

SHDC Tenant Engagement Framework 2023 - 2026

Introduction

South Holland District Council recognises the importance of involving and consulting with our tenants ensuring that any engagement work is produced with our tenants' views in mind.

Good landlords:

- engage in an open, inclusive, and meaningful way with their tenants;
- are transparent about the services they provide;
- are open to continuous improvement using tenants view to shape this;
- create opportunities for tenants to share their views; and
- respond proactively and respectfully to feedback.

This Framework sets out our vision over the next three years to explore and develop our approach to engagement with our tenants. The document builds on the good initiatives already in place and sets out the standards we will work towards in order to ensure that tenants remain involved and consulted at whatever level they choose to be.

We aim to create a housing culture that values tenant engagement and places the voices of our tenants at the centre of the Council's strategic direction and priorities. We understand that listening to tenants gives us the best insight into their priorities and the quality of our services. This enables us to make improvements that deliver increased customer satisfaction and demonstrate value for money. We are committed to evidencing how we are achieving this, and we will show how services have developed as a result of us engaging together.

We have a responsibility to involve tenants in the issues that affect them, and moving forward, we aim to engage our tenants flexibly by offering a range of different involvement opportunities.

We understand that to ensure that any tenant engagement is meaningful it needs to be co-produced with our tenants to ensure that it is diverse, accessible, inventive and meets the needs of our current tenant base.

Please note where this policy makes reference to 'tenants' it relates to residential tenants, licensees and leaseholders of South Holland District Council excluding those that the Council is assisting under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

What do we mean by Tenant Engagement?

The Framework intends to determine:

- How we find out what tenants and communities want and need
- The ways that tenants can engage with us, if they want to.
- The ways in which we support and empower tenants to influence and improve our services.
- How we develop our teams to work within the Engagement Framework.

By working together, tenants and Officers can:

- Create an environment where tenants can help shape and improve our services. We want to work with tenants in genuine partnership
- Develop meaningful involvement opportunities which produce useful feedback that we can act on.
- Make sure our approach to involvement leads to improvement and positive change for tenants and communities.

Context

There have been a number of national challenges and changes which have significantly impacted upon social housing and local authorities. Recent key legislative changes and strategies emphasise the importance of involving and empowering tenants in housing services and the benefits this brings to services and service users.

The Regulator of Social Housing requires landlords to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the development of policies, decision making, scrutiny, right to manage and agreeing local offers. This Framework aims to ensure that all aspects of the standard are incorporated into the delivery of our housing services.

This Framework will support us towards delivering key themes of the Charter for Social Housing Residents. The Charter aims to rebalance the relationship between social housing landlords and their tenants, and it sets out principles to underpin safe and decent housing, ensures that tenants are treated with dignity and respect and that social housing that is required is provided for the future. The Framework confirms the Council's commitment to listen and be accountable as a landlord and sets out how the Council will engage proactively with its tenants. This Framework will ensure that the voices of tenants are heard and that people are given the opportunity to engage with Officers and Councillors, and other social housing residents, on matters pertaining to their homes and neighbourhoods.

The Equality Act 2010 says public authorities must consider the need to advance equality of opportunity. This Framework aims to extend meaningful engagement opportunities to groups who are underrepresented. Demonstrating the value of listening to our tenants will also celebrate diversity and help to address the stigma experienced by some social housing tenants.

This Framework supports and facilitates the tenant community within South Holland to shape the services that meet their needs. It has been developed in consultation with tenants and Councillors and will be reviewed in consultation with the same.

Aims

Effective engagement reaches all tenants, ensuring everyone is given the opportunity to contribute. It allows tenants to have a voice and allows us the opportunity to give tenants an understanding of our responsibilities as a landlord. We will use the next three years to build on this foundation and increase engagement and involvement, particularly with General Needs tenants. We have set the following aims regarding tenant engagement:

Understand how tenants wish to be informed and involved, and the preferred channels of communication

Recognise current tenant satisfaction and determine areas of focus

Create a culture that recognises and values tenant engagement

Establish a range of accessible, attractive and innovative tenant engagement opportunities enabling services to be shaped to meet tenant's needs

Empower tenants to make a difference to their neighbourhoods where communities are healthy, safe and tenants are proud of where they live

Improve communication and transparency between tenants and the Council, focusing on a free exchange of information, performance and ideas

Ensure business and strategic decisions are informed by customer insight

Monitoring and accountability

Progress will be monitored by Assistant Director – Housing. With regular updates of progress provided to the Portfolio Holder for HRA & Private Sector Housing and established tenant groups. Progress will be publicised in the annual tenants report.

Last reviewed January 2023