

HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 OCTOBER 2025

HOUSING SERVICES TENANT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2024-2029 UPDATE

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the Housing Services Tenant Involvement Strategy 2024-2029.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council Housing Services has a long history of working with our tenants to help shape their communities and influence decisions about their homes and the services we provide. Our approach to tenant involvement is embedded in our culture of openness and honesty, demonstrated through our Tenants Panel.
3. The Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) new consumer standards from April 2024, set out their expectations for how social landlords must give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services.
4. The Housing Services Tenant Involvement Strategy 2024-2029, approved by Cabinet on 5 November 2024, sets out how we will involve and empower our tenants, including how our engagement activities will be monitored and reported, and how we will involve our tenants in decisions about the services they receive.
5. The Housing Services Tenant Involvement Strategy Annual Review Report at **Appendix 1** sets out our progress over the past 12 months against the key priorities of the strategy.
6. The Tenants Panel has been updated on the report, and they have given positive feedback on the report.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that Members:-
 - (a) Consider the contents of the report and the Housing Services Tenant Involvement Strategy Annual Review Report at **Appendix 1**.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

(i) The RSH Consumer Standards

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan's HOMES priority to provide affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents
Addressing inequalities	The Tenant Involvement Strategy will help the Council to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for our tenants
Tackling Climate Change	As part of our Tenant Involvement Strategy, our tenants have been consulted on our Housing Services Climate Strategy 2024-2029
Efficient and effective use of resources	There are no implications
Health and Wellbeing	There are no implications
S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	Council tenants and leaseholders
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This report does not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	This report does not represent an urgent decision
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,200 high quality homes for local residents. We are committed to providing the best homes and services to tenants as possible. Involving and engaging our tenants is critical to help achieve this. Our tenants are best placed to let us know how to make improvements and to review our plans and proposals for the future.
9. The RSH sets a number of Consumer Standards, which apply to all social housing providers, including Councils. Specifically, in relation to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, social housing providers must:
 - (a) Take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants.
 - (b) Take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered.

- (c) 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.
 - (d) Collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord services.
 - (e) Ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly.
10. The Council has well established processes in place to involve and engage our tenants in delivering our services. The Housing Services Tenant Involvement Strategy 2024-2029 promotes our continued commitment to tenant involvement and the Annual Review Report at Appendix 1 sets out our progress over the past 12 months against the key priorities of the strategy.

Outcome of Consultation

11. Our Tenants Panel has been updated on the report, and they have given positive feedback on the report. Comments included the following:
- (a) "Have had a read through (PDF files so much easier) and from what I remember of the last year looks good. Cheers for forwarding and great job to see the improvements."
 - (b) "I've just read it and it's long but informative interesting read."
 - (c) "Read it through seemed really good and informative."
 - (d) "I am pleased with the progress over the last year and it's definitely something you can see has improved and very it's important that is documented in the strategy."
 - (e) "It's been a really good year for involvement, and we have such a diversity now and we can get everyone's point of view - the increase of events is better as you are listening to everyone. The fact that the Tenants Panel now has representatives from most parts of the town is a really good thing as means no one's voice isn't heard."
 - (f) "It looks ok, and its quiet a long document but covers all points well, the engagement has been very good over the last 12 months, and I hope it continues. When I first started on the Tenants Panel, there was only a handful of tenants; it's great to see more people joining."
 - (g) "I struggle to read information sent by the council, so engagement events are vital for me as a tenant. The monthly hub at Branksome helps me to get my opinion across and engagement events are great, and the strategy helps shape these events."
 - (h) "It's a long read and I struggle to read it and access it but I think the involvement team have done a great job and we are starting to see improvement."
 - (i) "Thank you for sharing these documents, I have read through the Tenant Involvement Strategy and overall, I think it is clear, precise and well set out. The focus on tenant involvement is clear for all to see. Keeping tenants informed is key and the last 12

months has obviously been a success.”

- (j) “The importance of safety is paramount to any community, I am happy that it is a clear priority in this Strategy Review.”