.uk)

Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/WinchesterTenants](http://www.facebook.com/WinchesterTenants)

Or join our [Tenants' Facebook Group](#)

*Translate into local languages*