

# Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy 2020-2024

# Taking Part

Every tenant matters

**TENANT  
APPROVED**



**Tamworth**  
Borough Council

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## Contact us

If you would like more information or details on the Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy, you can get in touch by:

- Going online at: [www.tamworth.gov.uk](http://www.tamworth.gov.uk)
- Telephoning the Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team on: 01827 709709
- Emailing the Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team at: [tenantparticipation@tamworth.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@tamworth.gov.uk)
- Write to: Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team, Tamworth Borough Council, Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffs, B79 7BZ



## Our vision

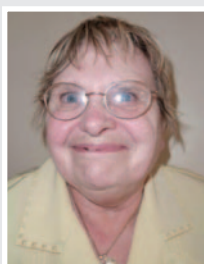
### Empower customers to influence services

We know that to do this successfully, it is vital that our tenants are at the heart of everything we do, the decisions that we make and the plans we put in place for improving services.

We want to work with tenants as part of our commitment to improve services and ensure that our neighbourhoods are places where people choose to live now and in the future in addition to creating sustainable communities. Our aim is to do this in partnership by speaking honestly, listening to each other's views and enabling tenants to influence decisions about their homes and the services they receive.

To achieve this vision, tenants and Tamworth Borough Council will:

- share values
- be honest and open
- be welcoming and accessible to every customer
- consult widely and listen to feedback
- work together to deliver change and improvement



**Iris Clements**  
Chair of the Tenant Consultative Group



**Councillor Michelle Cook**  
Portfolio Holder for Housing  
Services and Communities



**Rob Barnes**  
Executive Director - Communities

# Foreword

The council's Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy 2020-2024 sets out what we plan to do, in co-operation with council tenants and service users, working together towards a common aim of better neighbourhood services. As a council we are committed to encouraging and supporting tenant involvement over the next four years.

By working together, we will achieve all of the aims set out in this strategy, and tenant engagement will flourish as a result of all the hard work and dedication from those who take part. Let's do it better together!

## Michelle Cook, Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

I fully support this strategy, which emphasises the strength of the council's commitment towards improving and encouraging effective tenant involvement throughout the borough of Tamworth.

Much has been achieved to date and every year tenants make positive differences to our services. We hope to keep building on what has already been achieved and we will continue to provide opportunities for tenants to be involved and influence decisions, at the highest possible level in relation to the development of Neighbourhood Services.

A lot of hard work has gone into the writing of this document and I would like to thank tenant representatives and council officers for their dedication in producing another excellent strategy document.

## Iris Clements, Chair of the Tenant Consultative Group

We have worked together with staff to produce this new strategy, which we hope you will read and be encouraged to take part in a way that suits you. This will give you the opportunity to influence change by being involved in decision making.

You will also learn what makes the council tick and this will help you gain a good understanding of the services they deliver. Taking part will also give you many benefits as an individual, and satisfaction when you realise that you have made changes for the better for other tenants and residents in your area.

We can all make a difference by having a voice.

# Introduction

For the purpose of this document, where the phrase tenant involvement or tenants is used, this will include council tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users.

We believe that tenant involvement should be positive and active. Consulting and involving tenants in the services we provide is at the heart of what we do. To be successful, tenant involvement relies on effective communication between tenants and Tamworth Borough Council and their involvement in the decision-making process. Tenants have played a key role in shaping and monitoring Neighbourhood Services for many years and we acknowledge the importance of tenant engagement and consultation to ensure continuous improvement and tenant satisfaction.

Tamworth Borough Council Neighbourhood Services has a responsibility to create a strategy, with tenants, to show how it will support tenant involvement and empowerment.

Tenant involvement is about Neighbourhood Services communicating, consulting and most importantly taking on board the views and opinions of tenants and using these to influence decisions that shape services.

This strategy is reviewed every four years and sets out how we will consult on issues such as:

- housing and neighbourhood policy (change to policies and procedures), for example rent and allocation of council housing
- housing conditions, for example repairs, energy efficiency and capital works programme
- other related services, for example anti-social behaviour and environmental issues.

This strategy sets out the different ways tenants can be involved and play an active role in improving services provided by their landlord.

Tenant scrutiny is vital to the effective development of services and the council benefits hugely by using the ideas and opinions of tenants who use our services.

We continually strive for excellence with and for our communities by

- focusing on our customers' needs
- being honest, open and accountable
- providing equality of opportunities
- making best use of our resources

## Links to other strategies, plans and services

The Tenant Involvement Strategy also complements Tamworth Borough Council's strategic priorities 'Living a quality life in Tamworth', 'Growing strong in Tamworth' and 'Delivering quality services in

Tamworth' - with the main focus on the three key themes of People, Place and Organisation. These priorities focus on working with local people and partners to make communities safer, more confident and better places to live as well as widening housing choice, addressing housing needs and overall improving the quality of life for the people of Tamworth.

Tamworth Borough Council is made up of a diverse range of services who work together with each other and external partners. It is important that the Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy links into and informs these other services and their plans and strategies. This approach allows us to improve and deliver better value for money services by making the most of existing resources.

Other strategies related to Tenant Involvement:

- Housing and Health Strategy
- Customer Services Strategy

## Achievements

This latest Tenant Involvement Strategy builds on the many achievements already made by tenants and staff, working together to develop and improve tenant engagement throughout the Tamworth borough.

- Customer consultation, weekly engagement and regular updates on the planned improvement works at the High Rise blocks and Eringden flats
- Tenant involvement in the procurement process for the new repairs and planned works contractors to commence from 1st April 2020
- Regular updates on the regeneration works at Tinkers Green and Kerria and a visit by tenant working group members to view the new build properties at Tinkers Green
- Regular tenant scrutiny of Neighbourhood Services performance, intelligence and customer satisfaction
- Tenant group members involved in a successful garden make over event at Ellerbeck Supported Housing Scheme and Eringden flats
- Continue to deliver an annual programme of communal cleaning audits and annual estate inspection programme with tenant inspectors
- Developed and produced publications to include the Annual Report to tenants, tenants quarterly e-newsletter and the annual Impact Assessment of all tenant involvement activity
- Implementation of co-regulatory arrangements that see tenants involved in shaping, influencing and scrutinising services i.e. Complaints Review Panel, Tenant Inspector Audits, Estate Inspection Programme, Tenants Voice, ASB Service Improvement Group, Seniors United, Tenant Involvement Group, Tenant Consultative Group etc.
- Review and re-launch of the Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy 2020 -2024 inclusive of Action Plan
- Agreed the 'tenant approved' stamp for all Neighbourhood Services' literature and publications



- Annual review of performance and associated benchmarking data with a suite of smart PI's as approved by tenants
- Tenant involvement participatory budgeting on environmental works for 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and moving forward for 2020/2021
- Annual review of Tamworth Borough Council's Neighbourhood Services website in terms of accessibility, content and layout with recommendations for changes and inclusion
- Review and implementation of the Sheltered Housing Management Model

We are proud of our tenant involvement achievements but we are not complacent and continue to look for new ways to involve customers and to increase the number of tenants who engage with us.



# Our aims

The following aims have been developed in partnership with staff and tenants to ensure there are opportunities to scrutinise and influence the delivery of **Neighbourhood Services** at all levels.

## Information, communication and feedback

The council will provide good quality information and feedback on consultation through all means available.

## Being fair

The council wants to ensure tenant involvement is open and accessible to everyone who wishes to become involved. It is our aim to ensure every tenant has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect

## Consultation and decision making

The council will:

- meet and exceed all legal responsibilities when carrying out consultation, using clear communication methods
- use effective methods of consultation to gather views and use these to develop better services, whilst achieving value for money

## Resources and support

The council will:

- continue to develop modern and flexible communication methods, such as online services, to ensure information is accessible to all
- provide appropriate resources to support the aims of this strategy
- offer opportunities to all those involved to help develop knowledge, skills and encourage participation
- support staff to develop active tenant participation in their local area, including tenants' and residents' groups and other local initiatives.
- provide free training relevant to tenant workshops and working groups

## Performance monitoring and scrutiny

The council will:

- scrutinise regular performance reporting on service delivery and the council's Housing Revenue Account
- develop and encourage the use of effective scrutiny in activities tenants participate in



- monitor performance against the Tenant Involvement and Consultation Action Plan on a quarterly basis
- produce an annual Impact Assessment detailing the outcomes, representation and impact of all involvement activity
- seek independent advice and review from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and Tenant and Residents Organisations of England (TAROE)
- key performance indicators, otherwise known as 'the things that will be monitored', will be reported and updated regularly on the council's website, tenants newsletter and in the annual report to tenants
- benchmark performance with other housing providers

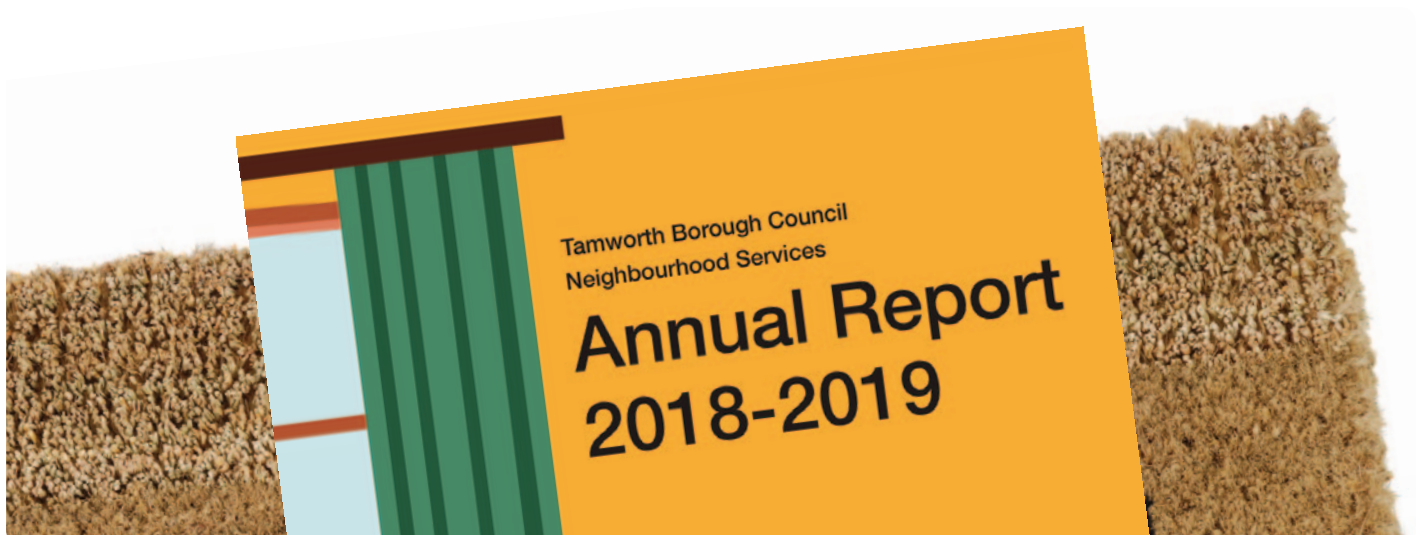
Existing feedback and communication methods will also be used to monitor and measure performance:

- Tenants newsletter/Annual report to tenants
- Tenant Involvement website
- Email
- Estate inspections/estate based events/consultation activities/awareness sessions
- Social networking
- ConnectTxt
- STAR survey/questionnaires/focus groups/workshops
- Tenants Conference

## How to take part

The council will:

- provide a range of opportunities for tenant involvement both formal and informal
- ensure tenants are actively involved in influencing, shaping and improving services



# Information, communication and feedback

We want to ensure the information we provide is meaningful and keeps tenants up-to-date on all aspects of the services we deliver.

We will make sure our editorial panel, Tenants' Voice, check and approve all publications intended for our tenants. They will look at the content, design, readability and language to ensure it is worthy of being 'Tenant Approved'.

We will inform, communicate and feedback using all appropriate means available to us. Here are the main ways we will do this.

## Tenants newsletter

This is the main publication used to inform on the results of any consultation, changes and improvements to services. It is produced quarterly in the spring, summer, autumn and winter. We may also use this to inform about future tenant satisfaction surveys and consultation exercises.

## Tenants sign-up pack

This is available to all council tenants when signing-up for a tenancy. It was developed in partnership with tenants and staff.

## Annual landlord report

Each year we produce a report for tenants detailing how we have performed over a variety of areas from repairs to anti-social behaviour. The report is produced from information we benchmark against and also on areas that are of interest to tenants, such as rent levels, repairs performance and allocation of properties.

## Tenant Involvement Impact Assessment

This is an annual publication written to celebrate the work of tenants and staff to recognise their work and achievements over the course of the year. This is available on the council website or on demand through the Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team.

## Online – using new technology

We will work with tenants to look at how we can use information technology to make it easier to keep in touch. We will use the most appropriate methods to promote events, share information and feedback on consultation, for example the council's website: [www.tamworth.gov.uk](http://www.tamworth.gov.uk)

# Being fair

The council wants to ensure tenant participation is open and accessible to everyone who wishes to become involved. It is our aim to ensure every tenant has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect. We are always looking for new ways to make it easier for people to have their say, so by telling us what we need to do to improve our service, you also improve it for everyone else!

**Equality** is about being fair – sometimes this means providing extra help to those who need it the most, to give people who are vulnerable, or do not have a voice, the opportunity to have their views heard.

**Diversity** is about difference. People across Tamworth borough come from all walks of life and the differences between people are what offer such a wealth of experience that can be used to make our services better for everyone.

**Communities** are made up of people of all ages, gender, nationalities, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and people with varying degrees of physical and mental disabilities.

**Barriers** to participation can prevent individuals from taking part. We show below some examples of how we can help overcome these.

## Equality of opportunity

If people are unable to attend meetings because of family commitments, or if they provide care for someone else, and have issues in attending meetings, there are other ways to get involved. They can speak to us about how we can help them do this.

## Transport

If transport is an issue and would prevent someone from attending a meeting or coming along to an event, the council can make transport available to and from meetings.

## Location of meetings

The council will ensure that any meetings they hold are in venues that are accessible, convenient and secure, such as the High Rise Social Club or Marmion House.

## Understanding what is going on

One of the biggest barriers for people can be that because they are new, they feel worried that they won't understand what is going on, that the meeting will be very formal or that they will be put on the spot. This is not the case; anyone can come along and listen; there will always be someone on hand to explain what is going on and ensure everyone is comfortable with whatever is being discussed. We also offer a user friendly introductory pack to get them started.

## Development opportunities

The council will also provide opportunities to give new tenants the knowledge and skills they need to help them feel comfortable, take part and enjoy being involved. We recognise that many tenants want to take part but can't make it along to meetings. We aim to provide other methods of involvement through online services and social media options.

## Help with written information

We can provide written information in a range of formats, such as Braille, electronic formats, different languages and large print where needed. We can supply reading aids such as helix magnifying sheets.

We can also provide access to a digital hearing system for meetings and conferences for those who have additional hearing needs. Just let us know what you require and we will make arrangements to meet your individual needs.





# Consultation and decision making

The council aims to go beyond its legal responsibilities and recognise that tenants should be involved in the scrutiny, planning and provision of services. By carrying out consultation, the views collected will be used to genuinely influence the decision making process and help improve services.

To ensure that everyone has a chance to have their say, we will use a range of methods to carry out consultation, such as traditional style community meetings or online surveys and quick comment opportunities for responses and suggestions.

It should be noted that there are some issues such as rents, housing repairs and internal home improvements on which only tenants can have a say.

## What we will consult on:

- Changes to policies and procedures regarding housing management and related services, including rent and service charges, repairs service, allocation of houses, estate management, anti-social behaviour and tenancy management
- Service standards relating to housing management, repairs and maintenance
- The Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy
- Development of annual Capital Programmes (improvements to your home and environment)
- The Housing Revenue Account Budget (funded by council rent)
- Housing Strategy and Development (including new build council housing).

## How we will consult. We will:

- provide all relevant information at the earliest stage to allow full understanding of any proposals and advise why the proposals are being made
- provide information that is clear, helpful and in plain english or an alternative format
- allow a minimum period of two months to give adequate time to carry out meaningful consultation and discussion
- provide a variety of ways for tenants to feedback their views and comment on the proposals being made from local meetings to surveys, emails and social media if appropriate.

## The results of any consultation carried out will be:

- submitted to the members of the Tenant Consultative Group for their consideration
- collected and shared with senior managers and elected members
- taken into account and used to inform reports made to the council's decision making bodies including Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee

- publicised so that everyone knows what has happened as a result of the consultation carried out
- sent out to each Registered Tenants Organisation and Housing Network(s).

## Our ten pledges when consulting with tenants

Neighbourhood Services have made the following pledges when consulting with tenants and other stakeholders. We will always:

- 1 be clear about our objectives for consultation, telling people at the outset who will be making the final decision and when they can expect this decision to be made
- 2 provide information in plain english and, where appropriate, community languages
- 3 provide a name and contact details in case of a query
- 4 explain all the options available and outline both the positive and negative consequences of choosing any one of a set of options
- 5 encourage people to put their own ideas forward
- 6 allow people reasonable time to consider their response
- 7 listen carefully to what people have to say and keep a record of their responses
- 8 report on the responses received to the council, Tenant Consultative Group or whoever is responsible for making the final decision
- 9 give feedback on the final outcome within six weeks of the decision being made to all those involved in the consultation process
- 10 tell people when they can expect changes to be implemented



# Resources and support

To encourage the development of individuals and groups in all aspects of tenant participation, Tamworth Borough Council recognises the importance of providing sufficient staffing, resources, support and learning opportunities.

## Staffing

A dedicated Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team will help support the work of tenants and staff to meet the strategy's aims. They will:

- work in partnership with neighbourhood staff and other partners to support tenants and residents groups
- offer skills development in the form of learning opportunities and information and awareness sessions
- provide funding and advice on setting up any local area based tenant activity
- co-ordinate any consultation carried out with tenants
- promote and engage with tenants using the various methods of involvement detailed in this strategy
- produce publications such as the tenants newsletter and the Annual Tenants Report

## Financial

The Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team hold an annual Tenant involvement budget. The budget will ensure there is sufficient funding to support tenant participation activities carried out locally.

Examples of the types of activities funded are:

- consultation
- tenants newsletter/annual report to tenants
- tenant satisfaction surveys
- tenant led inspections
- working groups
- focus groups
- development opportunities
- estate based events

The tenant involvement budget will also:

- pay for room hire if necessary
- pay for specialist services (e.g. signers for British Sign Language)
- pay for consultation and communication material

## Expenses:

It is recognised that anyone participating should not be out of pocket and will be recompensed for any outlay incurred during certain tenant involvement activities through payment of an incentive fee or travel expenses. These include:

- focus groups
- working groups.

Any involvement incentives paid will be treated as income. Taxpayers or anyone in receipt of an income-related benefit must declare any payment or expenses received. The Department for Work and Pensions may take this income into account when they work out what benefits are payable.

## Development opportunities:

A range of opportunities to develop skills and knowledge relating to tenant involvement are provided by Tamworth Borough Council and other partner services, such as:

- Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)
- Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)





# Performance monitoring and scrutiny

All aspects of the services provided by Neighbourhood Services will be monitored and scrutinised in a variety of ways to ensure the aims of the strategy are being met. This will be carried out by council officers, tenants and elected members.

## Internal assessment:

This will be achieved by monitoring:

- what methods of involvement and consultation have taken place
- what arrangements have been put in place to encourage participation
- how tenants' views were represented in the outcome of any consultation
- that the correct timescales were followed to allow effective consultation
- if tenants had the opportunity to become involved regardless of age, gender, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, particular needs or location.

The Tenant Involvement Working Group will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy on an ongoing basis.

Progress on the strategy will be reported regularly to the Tenant Consultative Group, senior managers, elected members and tenants.

The action plan will be reviewed annually and through regular monitoring will ensure that the strategy is implemented effectively.

## Independent Tenant Organisations

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service is an independent organisation which promotes good practice in tenant involvement by working with both tenants and landlords.

The council is a member of this organisation and by working with this body the council can ensure that good practice is maintained and shared.

# How to take part

Any tenant can take part, either as an individual or through one of our tenants groups. **Neighbourhood Services** recognises that people may want to take part in a way that suits them, so the following activities provide a range of opportunities for all. We will continue to look at new ways and methods of encouraging people to take part.

## Events

Various events may be held throughout the year for tenants to come along and find out about changes or improvements to services, such as rent levels, repairs or any other housing or environmental issue. These events are normally publicised in the tenants newsletter, at Marmion House and on the council's website.

## Surveys and Questionnaires

At various times surveys and questionnaires will be sent out directly to tenants. This provides customers with an opportunity to give their views and opinions on the services they receive, from the comfort of their own home. Surveys include the STAR Satisfaction survey and the Repairs survey. Surveys can normally be completed by post or by telephone.

## Interested Tenants

An 'interested tenant' is someone who has told us they wish to be consulted on issues that are important to them, such as repairs, anti-social behaviour or environmental issues. The council will contact 'interested tenants' from time to time to give them the opportunity to attend and participate in different events related to their area of interest. As an 'interested tenant' you will be able to use your experiences and knowledge to improve the services you receive in a way that suits you.

## Working Groups

A working group would normally be made up of council tenants, service users and council officers, who meet over a period of time to review an existing service or develop a new service.

A working group is normally formed to look at a particular subject, for example, the work for this strategy document was carried out by the Tenant Involvement working group

## Focus Groups

A focus group is much the same as a working group, except it would normally only meet once to discuss a particular topic.

## Editorial Panel – Tenants' Voice

Tenants' Voice Editorial Panel is a working group, made up of tenants who meet regularly to review

publications produced by Neighbourhood Services. These include the quarterly produced tenants newsletter, annual Report to tenants, information leaflets, surveys, standard letters and any document intended for tenants.

Any document showing the 'Tenant Approved' stamp has been reviewed by the Editorial Panel to ensure the content and design meet their high standards, is clear, meaningful and in plain english.

## Tenant Led Inspections

Tenant Led Inspections actively involve tenants in the review and redesign of services. It is a great way for local people to take part and have an impact on the way services are delivered in the future. An inspection team of around four to six individuals will choose a particular service area that they wish to closely examine and will identify strengths, weaknesses and then recommend areas for improvement.

## Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Tenants can review and give an independent opinion of the services delivered by Neighbourhood Services. Tenant Scrutiny Panel members can bring about positive changes to the way services are currently run. The role is varied and will involve taking part in team and tenant discussions, analysing performance and data and looking at other housing provider information, examining evidence, challenging any areas of particular interest or concern and reporting recommendations as well as strengths to Senior management.

## Estate Inspections

The aim of an estate inspection is to assess the standards of services we deliver in our neighbourhoods, identify areas for improvement and generally identify any action to be taken to address tenancy breaches.

## Training and Development

A wide range of training sessions are offered to tenants to enable them to increase their skills, knowledge and understanding in their involvement of housing and neighbourhood related issues. By offering a combination of both external and internal training, this ensures that our tenant involvement groups are equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively scrutinise and inform policy making as well as agreeing performance management arrangements.

## Mystery Shopping

Tenants can carry out mystery shopping exercises from the comfort of their own home to assess if services meet necessary standards. The level and quality of service we deliver to customers is vital to ensure continued customer satisfaction.

# Groups

Groups can be set up for many different reasons and often set out to achieve different things. Many groups start because people in an area are concerned about the same problems or issues and they find that they have more success in tackling these by working together as a group.

## Involvement Opportunities

Whether tenants are interested in spending five minutes or a couple of hours a week getting involved with Tamworth's Neighbourhood Services and fellow residents, there is something for everyone. We can also help them develop their skills when taking part in one of the involvement activities below.

The involvement opportunities for Tamworth Borough Council tenants focus on three key areas:

- Co-regulation to strengthen tenants' opportunities to challenge and drive improvements
- Customer insight which helps improve and tailor services by collecting, analysing and acting on tenants' views, preferences and needs
- Community engagement which helps us identify issues and set local standards

## Formal opportunities for involvement

### Tenant Consultative Group

The Tenant Consultative Group provides a united voice for tenants and leaseholders across the borough. This group discusses a range of issues and is involved in the decision making process to improve housing and neighbourhood services for all. This group is consulted on all tenant related policies, practices and procedures and current issues affecting Tamworth Borough Council and its tenants.

### Tenant Involvement Group

The Tenant Involvement Group oversees the implementation of actions and performance targets set out in the Tenant Involvement Strategy action plan. In addition to this, the group closely monitors all customer intelligence and performance and monitors the Neighbourhood Services annual customer satisfaction calendar.

## Informal opportunities for involvement

### Seniors United

This is a forum for sheltered housing tenants to get together, share ideas and experiences and discuss issues relevant to their needs with the support of their Scheme Manager and Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team.



## Complaints Review Panel

The Panel reviews anonymised information relating to the Tell Us Policy on a quarterly basis. In addition, the Panel also reviews all housing member enquiries. The Panel looks for key trends and emerging common themes and will make recommendations for service improvements. The Panel also monitors feedback from the monthly complaint satisfaction surveys.

## Tenant Inspectors

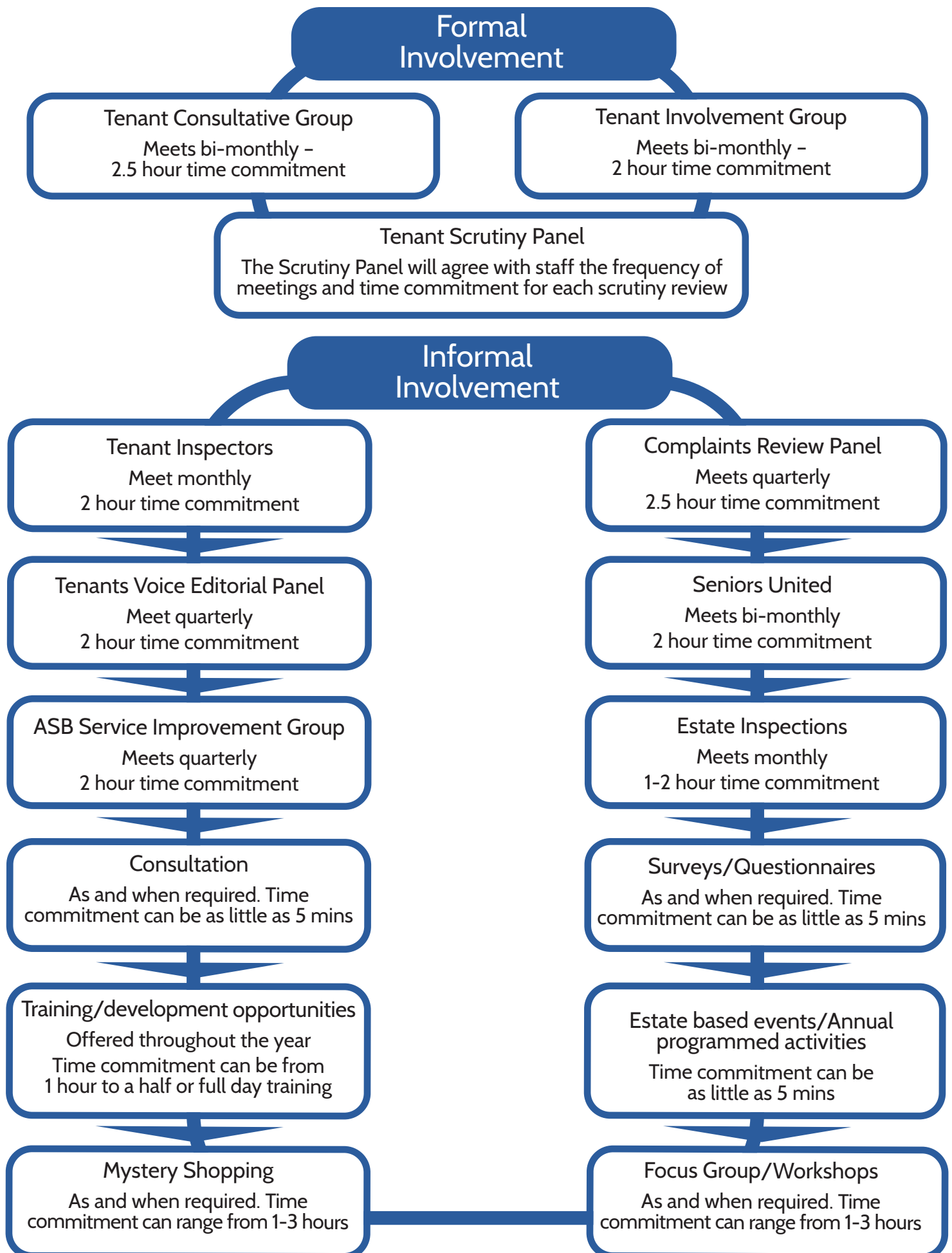
Tenant Inspectors are provided with the opportunity to audit the delivery of estate and communal cleaning services. Tenant Inspectors monitor the quality of service delivery against defined standards and undertake on-site inspections. They are empowered to call managers to account if services do not meet required standards and their feedback forms part of overall performance monitoring.

## Anti-Social Behaviour Service Improvement Group

This group meets quarterly. This is a forum that brings customers and staff together to oversee the delivery of service improvements, consider and discuss best practice, self-assess Neighbourhood Services ASB service for compliance against national standards and establish and monitor action plans and key performance data.



## Tenant Involvement Structure



## High Engagement

### Empowerment

Tenant  
Consultative Group

### Engagement/Involvement

Tenant Involvement Group  
Complaints Review Panel  
ASB Service Improvement Group  
Tenant Inspectors  
Seniors United  
Tenants Voice Editorial Panel  
Tenant Scrutiny Panel

### Consultation

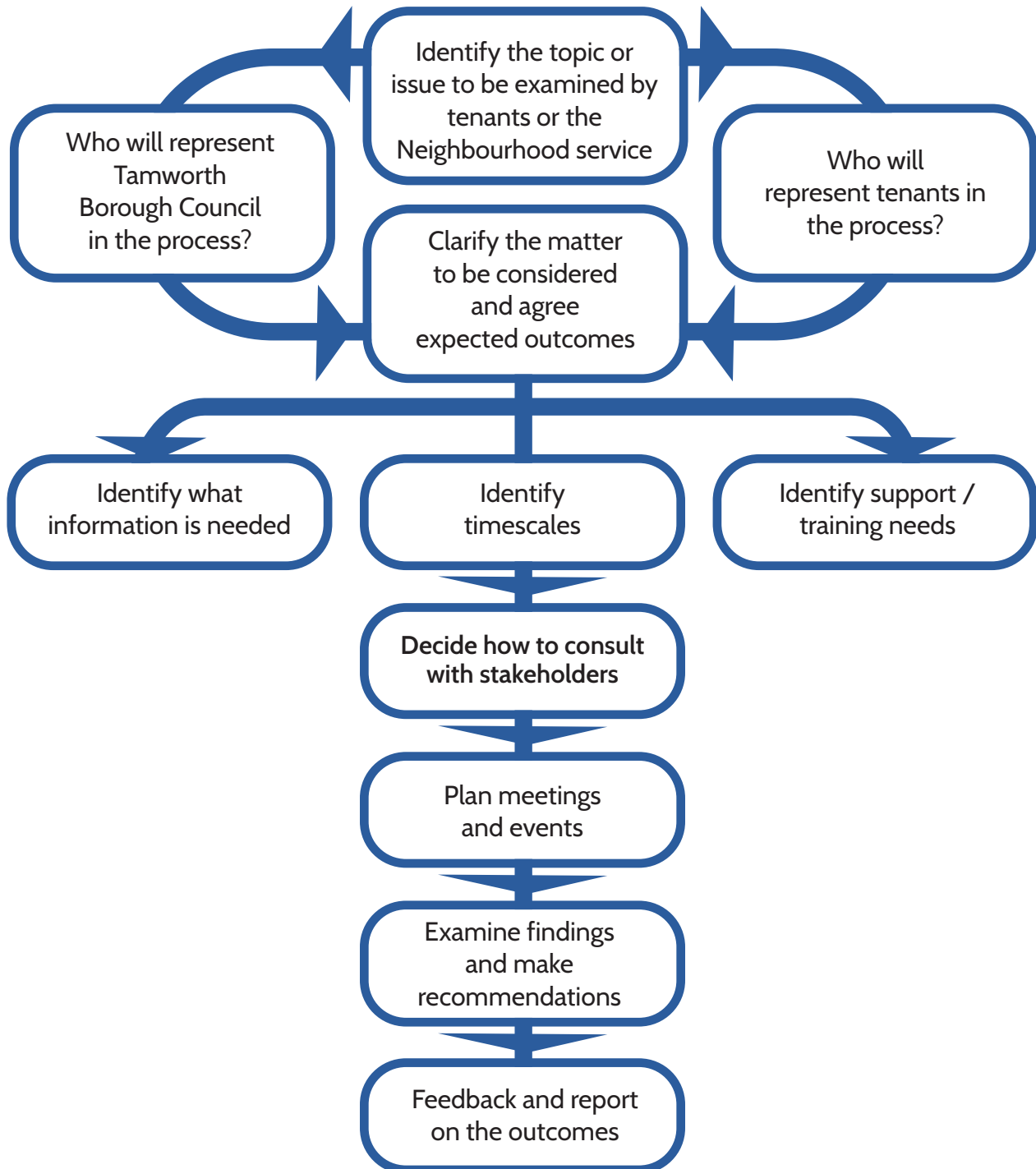
Tenants Conference  
Focus Groups  
Surveys/Consultation  
Workshops  
Community estate based events  
Open days

### Information

Tenants newsletter  
Annual Report  
Website  
Social media  
ConnectText

## Low Engagement

## How we plan tenant involvement activities



There is no blueprint for planning tenant involvement. Different ways suit different people and their circumstances. Approaches should be flexible to suit individual needs. When agreeing the best tenant involvement approach for particular issues, there are a number of key steps to consider.

The flow chart outlines the key steps Tamworth Borough Council will consider when planning tenant involvement activities.



# Involving communities

There are also options that can involve members of a community. These are a way for those with a shared concern or issue to work together to promote positive action.

## Environmental Investment programme

This initiative gives tenants and staff the opportunity to make recommendations to improve the environment in their local area, subject to budget availability. There are certain criteria that must be met for an application to be successful. Each application will be reviewed and selected by the Environmental Investment Panel.

## Estate inspections

To help ensure estates are kept clean and in good condition, regular inspections are carried out by Neighbourhood Services and tenants.

After each inspection, the Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team will collate the information and prepare a report grading the estate and highlighting areas for improvement. The results from the report will be fed back to those who attended the inspection. It will also be reported through the usual media channels, such as the tenants newsletter and the website.

## Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Engagement days

The Police recognise the importance of working with the public and partner agencies to help combat crime and increase the quality of life for residents as well as serving in the community. Engagement days address local area issues through community contact, and give residents the opportunity to get involved and have their say in local issues that affect or are of interest to them.



# Benefits of tenant involvement

## Listening to customers

Gaining views from tenants is vital for Neighbourhood Services to obtain an understanding of customer needs and aspirations and to constantly enhance and improve services. We are committed to working in partnership with tenants to ensure they have the opportunity to influence decisions about the management of their homes and in the area they live and to ensure the services they receive reflect value for money.

Involving tenants at a level they choose results in many benefits for both customer and landlord:

- to empower tenants to have a real say in how their neighbourhood service is delivered
- to achieve a more responsive and improved service
- to ensure that services provided reflect tenants' needs
- to enhance accountability by having diverse representation on the various involvement groups
- to achieve continuous improvement in service delivery
- to improve the community and environment and promote sustainability
- improve communication between landlord and customer and strengthen awareness of each other's perspectives, organisational and financial limitations
- informed and knowledgeable tenants who have both the skills and confidence to influence decisions
- building mutual respect and understanding
- increased tenant satisfaction with homes and neighbourhoods

Simple changes can often make a significant difference to people's lives. We aim to ensure that during the process of tenant consultation in relation to a particular topic or service, we listen to the information customers tell us and do something about it. Where this might not be possible, for example, due to lack of funding, we will endeavour to work with tenants to look at alternatives.

## Transparent services

We want to ensure our services are transparent and that Neighbourhood Services promote accountability to tenants. We therefore welcome feedback and involvement from all tenants in all aspects of our services whether this is through formal or informal involvement. Tenant contributions help us to improve our services to ensure we are an effective and efficient landlord.

# Legislation and regulation

From April 2012, the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) became the new social housing regulator. The Homes and Community Agency expects tenants to play a key role in assessing their landlord's performance and hold them to account for any weaknesses in performance. Landlords have a responsibility to make sure their tenants can, and do, play a key role in improving services.

Landlords must make sure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- Co-regulation and tenant leadership (council/housing provider and tenants working together)
- Tenants determining policies and strategic priorities
- Designing service delivery and setting service standards
- Scrutinising performance
- Decision making in the management of homes and services
- Agreeing local offers
- Providing support to involvement working groups
- Capacity and confidence building
- Working with tenants to provide an annual report based on outcomes

This framework for social housing sets out national standards that all social housing landlords must comply with. The national standards are divided into Economic and Consumer standards.

Economic National Standards cover:

- Value for money
- Governance and financial viability
- Rent

Consumer National Standards cover:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and community



## Governance and scrutiny

To have an effective governance and scrutiny structure, where tenants are empowered and have the capacity to work effectively with Tamworth Borough Council to deliver co-regulation, we will ensure that:

- staff understand and work with tenants to ensure co-regulation operates for the benefit of all
- Neighbourhood Services and tenants work together effectively
- tenants have the capacity to influence strategic decisions
- tenants challenge service performance effectively

## Value for money

In 2013, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the social housing regulator, introduced a value for money standard as part of the revised Economic standard. Within this standard clear reference is made to the need to actively involve customers in the scrutiny of the delivery of 'value for money' services.

Together with the impact of welfare reforms, it is now more important than ever for social landlords to put significant emphasis on achieving and delivering services that are efficient and demonstrate good value for money.

Value for money (VFM) for Neighbourhood Services is about making best use of resources, not just cutting costs. Throughout our consultation process, customers have told us that this is a key area for them in the current financial climate.

To achieve this we will ensure that:

- all involvement activities demonstrate value for money with clear outcomes
- we use customer involvement to improve services and deliver better VFM services
- we carry out impact assessments on all consultation and involvement activities to enable us to regularly monitor and review all involvement and engagement in terms of cost, impact and effectiveness
- we involve customers in policy reviews and the introduction of new policies, procedures and practices
- we involve tenants in procuring new contracts
- we undertake consultation for any new initiative/service beforehand to ensure this reflects tenants' needs and aspirations
- customers have genuine opportunities to scrutinise and challenge our performance
- we routinely publicise good news stories in relation to customer involvement
- we annually evaluate the impact of all customer involvement in relation to value for money

# The future

Predicting the future can be challenging, however we are committed to continually seek out good housing practice and apply it to Neighbourhood Services where possible.

We want to ensure that we consult with our tenants and empower them in order that they are able to influence decisions. We want to ensure that we involve all sections of the community and if something is missing from our tenant involvement structure we want our tenants to help us develop a way to put this right.

## What's next?

- Strengthen the way in which tenants influence, shape and scrutinise services
- Work to increase the overall level of engagement
- Continue to raise awareness and promote the benefits of tenant involvement through a variety of ways and as widely as possible
- Extend methods of obtaining customer feedback and satisfaction for example telephone surveys, focus groups, social networking sites and consultation online.





# Action Plan 2020-2024

Area	Actions	Responsibility	Results	Schedule
Consultation and decision making	Provide all tenants with the opportunity to feedback on the council as a landlord, through delivery of a Tenant Satisfaction Survey (STAR) and other service related surveys	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/ Neighbourhood Services	Tenant satisfaction survey results	Ongoing
	Develop a robust schedule of involvement opportunities for tenants to be consulted on any services	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/ Neighbourhood Services	Landlord Delivery Plan/Consultation Plan	Ongoing
	Continue to involve tenant representatives at the highest level of decision making	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/ Neighbourhood Services	Tenant working groups/ Tenant Consultative Group meetings and related minutes	Ongoing
	Involve tenants in the consultation process in relation to housing and neighbourhood policy, housing conditions and other related services. Taking on board their views and opinions and using these to influence decisions that shape services	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/ Neighbourhood Services/ Tenant working groups	Consultation specific documents, action plan & reports	Ongoing

Area	Actions	Responsibility	Results	Schedule
Information, Communication and Feedback	Produce a tenants newsletter approved by the Editorial Panel Tenants Voice to contain reports and information on Neighbourhood Services news, performance, updates and future plans	Tenants Voice/Tenant Involvement Group/Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team	Four editions of the tenants newsletter published annually	Ongoing
	Produce a comprehensive annual report to tenants to include Neighbourhood Services performance and information on progress against national standards set out in the Regulatory Framework for social housing in England	Tenants Voice/Tenant Involvement Group/Tenant Consultative Group/Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Neighbourhood Services	Performance report to tenants produced annually	October annually
	Explore innovative methods of engaging with tenants via technology	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant working groups	Tenant Involvement Annual Impact Assessment/ innovative engagement methods introduced	Ongoing
	Hold annual estate-based events/ involvement initiatives as part of an ongoing recruitment drive to increase the database of involvement for tenant influence in the delivery of services	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant working groups	Produce an impact assessment of all consultation/ involvement activity/tenant feedback/increase in the number on database of involvement	Ongoing
	Develop and promote the tenant involvement website, leaflets, literature and all engagement methods to encourage involvement	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant working groups	Relevant and up-to-date information	Ongoing

Area	Actions	Responsibility	Results	Schedule
Involvement	Maintain an Interested Tenants List for tenants who wish to participate and have contacted the team during activities or other communication channels, such as satisfaction surveys, recruitment drive, and estate based events	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team	Increased number of interested tenants on database of involvement	Ongoing
	Ensure that all working groups are encouraged and supported to be fully consulted and involved in service delivery, policy, performance, procedures and reviews. To include: TCG/TIG/Complaints Review Panel/Seniors United/Tenants Voice/ASB Service Improvement Group	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/ Neighbourhood Services staff as appropriate	Tenant working group minutes/Tenant involvement annual impact assessment	Ongoing
	Consult with tenant representatives on the format of future events. Use feedback to tailor events to ensure high satisfaction and the needs of tenants and Neighbourhood Services are met at each event	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant working groups	Tenant feedback	Ongoing
	Tenant Inspectors to audit the delivery of estate cleaning services, void lettable standards, customer access arrangements and estate improvements	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant Inspectors/ Neighbourhood Service staff as appropriate	Deliver annual programme of communal cleaning audits/annual communal cleaning report	Ongoing

Area	Actions	Responsibility	Results	Schedule
Resourcing	Develop and provide appropriate and useful training to tenant representatives and staff to develop skills in relation to tenant involvement events, housing and neighbourhood and related services.	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/ Neighbourhood Services staff as appropriate	Training feedback from groups/annual Impact Assessment	Ongoing
Performance, Monitoring and Scrutiny	Provide tenants with the opportunity to scrutinise performance at tenant involvement meetings on agreed Performance Indicators	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant Involvement Group	Tenant working group minutes/ Performance Dashboard/Annual Report to tenants	Ongoing
	Continue to work with tenant representatives to set targets on agreed Performance Indicators	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant Consultative Group/Tenant Involvement Group	Customer Dashboard as approved by tenants/Performance Indicators	Ongoing
	Benchmark with other organisations to ensure best practice standards are maintained and ensure sharing is promoted to provide consistency for tenants	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant Involvement Group/Tenant Consultative Group	Performance report to tenants	Ongoing
	Carry out an annual Impact Assessment of all tenant involvement activities/initiatives	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant Involvement Group	Impact Assessment produced reviewing effectiveness and outcomes of involvement across Neighbourhood Services	May annually
	Review the Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy Action Plan 2020/2024	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant Involvement Group/Tenant Consultative Group	Updated action plan	April annually
	Produce an annual customer intelligence report on complaints, compliments, customer feedback, learning and outcomes	Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team/Tenant Involvement Group/Tenant Consultative Group	Produce a comprehensive Customer Intelligence Report	Annually

# Glossary

## Action Plan

Summary of action to be taken – should be SMART – specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time-bound.

## Annual Report

The Annual Report to tenants sets out how we have performed throughout the year against national standards and the commitment we propose to make to tenants in the coming year.

## Best Practice

Looks for examples of positive practice and innovation, creative ways of overcoming barriers and resistance to change and ways of making better use of resources.

## Co-regulation

A joint approach to managing the delivery of services which puts residents in the driving seat.

## Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan

The Business Plan sets out the council's plans and ambitions in its role as landlord over the next 30 years. These plans have been developed in consultation with tenants and are at the heart of the overall strategic priorities.

## Impact Assessment

Will measure and evaluate the effect tenant involvement has had and the difference it has made to services provided by the council. The report will identify what has changed as a result of customer involvement.

## Leaseholder

An individual who has purchased a former council dwelling (usually a flat).

## Mystery shopping

A method of testing the quality of services whereby an individual (for example, an existing customer or an independent person) will ask for information, or test out the process of reporting a repair or visit estates to examine caretaking standards – to see how well services are being delivered.

## Tenants newsletter

Newsletter published by Neighbourhood Services together with an editorial panel of tenants - can be distributed as an e-publication and can be accessed on the Tamworth Borough Council website to read or download



## Tenants Performance Dashboard

The customer performance dashboard allows tenants to view Neighbourhood Services performance on repairs, rents, anti-social behaviour, tenant involvement and empty property management. The dashboard can be monitored online on Tamworth Borough Council's website.

## Sheltered Housing

Housing provided specifically for those with specific needs i.e. age (over 55) or disability.

## Sustaining tenancies

Preventing a tenancy from coming to a premature end by providing the necessary information, advice, and support for tenants to be able to maintain their tenancies.

## TAROE (Tenants and Residents Organisations of England)

is a membership organisation representing the interests of more than four million tenants, strengthening TAROE, the collective voice of tenants across England.

## Tell Us Policy

If you are not happy with the service you receive, you can visit the Tell Us policy which details how to make a complaint. It also gives details on making comments and compliments.

## Tenant Involvement & Consultation Strategy

Agreement between the council and its tenants on how tenants will be involved in the decision-making processes affecting the delivery of the Neighbourhood Services.

## TPAS

TPAS (Tenant Participatory Advisory Service) is the leading national tenant participation organisation working to promote tenant empowerment.



# Thank You

Thank you to the Tenant Involvement working group and all the tenants who have given us their views about getting involved in tenant involvement at Tamworth Borough Council. Without their help this document could not have been produced.

If you require this information in another  
format or language, please contact us

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