

Equality Impact Assessment

Lead Officer:-	Perry DeSouza
Decision Maker(s):-	Cabinet & Council
Name and type of document	Tenant Engagement Strategy 2022 – 2027
Type of decision: -	Approval of Strategy for formal consultation with stakeholders
Date of decision	3 October 2022
Aims of the decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Intended outcomes • Key actions • Who and how many will be affected? 	<p>1. Aim</p> <p>The objective of the report is to seek Cabinet approval of the content of the draft Tenant Engagement Strategy and agree to its wider consultation with stakeholders and service users. Dover District Council as a social housing landlord must comply with the Regulator of Social Housing’s regulatory framework, one aspect of which covers resident involvement. This encourages landlords to create an effective framework through which tenants and leaseholders can be involved with the management of the landlords service. The strategy also sets out how the Council will meet the ambitions set out in the Government Social Housing White Paper, A Charter for Social Housing Residents, in terms of commitment to offering service users greater opportunity to be involved and a commitment to greater transparency on the part of the housing service.</p> <p>2. Key actions and Intended outcomes</p> <p>The key priorities of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking down barriers for tenants to be involved • Rebuilding trust that tenants have in DDC • Increased offering and a larger variety of opportunities to encourage more people to be involved in ways that suit them • Supporting tenants to be involved through training, guidance, and support <p>3. Who and how many will be affected?</p> <p>As highlighted in the strategy, DDC currently has 4,896 properties with tenants of various tenures and tenant background which this document will impact on.</p> <p>The strategy aims to have a positive impact on tenants and leaseholders across the district and those with protected characteristics as identified in this assessment. The positive impact and method of engagement aims to enable and encourage tenants from all walks of life and backgrounds to increase their involvement with DDC through various methods of engagement as discussed in the strategy.</p>

Information and Research

- Summarize research and information that you used to prepare your proposals / preferred options
- What data did you use to research your proposals?
- List anything you found that will affect people with protected characteristics.

One of the provisions in the Social Housing White Paper, A Charter for Social Housing Residents states that tenants should expect to have their voice heard by their landlord, and it is hoped that through improved resident engagement by landlords, it will give residents a clearer voice so that they can help hold landlords to account.

In the development of the strategy, we consulted with a dedicated focus group purposefully established to provide feedback that was used to inform the tenant engagement strategy.

Consultation was also carried out with the Dover District Tenant Group (DDTG) our main tenant consultant group, residents living in our sheltered housing stock, the 437 members of the housing specific keep me posted group and the encouragement via articles in our summer newsletter that all tenants and leaseholders share their opinion of our draft strategic priorities.

Consultation with these groups highlighted several barriers the wider tenant population felt prevented them from involving themselves with DDC via surveys, focus groups and feedback. The barriers included:

- Work and family constraints (such as busy lifestyle, work commitments and school runs)
- Difficulty getting about due to physical or mental illness
- Travel expenses
- Lack of skills (e.g., literacy, mathematics, and computer/device literacy)
- English not first language
- Disinterest in the landlord service and apathy for getting involved

The Strategy addresses these barriers and sets out solutions which DDC will consider going forward to encourage greater tenant participation.

Along with tenant consultation, we used data from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey (TSS) 2021 to:

- Understand how tenants preferred to be engaged / involved
- Understand the best methods to involve tenants in the development of the strategy
- Understand what key issues were important to tenants that were raised in the survey

Data from the TSS 2021 survey is referred to within the strategy.

Wider research was also carried out to understand what other comparable organisations, both locally and nationally, were doing to engage and involve their tenants.

In the assessment and completion of this report, we have identified that there could be a positive impact to the following characteristics: Age, Disability & Race. This is for the following reasons:

- Residents will be given the opportunity to engage with the Council via different methods, rather than simply online. This could include completion of questionnaires in paper via post, over the phone and in person.
- Where engagement events are held in person, we will ensure that adequate facilities and resources are available to support disabled persons access to the event (for example, providing a wheelchair ramp).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If English is not a resident's first language, we will attempt to procure translations of documents so they can engage with us or provide details of where residents can access translation services themselves. An increased range of opportunities to be involved will include via digital platforms. It is hoped this will give access to forums that service users might otherwise be excluded from via the comfort of their own home with access to any specialist equipment, care arrangements or facilities that they have at home to support them.
<p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has there been any specific consultation done? What were the consultation results? Did the consultation analysis show any difference for people with protected characteristics? What conclusions did you draw from the consultation? 	<p>Preliminary consultation has been carried out with district tenants and leaseholders regarding how DDC should involve and engage with tenants, and what barriers there are to tenant involvement.</p> <p>Semi structured question and answer sessions were conducted with our sheltered housing residents and all tenants and leaseholders were invited to participate in our online survey seeking their views about our proposed priorities and opportunities to be involved. Full details of this were included in the tenant newsletter that went to all tenants and Leaseholders in July 22 and to all members of the housing keep me posted group.</p> <p>The views of staff in the housing service were also sought.</p> <p>Both internal review of current processes and applicable policies was carried out within the Housing department.</p> <p>A consultation with the Housing Policy Officer regarding the content and the potential impacts to those with protected characteristics and overcoming barriers.</p> <p>Further internal consultation with managers within DDC will take place once this document has been approved.</p>

Assessing if the decision is likely to be relevant to the three aims of the Equality Duty.	
Aim	Relevance Yes / No
Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimization	Yes
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.	Yes
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.	Yes

If you have decided that this decision is relevant to the three aims of the Equality Duty, use the section below to show how it is relevant and what the impact will be.			
Protected Characteristic	Relevance High/Medium/Low	Impact of the decision Positive/Neutral /Negative	Mitigations
Age	Medium	Positive	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.

Disability	Medium	Positive	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.
Gender reassignment	Low	Neutral	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.
Gender	Low	Neutral	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Low	Neutral	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Low	Neutral	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.
Race	Low	Positive	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.
Religion, Belief or Lack of Belief	Low	Neutral	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.
Sexual Orientation	Low	Neutral	None required. No negative impacts have been identified in the research and development of this strategy.

This Equality Impact Assessment must attach to any report throughout the decision-making process, to allow the final decision makers to have Due Regard.