

Appendix 1

Dacorum Borough Council Housing Landlord

Get Involved Strategy 2012-15



Get Involved Strategy 2012-2015 ~ Together We Can

Dacorum Borough Council's Housing Landlord Service Vision

Final Version – Sept 12

Our vision is to improve the quality of housing service available to all tenants. By involving tenants to take a strategic role in the scrutiny and monitoring of services, we will be empowering tenants to make recommendations for improvements. Tenants will also actively challenge the service on the delivery of these improvements for all. The Get Involved Strategy 2012-15 supports achieving this vision.

Context

Tenant Involvement is a rapidly developing area; with the changes to legislation following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 it is even more important to involve tenants in the strategic management of housing services.

With the Localism Act 2011 comes the abolition of the Tenant Services Authority the regulator for the regulatory framework. As a result tenants will take on this role. It is therefore essential that our Involvement Structure ensures tenants are at the heart of our organisation. Not only to act as drivers for change, but to help set the Vision for the service. Empowered tenants will work with staff to help deliver the Strategic part of the business by way of governance and challenge.

TPAS quotes *“Everyone knows that involving residents in service development, delivery and improvement is a sound proposition. It makes you more approachable. More accountable. More attuned to residents’ views – resulting in solid business decisions and increased efficiency.”*

Whilst the new regulatory framework does not recognise leaseholders they are key stakeholders in the Housing Service and those residing in Dacorum Borough Council blocks are also encouraged to play an active part in this Strategy.

The Get Involved Strategy replaces the more traditional Tenant Compacts and will be a live document. It aims:

- To provide a range of flexible opportunities for tenants to get involved
- To enable tenants to truly scrutinise and monitor the service
- To ensure that tenants have a voice that is heard and responded to
- To provide a dedicated team to support and develop effective tenant involvement
- To remove barriers ensuring everyone can get involved in the Housing Service
- To be transparent, open and honest
- To measure and report the effectiveness of tenant involvement
- To maximise the impact of tenant involvement activities and ensure value for money

The Strategy incorporates an action plan that covers the three year period of 2012-15. Progress against delivery of the plan will be reported to the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee who will represent tenants and leaseholders across the borough in respect of the Strategy.

The Housing Service has an annual service plan that has been developed with tenants and the strategy links to the service plan as follows:

- Service Objective one – To involve tenants effectively to make sure tenants and leaseholders monitor, challenge, shape and help us to provide an excellent service
- Service objective two – To give the tenants and leaseholders the best value for their rent and service charges
- Service Objective eight – To make all areas of our service provide excellent customer service
- Service Objective ten – To produce a plan for communicating positive messages to tenants and leaseholders, councillors, residents and the housing industry
- Service Objective eleven – Develop a positive “can do” staff culture

Local Promises

Local Offers whilst being a regulatory requirement should also reflect the local priorities of tenants across the borough. We currently have four local promises based around tenants local priority areas; litter, parking, the standard of repairs and involving children and young people. The Get Involved Strategy 2012-15 will help to support the delivery of these promises by empowering tenants to get involved at a local level to tackle the priorities in their area.

STAR Survey

The recent Survey of Tenants and Residents has given us a good understanding of additional areas for improvement by the Housing Service and these are reflected in the Strategy. In particular more work will be done around creating local level involvement and leaseholder involvement to increase satisfaction with local services.

Objectives of the Tenant Involvement Strategy 2012-15

Our overall objective in addition to the service plan is to ensure that we have a diverse, inclusive and flexible involvement structure that puts tenants at the heart of the organisation, giving them an active voice and empowering them to make a difference.

In order to do this we will:

- Introduce a range of flexible ways to get involved with the housing service
- Increase the number of tenants that we have involved with the housing service, focussing on those groups that are currently under-represented
- Develop Tenant Scrutiny to give tenants an active voice in scrutinising and challenging areas of poor performance and making recommendations for improvements
- Strengthen links with the wider Council Scrutiny methods
- Involve tenants in the setting of Service Plan objectives to ensure that the service is focussed on their priorities

Measuring Success

It is essential that the Strategy is reviewed regularly to ensure that improvements remain on track and also to ensure that we account for any further changes in legislation or regulation.

In order to do this we will:

- Report the progress of the plan to the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee on a six monthly basis
- Publish the successes of the plan via News and Views to the wider tenant body
- Establish a training package for involved tenants to enable empowerment
- Present an annual report to Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to demonstrate the achievements and success of the Strategy

In order to fully understand the impact of tenant involvement we also propose to:

- Develop and implement a value for money index
- Assess tenant satisfaction of activities
- Develop and publish an Impact Assessment of main tenant involvement activities

The National Tenant Organisations Accreditation

Within the 3 year plan, we aim to gain National Tenant Organisations (NTO) approved Accreditation (NTOapproved™). This accreditation has been developed to aid organisations in assessing themselves internally but it can also be externally accredited. The assessment is straightforward and is non prescriptive about how tenant panels are set up, allowing us, the Housing Landlord service to set up a panel that suits both the tenants and the landlords needs and aspirations.

The areas of focus for the accreditation are:

1. Co-regulation
2. Tenant leadership
3. Access to all and fairness
4. Functioning Structures and adequate support

The assessment is undertaken by the following methods:

1. Desk top review
2. Tenant Panel meeting
3. Staff Group meeting

The action plan attached to the strategy clearly outlines where and how we will be evidencing our journey to gaining this accreditation.

How will we know the Strategy has been a success?

One of the key measures of success for the strategy will be the NTO accreditation that we will work to achieve over the next three years. In addition to that the following will have been achieved:

End of year 1

At the end of year one, we will have put in place a new tenant involvement structure that will have increased the overall percentage of tenants involved in the service by a minimum 2.5%. This will be achieved by:

- Recruiting more tenants to be involved in committees/local area panels/focus groups etc.
- The Tenant and Leaseholder Committee will be re-established as a strategic group working with the Council to ensure that tenant priorities and expectations of the service are met and/or exceeded. Where this is not possible the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee will ensure that tenants are advised why.
- Tenant Involvement objectives will have been set as part of the staff appraisal process to increase the awareness of tenant involvement and help generate more involvement opportunities within the community.
- The Tenant Scrutiny Framework will have been launched and panel members will have been recruited. This will put us in a strong position to enable tenants to challenge and help shape the services they receive.
- Two joint training sessions will have been held; this will help to create a team working environment between tenants and staff.
- Work will have been completed with Communications to Plain English all publications; this will help to ensure that all messages are communicated clearly to all.

End of Year 2

At the End of year two, we will have strengthened tenant involvement further by introducing:

- An editorial panel will be in place made up of tenants and staff; this will ensure that errors are not made and that information is being communicated in the right way for the audience.
- A process of promoting tenant involvement at sign up of a new tenancy will have been devised; this will let tenants know immediately how they can get involved and make a difference in their housing service.
- A dedicated resource for the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee; this will free up staff time to work on bigger projects and will also ensure consistency and adequate regular support for the Committee as they continue to develop.
- A budget to create a local resource centre; this will enable more tenants to have access to the internet to help support them in their day to day lives. It is hoped that the resource centre could offer training to increase IT skills.
- Devolved budgets to local level via local area panels so that tenants can identify priorities in their local area and act on them. This will empower tenants to make a real difference in their local community.
- An annual report process so that the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee can submit a report to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee; this will ensure links with the wider Council and will help to promote the work being done by tenants to improve services.

End of Year 3

At the end of year three, we will have increased the percentage of actively involved tenants by 5% following the introduction of:

- A flexible menu of involvement opportunities, offering something for everyone with varying levels of commitment.
- More electronic methods of involvement to make participating more readily available to all.
- Tenant Associations in high rise flats and sheltered accommodation to help tackle issues specific to those client groups.
- Neighbourhood Agreements via local area panels to ensure local issues such as parking, litter and anti-social behaviour are tackled at a local level with more specific remedies for the area in question.

At the end of the three years the Strategy will have enabled us to achieve a tenant focussed housing landlord service. Tenants will be involved in setting the Strategic direction of the service, and ensuring that priorities are delivered on. More tenants will be involved across the board, particularly at a local level. This will ensure that issues are tackled at a local level, to create a more tailored service for all.

Equality and Diversity

The introduction of more flexible tailored methods of involvement will create an opportunity for everyone to get involved in the Housing Service regardless of differing needs and capabilities.

We recognise the valuable contribution that all of our tenants and leaseholders can make and we will ensure that there is an option available to everyone to be involved, in way that suits them, regardless of race, religion, gender, age, disability, how much time they have or whether they can get to Civic Centre etc.

Our Get Involved Strategy 2012-15 aims to open up tenant involvement to all tenants and leaseholders and remove any barriers to involvement; ensuring that our Tenants are at the heart of the business setting the vision for the future.

As a commitment to ensuring a fair and accessible housing service for all we will sign up to the Chartered Institute of Housing Charter for Equality and Diversity. The Charter is a flexible framework underpinned by six core principles designed to ensure that we are more proactive to ensure that the right services and the right needs and aspirations of our tenants and leaseholders are achieved.

Action Plan to achieve our objectives

| Link to NTO | Objective | Reference | Who? | By when? | Administrative or Impact | Status | Hyperlink to evidence |
|-------------|--|---|------|-----------|--------------------------|----------|--|
| | Year 1 | | | | | | |
| A, B, C & D | Establish new involvement structure – including committees, scrutiny, local panels, tenant associations and street champions in partnership with resident services | Service Plan 2012-13 | CL | Quarter 2 | A | Complete | Structure in word doc..doc |
| A & B | Establish aspirations of the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee to improve the housing service | Service Plan 2012-13 | JG | Quarter 2 | I | Complete | TLC terms of reference 10.07.12 (final).doc |
| A, B, C & D | Develop Tenant Scrutiny and launch the framework and recruitment at the Tenants Annual Conference 2012 | Localism Act 2011 Service Plan 2012-13 | CL | Quarter 2 | I | Ongoing | ..\Scrutiny\Tenant Scrutiny Form_14 Nov Recruitment.docx |
| A,B,C & D | Create a consultation framework to ensure that effective consultation is undertaken with tenants and leaseholders on changes to policy and/or services and the results are | TLC Priority | JG | Quarter 3 | A & I | Underway | |

| Link to NTO | Objective | Reference | Who? | By when? | Administrative or Impact | Status | Hyperlink to evidence |
|-------------|--|----------------------|------|-----------|--------------------------|---|--|
| | communicated effectively | | | | | | |
| A, B, C & D | Undertake a consultation with tenants and leaseholders regarding the creation of local area panels | TPAS best practice | JG | Quarter 2 | I | Consultation took place at the Tenant and Leaseholder conference with no for or against | |
| A,B,C & D | Create a supported housing forum to help ensure that the needs and priorities of supported housing tenants are being met | Service Plan 2012-13 | OJ | Quarter 3 | I | Underway | |
| A & D | Ensure that Tenant Involvement objectives are included in the staff appraisal process | Service Plan 2012-13 | CL | Quarter 1 | A & I | Complete | P:\Shared Information\Service Planning\201213\Updated 22.08.12 Service Planning Objectives 2012-13 all objectives V2 2003 2012 (2).doc Action 1.7 in |

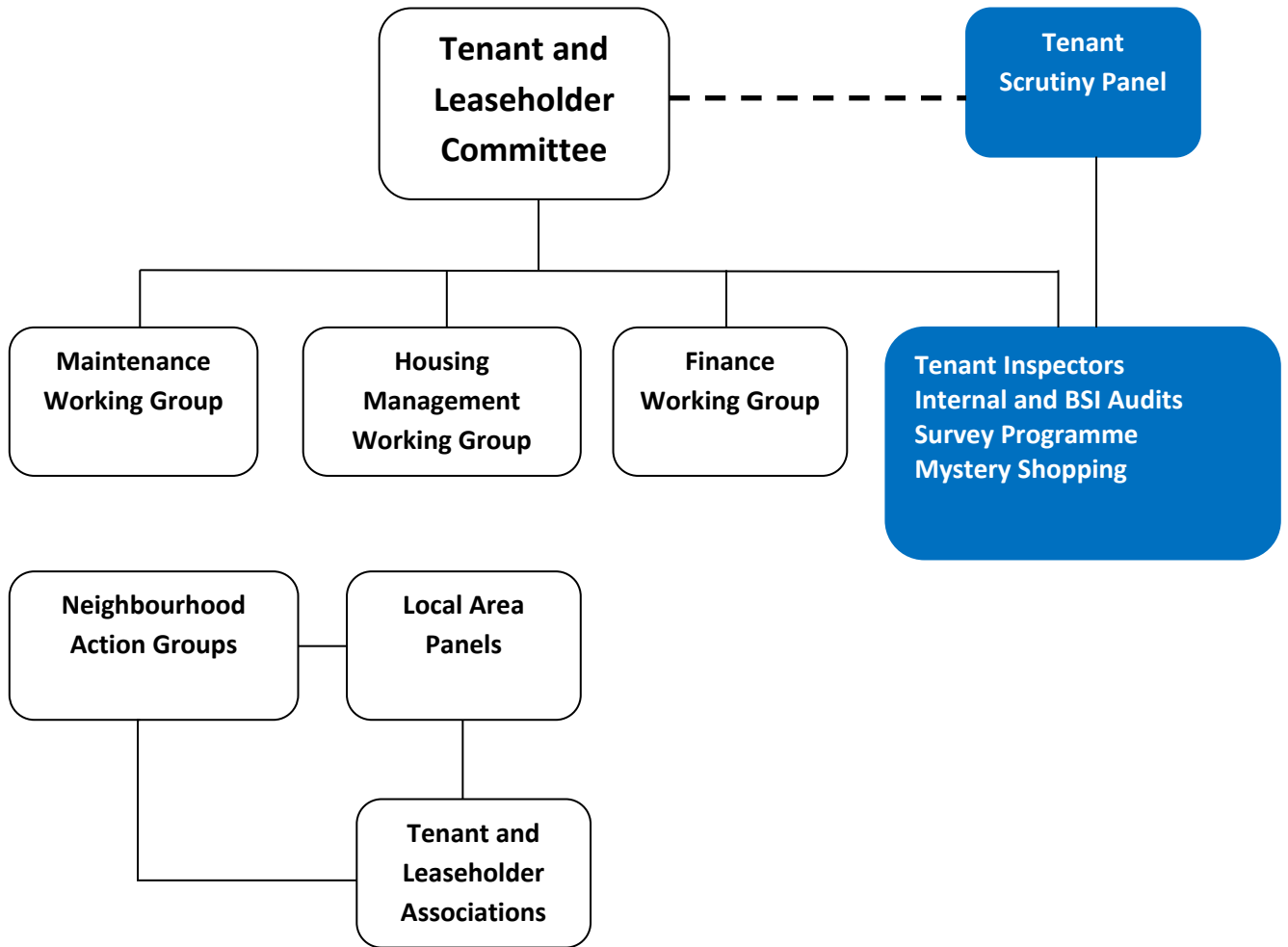
| Link to NTO | Objective | Reference | Who? | By when? | Administrative or Impact | Status | Hyperlink to evidence |
|-------------|---|---|------|-----------|--------------------------|--|---|
| | | | | | | | plan |
| A, C & D | Where possible and practical arrange training jointly for staff and tenants | TLC priority | JG | Quarter 4 | A | | |
| C | Set up a framework to continually look to recruit tenants to be involved in the service via News and Views, surveys, events, consultation and the local media | Service Plan 2012-13 TLC Priority | JG | Quarter 3 | A | Recruitment advert in every edition of news and views. Local media will be used for recruitment to Scrutiny Panel. | P:\Tenancy and leasehold Group\Policy and Participation\News & Views\Final Versions\News and Views Winter 2012-13 LR.pdf |
| C | Develop a system to plain English all communications to tenants and leaseholders | Service Plan 2012-13 TLC priority | SD | Quarter 4 | A | | |
| A | Use the STAR survey results to identify and plan tenant led improvements across the borough | STAR Service Plan 2012-13 Local Offers | JG | Quarter 2 | A & I | An action plan has been drafted and elements of improvements | P:\Tenancy and leasehold Group\Policy and Participation\Te |

| Link to NTO | Objective | Reference | Who? | By when? | Administrative or Impact | Status | Hyperlink to evidence |
|-------------|--|--|------|-----------|--------------------------|---|--|
| | | | | | | have been incorporated within the Annual Report 2011/12 | nant's Annual report\Annual Report 2011-12\DC_AnnualReport_WEB.pdf |
| A, B, C & D | Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment for the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement function and self assess against the CIH Equality and Diversity Charter | CIH E&D Charter | CL | Quarter 4 | A & I | | |
| A | Use Housemark benchmarking to establish Equality and Diversity Performance Indicators | CIH E&D Charter Housemark | JG | Quarter 4 | A | | |
| | Undertake a Gap analysis in preparation for the NTO accreditation | NTO best practice Regulation Tenant involvement and Empowerment Standard | JG | Quarter 4 | A | Underway | |
| | Undertake a review of the Strategy against the year one plan. Set deadlines for year two | | CL | Quarter 4 | A | | |

| Link to NTO | Objective | Reference | Who? | By when? | Administrative or Impact | Status | Hyperlink to evidence |
|-------------|--|-----------|------|----------|--------------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| | priorities. | | | | | | |
| | Year 2 | | | | | | |
| | Achieve NTO accreditation | | | | | | |
| C | Establish an editorial panel to include tenants and leaseholders for all publications including leaflets and posters | | | | | | |
| D | Promote involvement opportunities at sign up of a new tenancy | | | | | | |
| D | Recruit dedicated resource to support the TLC and other committees in minute taking and arranging meetings etc. | | | | | | |
| D | Identify budget and space to create a “tenant resource centre” | | | | | | |
| A | Delegate budgets through sub committees, local area panels | | | | | | |
| A | Set up a process for the TLC to complete an annual report to be submitted to Housing Communities Overview and Scrutiny and | | | | | | |

| Link to NTO | Objective | Reference | Who? | By when? | Administrative or Impact | Status | Hyperlink to evidence |
|-------------|---|-----------|------|----------|--------------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| | Cabinet | | | | | | |
| | Year 3 | | | | | | |
| D | Constitute the TLC in a move towards a tenants federation and work with members services to include within the Councils constitution | | | | | | |
| C | Establish tenant associations in high rise blocks and sheltered accommodation | | | | | | |
| B | Increase the percentage of involved tenants by 5% between 2012-15 | | | | | | |
| B | Establish a menu of flexible involvement opportunities to enable everyone to have an input into the housing service | | | | | | |
| C | Develop electronic methods of involvement via the website | | | | | | |
| B & C | Introduce neighbourhood agreements via the local area panels to ensure that tenants priorities for improvements are being tackled in their local area | | | | | | |

Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Structure



Councillors can attend any activity at request

- Road Shows
- Conference
- Engaged Tenants and Leaseholders
- Local Area Walkabouts
- Road Shows

Tenant Involvement Activity - 2012

