

Mid Devon District Council

Tenant Involvement

Policy Number: HSG

{HSG – Housing & Property Services}

April 2018

Version Control Sheet

Title: Tenant Involvement Policy

Purpose: **To inform residents of our approach to tenant involvement**

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Date: April 2018

Version Number: v4

Status: Review of policy

Review Frequency: **Every 4 years or sooner if required**

Next review date: **April 2022**

Consultation **This document was sent out for consultation to the following:**

Cabinet Member for Housing
Tenants Together
Group
Leadership Team
Homes PDG

Document History

This document obtained the following approvals.

Title	Date	Version Approved
Director of Operations	May 2018	V4
Cabinet Member for Housing	May 2018	V4
Tenants Together	10 May 2018	V4
Leadership Team	8 May 2018	
PDG*	22 May 2018	V4.1
Cabinet*	14 June 2018	V4.1

*- Delete if not applicable

1. Introduction

All registered providers of social housing must meet the consumer standards contained within the regulatory framework for social housing. One of these standards is the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard. The regulatory framework for social housing, operated by the Regulator for Social Housing requires outcomes for this standard in relation to:

- Customer service
- Choice and complaints, Involvement and empowerment
- Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

2. Scope

This policy applies to how we will develop greater involvement of tenants in the decision- making processes of the Housing Service leading to service improvement and improved tenant satisfaction.

3. Related Documents

- a. Tenancy Agreement
- b. Section 105 of the 1985 Housing Act
- c. The regulatory framework for social housing in England
- d. The Housing Service Tenant Involvement Strategy

4. The Policy

This policy demonstrates our commitment to tenant involvement and to providing better homes and communities. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the structure adopted by the Council delivers effective involvement with tenants, and this includes leaseholders, in developing and improving services to meet their needs, ensuring that tenants have a chance to scrutinise the work of the Housing Service, and to strengthen our communities.

- This policy has been developed to ensure that relevant legislation and the regulatory framework informs the work of the Housing Service. We will demonstrate this by:
- Working in partnership with tenants in all aspects of housing management, by offering a menu of involvement shaped around the diverse needs of our tenants and by offering opportunities to review the work of the Housing Service and to make recommendations to elected members
- Creating and developing a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between all parties at all levels
- Making the best use of the resources available being mindful of the need to spend funds available wisely
- We will involve tenants in housing management by a wide range of methods including:

- Making information easy to access, written in Plain English and, where possible, jargon free
- Acknowledging that many tenants do not wish to get involved and respecting their right not to do so. We will provide formal involvement methods, whilst promoting maximum inclusion through other less formal methods
- Finding the most appropriate way to consult individually and collectively and being clear about the choices on offer

5. Information

Tenants will be provided with information in a variety of ways, regarding the following:

Issues affecting their homes and tenancies
Housing management policies and practice
Any proposals for change
Rent increases

6. Consultation

The Council is obliged to consult secure tenants on certain aspects of housing management. The Housing Service issues a variety of different tenure types. The majority of our tenants have secure tenancies but may have flexible tenancies which are a form of secure tenancy. Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 requires public sector landlords to have arrangements to inform and consult secure tenants who are likely to be affected by some proposed changes in matters of housing management. We also have a commitment to keeping tenants informed about other matters and to offering choices and opportunities to make recommendations to elected members. We will therefore provide information about:

- a. Major improvement or repair programmes
- b. Changes to policy and strategies
- c. Performance targets and priorities
- d. Activities for tenant involvement
- e. The timetable for newsletters
- f. How the Housing Service is meeting the requirements of the regulatory framework for social housing

7. Participation

Tenants will have ample opportunity to participate and play an integral part in:

- Scrutinising and challenging how service are managed and provided
- Giving us their opinion on how to improve service delivery

- Reviewing policies and strategies
- Meeting Councillors to discuss service delivery

8. Summary

Establishing meaningful involvement is not always about attending a meeting or saying yes to every idea put forward. It is about working in partnership to make better decisions in the work that we do to improve our Housing Service for all tenants.

Tenants will be able to give us their views by various methods:

- Social media and email
- Face to face
- Telephone
- Written
- Tenant involvement events

We will use new technologies to increase access to information and to receive feedback, ideas and information and this may include, but is not limited to, use of the web, mobile apps, email lists, text SMS, as well as social media.

9. Equality and Diversity

As a registered provider of social housing, the Council has an equality duty and is bound by the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. This means that the Housing Service must ensure that there will be no discrimination or unfair treatment on the grounds of gender (or gender reassignment), race, colour, ethnicity or national origin, faith, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership status, age, disability, politics or trade union membership. We will not tolerate any discriminatory remarks or actions and will challenge anyone who behaves in that manner. Tenants will be excluded from any further involvement if they continue to behave in an offensive or discriminatory manner.

The Housing Service understands that some tenants may find it difficult to participate due to issues relating to travel and caring responsibilities. There is a tenant expenses scheme and reasonable costs can be reimbursed to enable those tenants interested in getting involved to do so.

In addition, reasonable adjustments can be made to remove barriers to involvement and these might include changing the time of meetings to enable them to be more inclusive, ensuring that there are vegetarian options available if food is to be provided for tenant representatives and that all the venues for meetings are accessible.

10. Review

This Policy has been written in line with and meets current relevant legislation.

Unless there are changes to such legislation beforehand, the next review of this policy is due 2022