

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

# **Tenant *Engagement* Strategy**



# Introduction

The councils have developed a Tenant Engagement strategy to reflect the importance and benefits of good tenant engagement - ensuring that all tenants and leaseholders have a voice in the running of the councils' housing services.

With the introduction of the Social Housing Regulations Bill and the new regulatory framework all tenants should have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to monitor and scrutinise the councils' performance as a landlord.

A home is more than a roof over our heads, as a tenant, we should have a say in the way things are done, and the changes that are introduced. We should have a say in the decisions being made to our homes and be part of the decision-making process.

This strategy offers tenants a range of choices in the ways they can work and engage with the councils, to ensure that the voice of the tenant is heard and considered - supporting the councils' ambition to deliver an excellent customer led service.

Based on the responses from the Tenant Engagement Survey and working with the existing Tenant Board and Councillors, the councils have set out five core goals and promises with a range of measurable actions so, as tenants, we can clearly see where they have succeeded or failed.

Throughout the Strategy you will see some targets that you may feel are stretching but you will also notice that there is a clear delivery plan so tenants can see how the councils are measuring up.

Going forward there will be many more opportunities for tenants to be able to participate in decision making about their homes, communities, and services offered alongside elected members of the councils. The strategy seeks to build a culture throughout the housing services that shows that it listens to, learns from, and values the lived experiences of its tenants, and on top of that acts on the feedback received.



*Liz Perryman*  
**Tenant Board Representative**

**This strategy sets out how Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils' will develop tenant engagement opportunities, so that you can effectively and meaningfully work with us.**

The overall aim is to increase the levels of community engagement, using what you tell us to help shape our services and provide you with assurance around our performance, your safety and anything else that is important to you.



## Our Strategy Vision

*"Housing services are delivered through multiple channels that convey clear, streamlined communication with our residents. Meaningful tenant engagement puts tenants at the heart of everything we do."*

# Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results 2022

**Total of 1092 responses**

**16%**  
**Response rate overall**

**453**  
**(42% of respondents)**  
**people told us you would like to engage further**

## The top barrier listed for not being involved

**was:** illness or disability which highlights our aging tenant population, followed by not feeling that views would make a difference.

## How do you want to engage with us?

Top 5 answers were:

- Completing surveys
- Holding us to account on performance
- Neighbourhood walkabouts
- Feedback groups
- Being a local community representative.

## Top 5 ways of engaging split by survey response type

Paper Based Survey Responses	Digital Survey Responses
Paper letters, leaflets & surveys	Emails
Face to Face	Face to Face
Emails	Website
Website	SMS
SMS	Tenant Portal

## Our Tenants Values

We also asked what you valued the most about your relationship with the councils as your landlord and used examples of real tenant values, that were common themes, to inform the strategy's promises and priorities.

# Engagement Values, Priorities and Promises

## Tenant Value

## Priority

## We promise you...

**"Finding information that is required with ease."**

### **1 Open & Transparent Information**

- Will receive regular and relevant information that is important to you.
- Can access information you need to give us your views on the services you receive.
- Will be supported so you can hold us to account and that you understand how we can put things right when they go wrong.

**"Effective Communication."**

### **2 You said, we did**

- We will always provide updates on what it is we have asked you about.
- We will increase the levels of engagement and opportunities to influence, increase tenant satisfaction and use what you have told.

**"Access to services when required."**

### **3 Valuing Diversity & Inclusion**

- That we will provide opportunities for you to get involved in areas that are of interest to you.
- We will make sure that we are supporting those who want to be more digitally consulted with.
- That will remove barriers to involvement for underrepresented tenants and work to end the stigma associated with social housing and ensure you are always treated with respect.

**"To feel we are just as good as everyone else and not made to feel worthless because we are in social housing. Also, when work is done on our home it's done to the standard we deserve, not any old how, because it's a council house and doesn't matter."**

### **4 Engagement is everyone's business**

- We will create a culture of valuing engagement across all services.
- We will make it clear where engagement with you has made a difference.
- Are able to challenge us on our performance, that we keep our promises and that you trust us. We want to work in partnership with you.

**"Hoping that my views will be heard."**

### **5 Early and Planned Engagement**

- We will make sure that your voice is heard before issues are decided, so you can have a say at the earliest opportunity
- That consultation isn't just a tick box exercise.
- That there will be adequate time and resources to get engagement right.



# How we keep our promises

## 1

### Actions

- We will continue to improve the MyHome Bulletin e-newsletter, sharing essential information and as well as updates on our performance data, tenant satisfaction survey outcomes, safety and compliance information. We will also produce an annual printed edition of MyHome for our tenants who may not be online.
- We will, on request, provide you with the information you need to be able to effectively challenge us and make sure you can see how we are performing.
- We will make sure that we consult you on all housing policies that affect you, and that the feedback you give us is used to develop policies and practices before they are approved, ensuring that we are open and transparent
- We will create a dedicated area of our website and improve our Tenant Portal so that you can access everything that is relevant to you and your home, providing you with a one stop shop.

### What will success look like?

- Access to a wide range of information, so that you can scrutinise and challenge us on areas that are important to you.
- You will trust us, feel listened to and understand how you can work with us. We will see engagement levels increase.



***Satisfaction with the way we communicate will increase to at least 80% by April 2024*** - evidenced by feedback via our annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

- A Tenant Approved marker will be added to everything that has been consulted on or designed with you.
- Our web pages will contain the information you need and will be useful, accessible and easy to navigate.



# 2

## Actions

- We will share housing complaints data to make sure you are made aware of when things have gone wrong and what we are doing to put things right.
- We will increase, measure and report on transactional satisfaction, for example, asking for feedback when you have received a repair, moved into your new home, experienced anti-social behaviour or raised a complaint and we will use what you tell us to drive service improvements.
- We will report at least annually on all our tenant engagement work, our tenant satisfaction levels and what has been achieved through working with you.

## What will success look like?



***Housing complaints will reduce by 30% by April 2024 and a further 10% by April 2025.***

- We are following the Complaint Handling Code of the Housing Ombudsman and share our self-assessment against the code annually.
- What you tell us will help us improve services, and we will show you where this has happened.
- You will trust us, feel listened to, understand how you can work with us, and levels of engagement will increase.



**You said,  
we did**

# 3

## Valuing Diversity & Inclusion

### Actions

- We will challenge unacceptable views and behaviours associated with someone's protected characteristics, the stereotyping or stigmatising of our tenants and will carry out regular training with all our colleagues.
- We will develop and put in place the support needed to offer a range of opportunities that encourage engagement, about the things that matter to you and at the level of commitment and involvement that you feel comfortable with.
- We will provide training and support utilising our Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) membership and working with other partners; including the development of digital skills to ensure that we have a structure that is fit for the future.
- We will increase the collection and usage of data, to ensure we are providing accessible and inclusive opportunities and landlord services.

### What will success look like?

- Increased numbers of tenants engaging with us from a more diverse background representative of our tenant population.



***Increased tenant satisfaction to at least 80% Satisfied or Extremely Satisfied by April 2024.***

- Tenants have the skills and confidence to be able to give us feedback, effectively challenge and scrutinise us.



***Increased data held relating to equality, diversity, inclusion, and vulnerability by 100% by April 2024.***



# 4



**Engagement  
is everyone's  
business**

## **Actions**

- We will create, with you and colleagues, performance dashboards across the whole housing service on the information that is important and relevant to you, to provide a 360-degree oversight of all levels of the councils' performance.
- Everyone who talks to you will ensure that they are capturing their engagement activities in our Housing systems and will ensure that all interactions with you are opportunities for engagement, to improve the data we hold about you and increasing your satisfaction with us.
- We will develop, with you, a set of service standards and targets relating to the management of your home, tenancy and neighbourhood and ensure these are accessible to you. We will report on our performance relating to these standards at least quarterly
- We will work with all of the councils' services to ensure that we are working together to deliver on the councils' wider corporate aims and strategies

- We will also work with you to deliver a set of local offers and ensure we report on the performance of these at least quarterly.
- We will build relationships with partners across the housing sector to ensure we are sharing and learning from best practice.

## **What will success look like?**

- The whole the housing service takes ownership for its work and are jointly accountable for its performance.
- We are able to report on the levels of engagement and show where this has increased.
- You will be able to access the information you need to be able to monitor, scrutinise and challenge the council's performance as a landlord.
- Our culture represents the councils' values, and we build trust and mutual respect with you.

# 5



## Actions

- We will showcase where your feedback, influence and involvement has been used in the development of a service or resulted in a policy change so that it is clear for all to see the benefits of designing services with you instead of for you
- We will create a Tenant Consultation Procedure & toolkit to enable all colleagues to effectively engage with you
- We will work towards Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) accreditation and utilise the full benefits of our membership

## What will success look like?

- Consultation is embedded in all review activities, in line with our consultation framework.
- You trust that we have your best interests at heart, and that we are designing services with you.
- We can showcase where you have made a difference.
- We will apply for TPAS accreditation to demonstrate our commitment to tenant engagement by December 2023.

# Overall Success of the Strategy

A delivery plan, which underpins our goals and promises, accompanies this strategy and can be [found on our website](#), a physical copy can be obtained on request.

The delivery plan will be continually developed and annually reviewed by the Tenant Board and our colleagues, to ensure we are working towards what you want and that we are keeping up with your changing priorities.

We will also ensure that progress of the delivery plan is overseen by the portfolio holder members for housing through quarterly reports.



***Specific targets can be found throughout the strategy and within the delivery plan***

## **For us, success means:**

- You are engaged in the running of your housing service
- You feel that your views are heard
- You feel that you are treated with respect
- Satisfaction levels increase
- We meet or exceed our targets
- We are working together across all areas of the councils to ensure we are engaging with all our residents and communities
- We are monitoring and comparing our own performance against others to identify how our performance compares

# Tenant Engagement Roles & Definitions

**Tenant Board or equivalent** - an independent body of tenants and leaseholders that scrutinises our performance, monitors satisfaction levels in line with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, reviews and approves changes to policy and strategy, monitors regulatory compliance, health & safety compliance and makes decisions based on evidence-based reports.

**Tenant Sounding Boards** - to consult and gain the tenant perspective about new or changing initiatives that will directly affect tenants. The boards will focus on different areas of the housing service segmented by what you have told us you are interested in so that you only receive information and are able to influence topics that are of interest to you.

**Neighbourhood Champions** - To act as the eyes and ears of their communities, feeding back and working with the relevant teams about issues affecting tenants in our communities.

**Mystery Shoppers** - to assist us in testing that our services are easy to access, our colleagues are polite, respectful, and helpful and to help us ensure we are getting things right first time.

**Resident Readers** - To give us insight on how easily understood our communications with our tenants are, including feeding into the annual reports.

**Resident Recruiters** - to assist us in the recruitment of tenant facing roles within the councils.

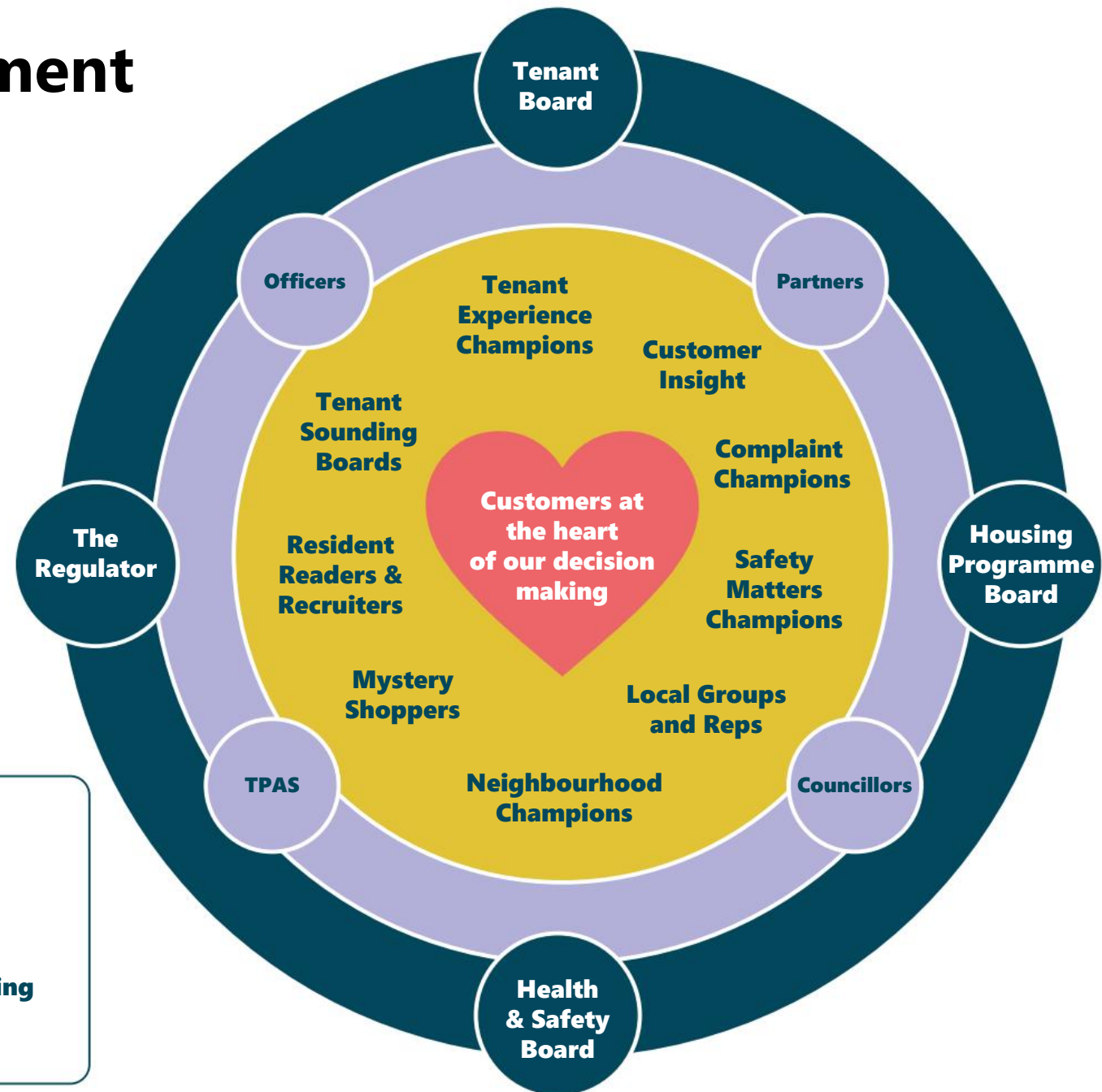
**Tenant Experience Champions** - to work with us when reviewing a specific service or issue, giving us their experiences on their use of that service, and influencing how we can make things better for all tenants.







**Complaint Champions** - to assist us in analysing complaint trends, identify lessons learned and be involved in complaint escalation where appropriate.

**Safety Matters Champions** - Engaging with tenants around the safety of their homes and neighbourhoods, understanding what the council does to keep tenants and leaseholders safe and holding us to account on safety matters.

If you any of these roles would be of interest to you, please contact your Tenant Engagement Team by email: [tenant.engagement@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.engagement@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk) or calling: 01473 296334

# Tenant Engagement Role Structure



					
Engagement Type	Who	Time Commitment	Platform	Function	Frequency
Completing surveys	All Tenants and Leaseholders	Up to 15 minutes	Virtual/Paper /Phone/SMS	Feedback & Influence	At least once a year and after a service has been provided
Neighbourhood Walkabouts	Neighbourhood Champions	1-2 Hours	In Person	Feedback & Scrutiny	At least twice a year
Assisting us with recruitment	Resident Recruiters (Training required)	½ a day interview panel	In Person/Virtual	Scrutiny & Influence	As & when required
Assisting us with procurement	All tenants and Leaseholders (Training required)	1-day tender panel	In Person/Virtual	Scrutiny & Influence	As & when required
Holding us to account on performance	Tenant Board or Equivalent (Training required)	2-3 hours	In Person/Virtual	Scrutiny	4 times a year
Local groups/associations	All Tenants and Leaseholders (Support offered to get started)	Medium to long term commitment	In Person	Feedback & Influence	Regularly
Community Based Events	All Tenants and Leaseholders	½ - 1 day	In Person	Feedback & Influence	As & when required
Virtual Feedback	Tenant Sounding Boards Tenant Experience Champions	30 minutes – 2 hours	Virtual	Feedback & Influence	As & when required
Local Community Rep	All Tenants & Leaseholders	Medium to long term commitment	In Person	Feedback & Influence	Regularly
Reviews of tenant facing policy & procedures	Tenant Sounding Boards Tenant Experience Champions	1-2 hours per quarter	In Person/Virtual	Feedback & Influence	As & when required
Assisting with Complaint panels and Complaint Forums	Complaint Champions	1-2 hours per quarter	In Person/Virtual	Scrutiny & Influence	At least 4 times a year



# Monitoring and Governance

This strategy and the progress of its delivery plan will be monitored quarterly through the Housing Programme Board, progress updates will be provided to the portfolio holder members and shadow portfolio holders for housing quarterly and reviewed quarterly with the Tenant Board for scrutiny.

Our progress will be reported to tenants annually through our annual report, updated quarterly on our website or provided on request.

## Our Organisation Values



OUR  
PEOPLE

*We empower,  
value and develop  
our people to  
work together as  
one dynamic and  
efficient team.*



OUR  
CUSTOMERS

*We care about  
delivering  
high quality,  
customer focused  
outcomes with our  
communities and  
partners.*



BEING OPEN  
and HONEST

*We are open,  
transparent and  
truthful.*



TAKING  
OWNERSHIP

*We take pride in  
our work and take  
responsibility for  
our actions.*



BEING  
AMBITIOUS

*We are ambitious,  
inspiring our  
communities,  
taking pride in our  
places and striving  
for excellence.*

# Background Documents

Tenant Engagement Survey

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey

Charter for Social Housing Residents

Regulatory Standards

Corporate Strategy

Customer Strategy

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Homes & Housing Strategy