



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

Tenant *Engagement* **Strategy**



Introduction

The councils have developed a Tenant Engagement strategy to reflect the importance and benefits of good tenant engagement - ensuring that all tenants and leaseholders have a voice in the running of the councils' housing services.

With the introduction of the Social Housing Regulations Bill and the new regulatory framework all tenants should have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to monitor and scrutinise the councils' performance as a landlord.

A home is more than a roof over our heads, as a tenant, we should have a say in the way things are done, and the changes that are introduced. We should have a say in the decisions being made to our homes and be part of the decision-making process.

This strategy offers tenants a range of choices in the ways they can work and engage with the councils, to ensure that the voice of the tenant is heard and considered - supporting the councils' ambition to deliver an excellent customer led service.

Based on the responses from the Tenant Engagement Survey and working with the existing Tenant Board and Councillors, the councils have set out five core goals and promises with a range of measurable actions so, as tenants, we can clearly see where they have succeeded or failed.

Throughout the Strategy you will see some targets that you may feel are stretching but you will also notice that there is a clear delivery plan so tenants can see how the councils are measuring up.

Going forward there will be many more opportunities for tenants to be able to participate in decision making about their homes, communities, and services offered alongside elected members of the councils. The strategy seeks to build a culture throughout the housing services that shows that it listens to, learns from, and values the lived experiences of its tenants, and on top of that acts on the feedback received.



Liz Perryman
Chair of the Tenant Board

This strategy sets out how Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils' will develop tenant engagement opportunities, so that you can effectively and meaningfully work with us.

The overall aim is to increase the levels of community engagement, using what you tell us to help shape our services and provide you with assurance around our performance, your safety and anything else that is important to you.



Our Strategy Vision

“Housing services are delivered through multiple channels that convey clear, streamlined communication with our residents. Meaningful tenant engagement puts tenants at the heart of everything we do.”

Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results 2022

Total of 1092 responses

16%
Response rate overall

453
(42% of respondents)
people told us you would like to engage further

The top barrier listed for not being involved was:

Illness or disability which highlights our aging tenant population, followed by not feeling that views would make a difference.

How do you want to engage with us?

Top 5 answers were:

- Completing surveys
- Holding us to account on performance
- Neighbourhood walkabouts
- Feedback groups
- Being a local community representative.

Top 5 ways of engaging split by survey response type

Paper Based Survey Responses	Digital Survey Responses
Paper letters, leaflets & surveys	Emails
Face to Face	Face to Face
Emails	Website
Website	SMS
SMS	Tenant Portal

Our Tenants' Values

We also asked what you valued the most about your relationship with the councils as your landlord and used examples of real tenant values, that were common themes, to inform the strategy's promises and priorities.

Engagement Values, Priorities and Promises

Tenant Value

Priority

We promise you...

“Finding information that is required with ease.”

1 Open & Transparent Information

- Will receive regular and relevant information that is important to you.
- Can access information you need to give us your views on the services you receive.
- Will be supported so you can hold us to account and that you understand how we can put things right when they go wrong.

“Effective Communication.”

2 You said, we did

- We will always provide updates on what it is we have asked you about.
- We will increase the levels of engagement and opportunities to influence, increase tenant satisfaction and use what you have told.

“Access to services when required.”

3 Valuing Diversity & Inclusion

- That we will provide opportunities for you to get involved in areas that are of interest to you.
- We will make sure that we are supporting those who want to be more digitally consulted with.
- That will remove barriers to involvement for underrepresented tenants and work to end the stigma associated with social housing and ensure you are always treated with respect.

“To feel we are just as good as everyone else and not made to feel worthless because we are in social housing. Also, when work is done on our home it’s done to the standard we deserve, not any old how, because it’s a council house and doesn’t matter.”

4 Engagement is everyone’s business

- We will create a culture of valuing engagement across all services.
- We will make it clear where engagement with you has made a difference.
- Are able to challenge us on our performance, that we keep our promises and that you trust us. We want to work in partnership with you.

“Hoping that my views will be heard.”

5 Early and Planned Engagement

- We will make sure that your voice is heard before issues are decided, so you can have a say at the earliest opportunity
- That consultation isn’t just a tick box exercise.
- That there will be adequate time and resources to get engagement right.

How we keep our promises

1

Actions

- We will continue to improve the MyHome Bulletin e-newsletter, sharing essential information and as well as updates on our performance data, tenant satisfaction survey outcomes, safety and compliance information.
- We will also produce an annual printed edition of MyHome for our tenants who may not be online.
- We will provide you with the information you need to be able to effectively challenge us and make sure you can see how we are performing.
- We will make sure that we consult with you on all housing policies that affect you, and that the feedback you give us is used to develop policies and practices before they are approved, ensuring that we are open and transparent.
- We will create a dedicated area of our website and improve our Tenant Portal so that you can access everything that is relevant to you and your home, providing you with a one stop shop.

What will success look like?

- Access to a wide range of information so that you can scrutinise and challenge us on areas that are important to you.
- We will see engagement levels increase.
- A Tenant Improved marker will be added to everything that has been consulted on or designed with you.
- Our web pages will contain the information you need and will be useful, accessible and easy to navigate.
- Introduction of a customer relationship management tool in 2024-25 which is proving successful.
- Introduction of a self-service tool for reporting repairs in 2024-25.
- We will seek to understand all tenants communication preferences so we are talking to you in the way you want us to.

Open &
Transparent
Communication



Specific targets can be found throughout the strategy and within the delivery plan

2



**You said,
we did**

Actions

- We will share housing complaints data to make sure you are made aware of when things have gone wrong and what we are doing to put things right.
- We will increase, measure and report on transactional satisfaction, asking for feedback when you have; received a repair, moved into your new home, experienced anti-social behaviour or raised a complaint. We will use what you tell us to drive service improvements.
- We will report at least annually on all our tenant engagement work, our tenant satisfaction levels and what has been achieved through working with you.
- We will understand how we can improve our Complaints process.

What will success look like?

- We are following the Complaint Handling Code of the Housing Ombudsman and share our self-assessment against the code annually.
- What you tell us will help us improve services, and we will show you where this has happened.
- You will trust us, feel listened to, understand how you can work with us, and levels of engagement will increase.
- We will publish an annual report on engagement as well as our usual annual report to tenants.



We will conduct at least two improvement projects per year. these will be based on what you have told us through complaints, satisfaction surveys and other engagement. these will then be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Joint Committee to ensure that they meet the council's standards.

3

Actions

- We will challenge unacceptable views and behaviours associated with someone's protected characteristics, the stereotyping or stigmatising of our tenants and will carry out regular training with all our colleagues.
- We will develop and put in place the support needed to offer a range of opportunities that encourage engagement, about the things that matter to you and at the level of commitment and involvement that you feel comfortable with.
- We will provide training and support utilising our Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) membership and working with other partners; including the development of digital skills to ensure that we have a structure that is fit for the future.
- We will increase the collection and usage of data, to ensure we are providing accessible and inclusive opportunities and landlord services.
- We will collect equality, diversity and inclusion data through our engagement opportunities ensure that the feedback we are collecting is representative of our tenants.

Valuing Diversity & Inclusion

What will success look like?

- Increased numbers of tenants engaging with us from a more diverse background representative of our tenant population.
- **Increased tenant satisfaction on our tenant satisfaction measures.**
 - Tenants have the skills and confidence to be able to give us feedback, effectively challenge and scrutinise us.
- **Increased data held relating to equality, diversity, inclusion, and vulnerability.**
- **We will hold training on Stigma in Social Housing for our frontline staff and as part of induction for new starters housing.**
 - We will introduce a translation service for use when needed.
 - We have signed up to be part of the Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign and have worked with them to develop an action plan.

4

Actions

- We will create, with you and colleagues, performance dashboards across the whole housing service on the information that is important and relevant to you, to provide a 360-degree oversight of all levels of the councils' performance.
- Everyone who talks to you will ensure that they are capturing their engagement activities in our Housing systems and will ensure that all interactions with you are opportunities for engagement, to improve the data we hold about you and to increase your satisfaction with us.
- We will develop, with you, a set of service standards and targets relating to the management of your home, tenancy and neighbourhood and ensure these are accessible to you. We will report on our performance relating to these standards at least quarterly.
- We will work with all of the councils' services to ensure that we are working together to deliver on the councils' wider corporate aims and strategies.
- The housing team will work together to track and measure key performance indicators in relation to engagement.



**Engagement
is everyone's
business**

- We will hold Housing improvement days with staff and tenants.
- Tenant engagement is now part of all performance management targets in housing.
- We will build relationships with partners across the housing sector to ensure we are sharing and learning from best practice.

What will success look like?

- The whole of the housing service takes ownership for its work and are jointly accountable for its performance.
- We are able to report on the levels of engagement and show where this has increased.
- You will be able to access the information you need to be able to monitor, scrutinise and challenge the council's performance as a landlord.
- Our culture represents the councils' values, and we build trust and mutual respect with you.

5

Early and Planned Engagement

Actions

- We will showcase where your feedback, influence and involvement has been used in the development of a service or resulted in a policy change so that it is clear for all to see the benefits of designing services with you instead of for you.
- We will create a Tenant Consultation Procedure & Toolkit to enable all colleagues to effectively engage with you.
- We will work towards Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) accreditation and utilise the full benefits of our membership.
- We will try to understand how we can better measure performance in tenant engagement activities.

What will success look like?

- Consultation is embedded in all review activities, in line with our consultation framework.
- We can showcase where you have made a difference.
- We will apply for TPAS accreditation to demonstrate our commitment to tenant engagement by December 2024.



Increase satisfaction for 'listen and acts' within the tenant satisfaction measures by April 2025

Overall Success of the Strategy

A delivery plan, which underpins our goals and promises, accompanies this strategy and can be [found on our website](#), a physical copy can be obtained on request.

The delivery plan will be continually developed and annually reviewed by the Tenant Board and our colleagues, to ensure we are working towards what you want and that we are keeping up with your changing priorities.

We will also ensure that progress of the delivery plan is overseen by the portfolio holder members for housing through quarterly reports.

From 2025 this delivery plan will become part of the Housing Master Action Plan and can be found [here](#).



For us, success means:

- You are engaged in the running of your housing service.
- You feel that your views are heard.
- You feel that you are treated with respect.
- Satisfaction levels increase.
- We meet or exceed our targets.
- We are working together across all areas of the councils to ensure we are engaging with all our residents and communities.
- We are monitoring and comparing our own performance against others to identify how our performance compares

Tenant Engagement Roles & Definitions

Tenant Board - an independent body of tenants and leaseholders that scrutinises our performance, monitors satisfaction levels in line with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, reviews and approves changes to policy and strategy, monitors regulatory compliance, health & safety compliance and makes decisions based on evidence-based reports.

Tenant Sounding Boards - to consult and gain the tenant perspective about new or changing initiatives that will directly affect tenants. The boards will focus on different areas of the housing service segmented by what you have told us you are interested in so that you only receive information and are able to influence topics that are of interest to you.

Neighbourhood Experts - To act as the eyes and ears of their communities, feeding back and working with the relevant teams about issues affecting tenants in our communities.

Mystery Shoppers - to assist us in testing that our services are easy to access, our colleagues are polite, respectful, and helpful and to help us ensure we are getting things right first time.



Resident Readers - To give us insight on how easily understood our communications with our tenants are, including feeding into the annual reports.

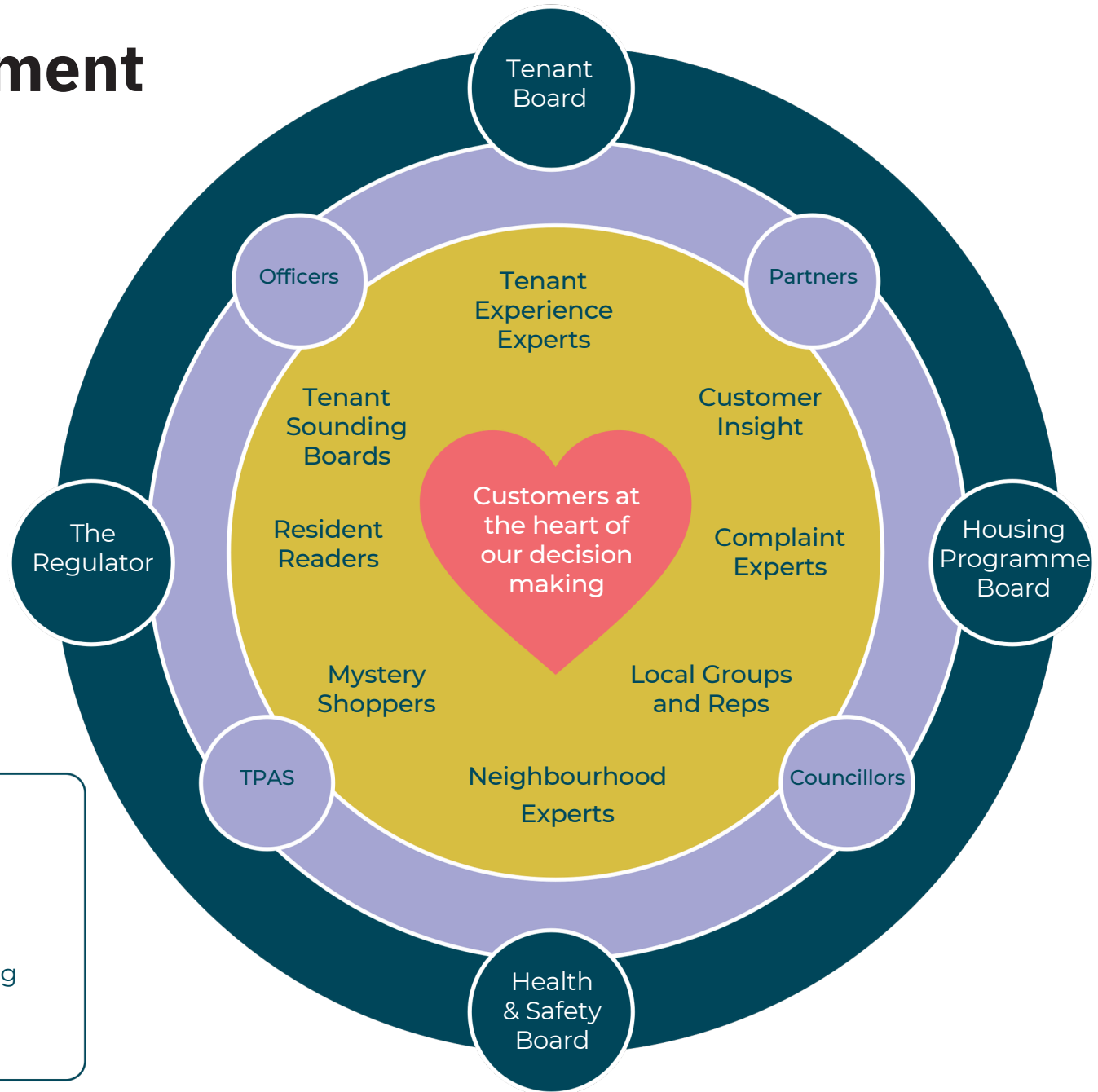
Tenant Experience Experts - To work with us when reviewing a specific service or issue, giving us their experiences on their use of that service, and influencing how we can make things better for all tenants.

Complaint Experts - To assist us in analysing complaint trends, identify lessons learned and be involved in complaint escalation where appropriate.

In 2025/26 we will aim to increase number of neighbourhood experts and start recruiting for compliant expert role.







If you any of these roles would be of interest to you, please contact your Tenant Engagement Team by email: tenant.engagement@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk or calling: 01473 296334

Tenant Engagement Role Structure



KEY

- = Insight & Influence
- = Other key stakeholders
- = Scrutiny, oversight & holding us to account

					
Engagement Type	Who	Time Commitment	Platform	Function	Frequency
Completing surveys	All Tenants and Leaseholders	Up to 15 minutes	Virtual/Paper /Phone/SMS	Feedback & Influence	At least once a year and after a service has been provided
Neighbourhood Walkabouts	Neighbourhood Experts	1-2 Hours	In Person	Feedback & Scrutiny	At least twice a year
Assisting us with procurement	All tenants and Leaseholders (Training required)	1-day tender panel	In Person/Virtual	Scrutiny & Influence	As & when required
Holding us to account on performance	Tenant Board or Equivalent (Training required)	2-3 hours	In Person/Virtual	Scrutiny	4 times a year
Local groups/associations	All Tenants and Leaseholders (Support offered to get started)	Medium to long term commitment	In Person	Feedback & Influence	Regularly
Community Based Events	All Tenants and Leaseholders	½ - 1 day	In Person	Feedback & Influence	As & when required
Virtual Feedback	Tenant Sounding Boards Tenant Experience Experts	30 minutes – 2 hours	Virtual	Feedback & Influence	As & when required
Local Community Rep	All Tenants & Leaseholders	Medium to long term commitment	In Person	Feedback & Influence	Regularly
Reviews of tenant facing policy & procedures	Tenant Sounding Boards Tenant Experience Experts	1-2 hours per quarter	In Person/Virtual	Feedback & Influence	As & when required
Assisting with Complaint panels and Complaint Forums	Complaint Experts	1-2 hours per quarter	In Person/Virtual	Scrutiny & Influence	At least 4 times a year

Monitoring and Governance

The strategy will be reviewed annually and to be published by April of the following year.



Our Organisation Values



OUR
PEOPLE

*We empower,
value and develop
our people to
work together as
one dynamic and
efficient team.*



OUR
CUSTOMERS

*We care about
delivering
high quality,
customer focused
outcomes with our
communities and
partners.*



BEING OPEN
and HONEST

*We are open,
transparent and
truthful.*



TAKING
OWNERSHIP

*We take pride in
our work and take
responsibility for
our actions.*



BEING
AMBITIOUS

*We are ambitious,
inspiring our
communities,
taking pride in our
places and striving
for excellence.*

- The Housing Programme Board will be updated on the delivery plan every 6 months
- Progress on tenant engagement activities will be reported in Portfolio Holders monthly.
- The Tenant Board Scrutiny projects are overseen by the Overview and Scrutiny Joint Committee.
- We will give the Tenant Board a report on the strategy documents and actions and changes that have happened.

Background Documents

[Tenant Engagement Survey](#)

[Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey](#)

[Regulatory Standards](#)

[Housing Revenue Account Business Plan](#)

[Homes & Housing Strategy](#)

[Stop the Social Housing Stigma](#)

[Our Plan for Babergh](#)

[The Mid Suffolk Plan](#)



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