



# SHDC Housing Landlord Service: Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy

2025- 2027

## Version History

Version No.	Release Date	Reviewer	Summary of changes
1	21/11/24	Adel Gardner	First draft
2	4/12/24	Vikki Cherry	Review and amendments
3	9/12/24	Adel Gardner	Review and amendments
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## Introduction

The Council became members of TPAS ([Tenant Participation Advisory Services](#)) in July 2024 and embarked on a new reengineering tenant engagement project, commissioning TPAS to work with tenants and staff to develop a way of making sure tenants' experiences influence service design and delivery within landlord services. The TPAS methodology followed these key actions:

- Target a cross section of SHDC tenants and invite them to take part in a survey and focus groups.
- Introduce the lived experience concept and draw out the importance of noticing the silent voices of tenants.
- Deliver a series of recommendations or improvement using Appreciative Inquiry methodology.

TPAS then produced an executive summary report on the Tenant Engagement and Influence Project with proposed recommendations which have shaped this strategy.

The Tenant Engagement and Influence strategy will underpin and support the Council in delivering the requirements of the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 and meeting the outcomes of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, specifically the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

We define tenant engagement as:

**"Tenants taking part in the decision-making process and influencing choices which affect the services, homes and communities in which they live".**

Proud members of



## Definitions

<b>TPAS</b>	An organisation that supports and promotes tenant engagement and participation in housing and community services.
<b>Engagement</b>	To participate or be involved in something.
<b>Influence</b>	To affect or change something.
<b>Regulator of Social Housing</b>	Sets consumer standards for Registered Providers. The Council is subject to a programmed regulatory inspection at least every four years.
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	A Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a financial account used by local authorities in the UK to record income and expenditure related to their housing stock
<b>South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership</b>	A partnership involving Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council, and South Holland District Council. The largest council partnership in the UK serving over 300,000 residents.

**Equality Impact Assessments**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process used to evaluate the potential effects of a policy, project, or decision on different groups of people, particularly those who are protected under equality legislation.

## Background

Providers of registered social housing in England are governed by the Regulator of Social Housing, which seeks to promote a housing sector that can deliver and maintain homes of appropriate quality to meet a variety of resident needs. The regulatory landscape for social landlords has evolved significantly, emphasising the importance of tenant engagement and influence.

Engagement with tenants is an explicit required outcome of the Transparency, Accountability, and Influence Standard. The Consumer Standards Code of Practice summarises key principles as:

- Genuine consideration of tenants’ views should be at the heart of registered providers’ different levels of decision-making.
- Tenants’ views can be gathered in different ways. Boards and councillors of registered providers should assure themselves that tenants’ views have been actively sought and considered as part of decision-making about their organisation’s landlord services.
- Communicate to tenants how their views have been taken into account in decision making about how landlord services are delivered. Consideration of how to improve and tailor landlord service delivery should be an ongoing activity taking place at all levels of the organisation and across all areas of service delivery.
- Ensure that all tenants have an equitable opportunity to be involved in influencing and scrutinising strategies, policies, and services, taking into account the diverse needs of tenants.
- Take reasonable steps to assist tenants wishing to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise their landlord’s strategies, policies, and services.

The TPAS model of engagement reflects the fact that not everyone wants to, can, or has the need to get involved in the same way. Our model for the strategy will recognise these differences.



## Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to set out our plans for increasing involvement and to ensure our service meets the needs of our tenants. The strategy will encourage tenants to be actively involved in

shaping, improving, and scrutinising the housing service. SHDC Housing Landlord Services will listen to, hear, understand, and act on tenants' experiences. This will be achieved by focusing on delivering two complimentary approaches:

**Noticing tenant's experiences - using data, curiosity, and experience, SHDC will start to hear the silent voice and will gain insight from the wider tenant base.**

**Working with tenants to proactively influence the service across a variety of opportunities.**

This strategy ensures that there are various opportunities for all tenants, to become involved at the level they wish.

## Objectives

The objectives of this strategy are as follows:

- Tenants have the opportunity and support to be involved in a way that suits them.
- Tenants are at the heart of the service and their voices are heard, valued, and responded to
- Managers and staff respect and work in partnership with tenants.
- Tenants have increased access to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Members, ensuring transparent communication and fostering a collaborative environment where tenant feedback directly influences decision-making processes.
- There is an effective mechanism for co-regulation and tenant scrutiny, offering Senior Officers and Members assurance that we are delivering the right services, in the right way, and where tenants raise concerns, that these are recognised and responded to.

## The profile of our tenants

Our Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy is built around what we know about our tenants. We aim to engage about things that matter most to tenants in a way that is as inclusive as possible. We will seek to ensure we have representative views when considering service wide issues, and local area views when engaging at a local level.

We deliver services to a diverse range of people and so it's important that we understand more about them so that:

- When we develop or review services, policies, and procedures we can be sure that our services are inclusive.
- When we plan engagement activities, we can develop methods that are of interest to relevant groups.
- When we test services, we do so from a wide range of perspectives.
- When we ask for views and ideas, we do so from a wide range of perspectives.

## What do we know?

We carried out a tenant census in 2023 with a 70% return rate. From that we know that:

### Gender.

We have more female tenants than male.

<b>64% Female</b>	<b>36% Male</b>
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### Age.

We do not have many very young tenants (under 25).

16-24	1%
25-23	9%
35-44	11.5%
45-54	13.5%
<b>55-64</b>	<b>18.7%</b>
<b>65-74</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
<b>75-84</b>	<b>17.5%</b>
85+	8.3%

### Ethnic Background.

Many of our tenants are white British.

White British	92%
White other (includes Gypsy, Roma, other white backgrounds)	6%
Mixed (includes white and black Caribbean, white and black African, white and Asian, any other mixed)	1
Black/Black African/ Black British/ Black other	0.4
Asian/ Asian British	0.5
Other	0.03

### Disability

51% of all tenants have a limiting disability.

<b>32%</b>	Of tenants have a disability which limits day to day activities <b>a lot</b>
<b>19%</b>	Of tenants have a disability which limits their day to day activities <b>a little</b>
41%	No disability
8%	Other

### How we try to get a representative view.

- We make use of social media and electronic communications to widen the reach of our consultations or engagement activities. This can support tenants to access the adjustments they may already have available on their devices such as translation or screen adjustments.
- We consult locally on neighbourhood matters; we do this through direct contact with tenants in those areas.
- We complete Equality Impact Assessments to enhance inclusivity by identifying the underrepresented groups.
- We use a variety of engagement methods to reach different groups. Different methods can help capture the views of those who might not ordinarily participate.

- We visit local areas to consult directly with tenants, ensuring their voices are heard and their specific needs are addressed.

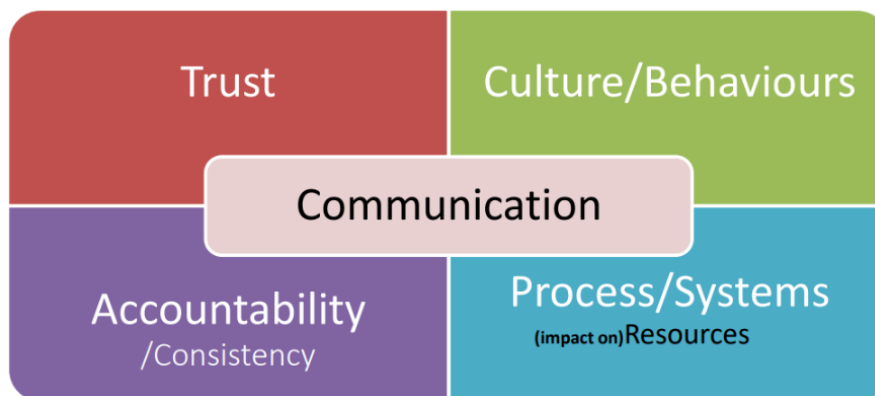
## Our engagement approach

The Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy is linked to the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnerships wider [Customer Experience Strategy](#) by:

- Ensuring a person-centred approach that prioritises tenant feedback;
- Empowering staff to deliver a consistent service and drive improvements;
- Actively welcoming tenant scrutiny; and
- Embracing technology to enhance accessibility by adapting our offerings to meet the diverse needs of our tenants.

## The Re-engineering Engagement Approach

Through our re-engineering engagement project, we identified 5 key themes that will drive forward the Councils efforts towards more effective Tenant Engagement and Influence practices.



## Our Commitments

### Commitment 1

We commit to ensuring that **trust and respect** towards our tenants is embedded within all areas of the landlord service.

### Commitment 2

We commit to a **consistent** approach of **feeding back** the results from tenant **influence** to tenants and officers

### Commitment 3

We commit to delivering the priorities in this strategy to demonstrate how tenant's experiences will be **noticed** and how their **influence improves** the landlord service

### Commitment 4

We commit to creating a **Tenant Influencing Vehicle** with links into the Council's governance arrangements

## Resources for tenant engagement

Engagement is a cross cutting responsibility throughout the Housing Landlord Service.

All managers understand the importance of listening to tenants and are encouraged to work with officers to develop effective ways to engage tenants in giving feedback about the service delivered by their teams.



- We will appoint a Lead Officer for tenant engagement who offers expertise and support to other teams to create capacity and opportunity for enhanced tenant engagement and influence as part of their day-to-day roles.
- We have specific budgets set aside to fund tenant engagement, ring-fenced within the Housing Revenue Account.

## Who can get involved?

- Any tenant or resident on a South Holland District Council managed estate.
- Any other person who has a connection with these people, for example a carer or relative.
- We may also involve other residents or existing community groups who can offer certain skills, experience, or perspective.

## The ways we engage tenants.

Tenant engagement is a broad term that defines lots of different ways that tenants can get involved and make a difference on behalf of other tenants and residents.

We recognise that not everyone wants to be involved in the same way. Our model offers a variety of ways for tenants to get involved and have their say.

Many involvement options only ask for a small amount of time, as and when suits. Others ask for larger and more regular time commitments. Whichever option is chosen, tenants will be playing a very important part in helping us improve the Housing Service.

We have established the following offering based on the TPAS model of engagement:

<p><b>Informing</b> We give tenants information about policies, events, and services that may affect them</p>	<p><b>We do this by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing information on our website</li> <li>• Sending out texts and emails</li> <li>• Using our social media platforms</li> <li>• Inviting tenants to have their say</li> <li>• Sharing and publishing our performance reports</li> <li>• Holding meetings in tenant's local areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consulting</b> We seek the views of tenants in relation to services we deliver.</p>	<p><b>We do this by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking views of the Tenant Forum in the first instance.</li> <li>• Involving tenants in areas that mean something to them.</li> <li>• Sending out surveys on lived experiences.</li> <li>• Using our social media platforms.</li> <li>• Holding meetings in tenant's local areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Involving</b> We give tenants the opportunity to influence the decision-making process, through our menu of involvement both at a local and strategic level.</p>	<p><b>We do this by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involving our Tenant Forum</li> <li>• Using our Tenant Forum representatives</li> <li>• Hosting estate walkabouts</li> <li>• Facilitating mystery shopping</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting local meetings</li> <li>• Bespoke focus groups on specific services</li> <li>• One off consultations</li> <li>• Committee meetings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting</b> We provide a range of support to our tenants to enable them to become actively involved in shaping services</p>	<p><b>We do this by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering training to ensure our tenants have the skills and knowledge they need to get involved.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Working together</b> We work with tenants to support them operating tenant led activities to scrutinise the service.</p>	<p><b>We do this by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing the opportunity for tenants to influence through insight and scrutiny activities.</li> <li>• Bespoke scrutiny groups for example proactively involving tenants in financial scrutiny groups, ensuring transparency and accountability in how their rent is spent.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empowering</b> We give tenants the skills and tools they need to actively make a difference.</p>	<p><b>We do this by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the Right to Manage</li> <li>• Providing strategic opportunities for tenants through the Council's governance structure.</li> <li>• Ensuring tenants have the skills and knowledge they need to effectively challenge us.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feeding back</b> We provide feedback to tenants to help them understand how their input has shaped decisions regarding our landlord services.</p>	<p><b>We do this by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing regular updates in newsletters, community updates and emails.</li> <li>• Publishing reports showing the impact tenants have had.</li> <li>• Create and showcase case studies.</li> <li>• Send follow up communication to those who provide feedback to highlight the difference it has made.</li> <li>• Publishing infographics and posters. 'you said we did'.</li> </ul>

### Involvement Opportunities

Involvement will offer flexibility, inclusivity and a range of engagement opportunities that cater for the diverse needs of our tenants. Some engagement opportunities require less time commitment than others of tenants.

#### Tenant Forum

The Tenants' Forum will give tenants the opportunity to give feedback and discuss issues that affect housing before any decisions are made. Membership will be open to all tenants. A code of conduct and terms of reference will be adopted, ensuring all members understand and agree how it should function.

### Mystery Shopping

Evaluating the service quality through hidden testing.

### Estate Inspections

Regular inspections by tenants and Housing Officers to assess the condition of the estates and communal areas.

### Sheltered Housing Focus Groups

An opportunity to allow Sheltered Housing tenants and housing landlord services to work in partnership, to discuss services received and identify areas for improvement.

### Communal area inspections

Volunteering to monitor the standard of service, according to our contract specifications.

### Consultations and surveys

Responding to consultations, transactional surveys and tenant satisfaction surveys. This allows tenants the option to participate as and when suits.

### Tenant Influence Panel (The Panel)

As a registered provider the Council will take steps to assist tenants to scrutinise the landlord service. The Panel will demonstrate commitment to formalising tenant scrutiny arrangements as it will provide a united voice for tenants to discuss a range of issues and get involved in the decision-making process to improve housing services for all. Appointment to the Panel will be based on skills and expertise, open to all tenants to apply.

The main purpose of the Panel is to;

- Regularly review risks associated with the Housing Landlord service.
- To actively scrutinise finances ensuring transparency and accountability in how their rent is spent.
- To review health and safety matters.
- To act as a driver for the continuous review and improvement of housing services.

The group of tenants will have oversight of tenant scrutiny, and commission tenant scrutiny activity (for example, the Tenant Scrutiny groups) when this is needed on a wide range of housing related policies, practices, and procedures. Tenant scrutiny activity will be based on the evidence about the housing service, the Panel will decide to look in more detail at a number of specific areas of the service, where they feel there is the greatest need for improvement. These will be the scrutiny topics for the year. The Panel and all tenant scrutiny activity will feed into formal Member scrutiny arrangement as set out in the HRA Governance arrangements.

### Tenant Scrutiny groups

The aim of these groups is to carry out a range of in-depth investigations of housing related services and use the findings to challenge and shape the landlord service. These sessions will be accessible to all members of the Tenant Forum, maximising the opportunity for tenants to get involved.

## How we support tenants to be involved

Delivering this strategy requires us to make sure that staff and involved tenants have the necessary skills to be involved at a level that suits them. This is critical to making sure we can achieve our vision and deliver worthwhile involvement. Support will include formal training sessions, workshops, and more informal techniques reflecting the needs of the customers and services.

## How we give training and support

- We will pay reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
- We provide refreshments at events.
- We will arrange transport by taxi if public or private transport is not possible.
- We will choose venues which are inclusive for people with disabilities; this includes physical and sensory disabilities.
- We will offer translation services to tenants, where required.
- We will arrange events at times suitable for most people and where needed, we will arrange alternative times or sessions.
- The training we offer will be informal such as shadowing an officer or simply meeting Officers to talk about things.
- We will organise sessions to educate tenants on their rights and responsibilities. These sessions will cover key topics such as understanding tenancy agreements, maintenance programmes, and the complaint process.
- We will provide tenants with effective communication and negotiation skills that empower tenants to engage more confidently and assertively with us.
- We will hold sessions where tenants can ask questions directly to our team. This will help them gain confidence in asking critical questions and understanding the responses.
- We will provide guides and resources that outline important questions tenants should ask regarding their tenancy. These materials will be easily accessible online and in print.
- We will assist tenants wishing to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise strategies, policies, and services relating to the Housing Landlord Service. Assistance may include, for example, providing venues for meetings, administrative support, funding, and training.
- We will ensure staff are trained to support tenants to get involved, including areas such as using plain English that is free of jargon and promoting awareness of accessibility and inclusion.

## What success looks like

<b>Increased Trust:</b> Tenants will experience clear, transparent, and timely communication.  Tenants will see their voices being valued and acted upon.	<b>Consistency:</b> Tenants will experience regular updates and reporting back on tenant feedback.  Tenant concerns will be addressed promptly and effectively with empathy.
<b>Visible Tenant Impact:</b> Tenants will see tangible changes in services and policies that reflect their feedback and experiences. There will be a rise in tenant participation in engagement activities.	<b>Empowered Tenants:</b> Tenants are equipped with skills and knowledge required to be actively involved with influencing service delivery. Tenants are engaged in shaping services and are empowered to participate in decision making.

## Monitoring the impact of tenant engagement

It's essential that we monitor and share the difference tenant involvement has made. As a registered Provider the Council should assure themselves that tenants' views have been actively sought and considered as part of decision-making processes. This demonstrates that we are listening to our tenants and shows respect for those who have given their time to help make the difference. It also highlights any engagement activities that need to be done differently. To do this we will produce and publish:

- An annual Involvement Impact Assessment – This will provide details of our engagement activities and the difference that they have made. It will be published on our website and reported to Members. It will allow us to evaluate the impact in terms of cost and outputs which will inform future engagement.
- Annual Report to tenants - This will detail high level findings from the above to keep all tenants informed as part of our tenant engagement model.

## Our priorities to ensure we deliver against this strategy.

We have identified some key areas of development, which will improve how we engage with and respond to the views of tenants.

<b>Our Priorities</b>	<b>We will achieve this by</b>
<b>Ensuring that trust and respect towards our tenants is embedded within all areas of the landlord service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that tenant experience is embedded in all service delivery and is captured within staff appraisals.</li> <li>• Fostering a strong organisational culture of fairness, courtesy, and respect.</li> <li>• Producing clear and consistent communications using a variety of channels that are aimed at explaining landlord services.</li> <li>• Setting clear guidelines to staff around setting expectations and providing tenants with information such as what happens next, timescales and closing the feedback loop.</li> </ul>
<b>Establishing and embedding a tenant scrutiny mechanism within the HRA Governance arrangements, ensuring it has an impact on service delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committing to formalising tenant scrutiny arrangement by seeking to adopt a Tenant Influencing Vehicle.</li> <li>• Train and develop tenants to undertake effective scrutiny.</li> <li>• Establishing arrangements to co-ordinate tenant scrutiny functions, feeding into Member scrutiny.</li> <li>• Developing a programme of scrutiny that is agreed annually and which reflects service delivery and housing transformation workstreams.</li> <li>• Update the HRA Governance Framework to reflect these changes.</li> </ul>
<b>Promote a culture of inclusivity, enhancing the value of tenant engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through training and development, we will promote equality and equal relationships within our Housing service to remove barriers.</li> <li>• Developing processes to ensure tenant voice and impact is a key part of service design and delivery.</li> <li>• Tracking tenant influence and measuring the impact in all activities, providing details in formal reports to staff and Members.</li> <li>• Through staff appraisals we will recognise the right behaviours and celebrate contributions of tenants and staff who promote inclusivity.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Effective communication across the landlord service</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a consistent approach to feeding back to tenants the outcomes from tenant influence.</li> <li>• Enhancing communication to keep our tenants up to date on what matters to them, using a range of approaches tailored to tenant preferences.</li> <li>• Make better use of social media and online methods to make it easier for residents to have their say.</li> <li>• Continue to offer an offline tenant engagement presence, recognising that tenants may prefer a phone call, meeting, or face to face discussion.</li> <li>• Publishing clear information on the roles and responsibilities of senior staff, including named people who are responsible for ensuring legal and regulatory standards are met.</li> <li>• Providing fair and easy access to our services and keeping tenants up to date on their enquiries.</li> <li>• Providing details to tenants on the impact of tenant engagement activity.</li> <li>• Ensure tenants know who their housing officer is and how to report repairs.</li> </ul>
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### Oversight and monitoring of this strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing and the Assistant Director - Housing have oversight for the delivery of the Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy.

Tenants will be updated on the progress of delivering this strategy in planned communication materials such as newsletters and annual reports.

The Housing Landlord Board will monitor the delivery of the Tenant Engagement and Influence Strategy and action plan. Tenants and Elected Members will be regularly updated on the progress of delivery.

### Conclusion

The importance of a strategy to direct our engagement cannot be underestimated, not only from a regulatory perspective, but also from a tenant's point of view. We must listen, understand, and work together to improve our services.

This Strategy reflects the Council's aspiration to move to an evidence-based, outcome-focused, tenant influence framework that goes beyond compliance with regulation and invests in providing the homes and services our tenants deserve, putting them at the heart of decision-making.

**Access for All Statement:**

We can provide this information in other languages and formats for example, in large print, in Braille, on CD or audio cassette.

Please contact us by

Email: [info@sholland.gov.uk](mailto:info@sholland.gov.uk)

Phone: 01775761161

Visiting our Council offices, Priory Road, Spalding, PE11 2XE

DRAFT