

# **Broxtowe Borough Council**

## **Housing Engagement Strategy 2019 - 2022**

### **“Your Voice, Your Views”**

#### **Our Vision**

The Council’s Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020 sets out our vision of:

‘Broxtowe.... A great place where people enjoy living,  
working and spending leisure time’

One of the key priorities for Housing set out in the Council’s Corporate Plan is to:

‘Become an excellent housing provider’

Through listening and responding to views and feedback, the Housing Department can ensure that customers are at the heart of shaping services for the benefit of all our customers. For the purpose of this strategy a customer is anyone who receives a service from the Housing Department, including tenants, leaseholders, Lifeline customers and Homeseach applicants.

#### **Why have a Housing Engagement Strategy?**

The Housing Engagement Strategy covers the Housing Department’s plans for engagement with customers from 2019 – 2022. The strategy reflects national priorities following the Grenfell Review and the Social Housing Green Paper, along with key priorities and objectives from the Council’s Corporate Plan and Housing Business Plan. This will enable Housing to build upon and improve the way in which we engage with our customers by obtaining feedback from a wider range of views which will use to improve services.

Customer experience of services is essential for highlighting what is working well and where improvements are needed. The priorities and actions set out in this strategy will ensure that our customers have a greater voice and can influence positive change.

#### **How the Housing Engagement Strategy has been developed**

Customers were invited to put forward their ideas to help develop this strategy. The Housing Department took advantage of a free mini-health check available to us through the Council’s membership of TPAS (Tenant Engagement Experts), to inform and develop plans for this strategy and has also incorporated the TPAS National Tenant Engagement Standards into our plans. The strategy has also been developed taking into account the regulatory standard for Tenant Involvement and Empowerment, as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing.

## **How the Housing Engagement Strategy will be delivered**

A range of engagement methods are available for customers to choose from. These methods will match customers' areas of interest, the learning opportunities required and the time commitment available. The introduction of new informal methods will encourage as many people to get involved as possible and ensure that a broader range of views will be heard.

A partnership approach with customers will be taken to reviewing and improving services. Customers involved in the scrutiny of services will have access to appropriate information which will enable them to make informed decisions and recommendations. Customers will be supported by the Housing Engagement Team and other officers from across the Department. We will provide training to support customers who wish to participate. Our support includes reimbursement for reasonable out of pocket expenses.

The delivery of the priorities set out in the Engagement Strategy will be monitored by the Resident Involvement Group and Housing Management Team. Regular reports will be presented to Housing Committee and Housing Performance Group to monitor that key outcomes are being achieved.

## **Benefits for customers who get involved**

We will ensure that getting involved is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Participation will allow customers to use and develop a range of skills from working as part of a team to interpreting data and writing reports. We will offer opportunities to support the employment aspirations of our customers. Wherever possible we will support customers by providing work experience opportunities. A key strategy action is to review the provision of traineeships and apprenticeships in the Housing Service.

The increased focus on informal engagement methods and pilot of housing surgeries will provide easier and quicker ways to be involved, acknowledging that traditional methods, such as meetings, are not for everyone.

In addition to benefits for the individual, by becoming involved customers will also improve the service provided to all customers by sharing their experiences and opinions on service improvements.

## **Our Engagement Priorities**

The Housing Engagement Strategy covers a three year period and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the strategy continues to meet national and local priorities.

The strategy will be supported by an annual action plan. During 2019 – 2020 the priorities will be delivered by:

## Increase our range of informal engagement opportunities

Strategy Action	To be achieved in 2019-2020
Increase Housing's attendance at community events to promote the work of the team and seek feedback about services	Minimum of five community events attended
Increase the use of 'Meet the Manager' events for managers to gain greater understanding of customer views	Minimum of 20 'Meet the Manager' events arranged; with every manager attending at least one event
Review information on our website to highlight opportunities for involvement and provide opportunity to share views	Review Housing web pages to highlight the new methods of engagement and develop virtual engagement methods
Embed the use of informal engagement methods throughout the Housing Department	Training provided to Housing Managers on informal methods of engagement and the benefit of this approach to services

## Review our formal engagement structure

Strategy Action	To be achieved in 2019-2020
Map out existing tenant and community groups in the Borough	Database of groups developed using information from key stakeholders
Engage with other Council Departments to share learning and insight	Include the outcomes of engagement activities in a minimum of 6 SMT Briefings
Complete an annual impact assessment of resident involvement to ensure that outcomes are being achieved	Impact assessment model developed and outcomes published
Develop a Community Champion programme	A minimum of 4 Community Champions recruited
Establish a community pot to enable groups of tenants to bid for small scale improvements to their area	At least one bidding round completed
Review the role of the Resident Involvement Group (RIG)	Assess the structure, role and impact of the group

## Improve our approach to encouraging involvement

Strategy Action	To be achieved in 2019 - 2020
Review how we use information provided in complaints to improve services	Include learning logs to direct scrutiny reviews and promote "You said, We Did" messages to customers
Increase the use of text messages and email, where customers have identified this as their preferred method of contact	Introduce the use of text messages and increase the use of the "Email me" service
Improve promotion of upcoming decisions and opportunities to get involved	Use a range of Housing communications promote decisions and opportunities
Review the use of surveys, including frequency, method and impact	Update Capita Open Housing system to enable surveys to be undertaken using customers' preferred method of contact

Consider how the Council's Mediation Service can be used to resolve landlord and tenant disputes	Assess the impact of the service in improving disputes
Encourage engagement through the promotion of skills development	Review the provision of traineeships and apprenticeships

<b>Increase the methods used to provide feedback</b>	
<b>Strategy Action</b>	<b>To be achieved in 2019- 2020</b>
Increase opportunities for customers to engage on safety issues and provide feedback on resolutions	Develop Tenant Inspector programme
Ensure information on our performance is provided to customers	Provide performance information using a range of Housing communications
Improve feedback on service improvements, such as 'You Said, We Did' bulletins	Include "You Said, We Did" features in a range of Housing communications

## Engagement Methods

A range of engagement methods are available for customers to choose from. These methods will match customers' areas of interest, the learning opportunities required and the time commitment available. We will ensure that getting involved is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Low Level Engagement – no more than 30 minutes				
Activity Type	Method	Overview	Skills	Frequency
Receiving Information	Social Media/website	Messages on key Housing services, including self service forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT skills</li> <li>• Understanding the service</li> </ul>	Weekly
	Housing News Bulletin	Sent out to subscribers of Council Housing through ' <a href="#">Email Me</a> '	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT skills</li> <li>• Understanding the service</li> </ul>	Monthly
Providing Feedback	Consultations	Undertaken when changes to services are being considered that will directly impact on customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing feedback</li> <li>• Written communication</li> <li>• ICT skills</li> </ul>	As required
	Surveys	Undertaken with customers about services to gauge satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing feedback</li> <li>• Written communication</li> <li>• ICT skills</li> </ul>	As required
Information Feedback	STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents)	Undertaken with tenants and leaseholders to seek feedback about the areas they live in and services received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing feedback</li> <li>• Written communication</li> <li>• ICT Skills</li> </ul>	Biennial
	Housing Surgeries	Face-to-face sessions to discuss concerns and ask questions relating to housing issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of services</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> </ul>	Quarterly
	Meet the Manager Events	Held in key areas to enable customers to meet Housing Managers and feedback on the services they receive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of services</li> <li>• Communications skills</li> </ul>	Flexible

### Medium Level Engagement – 30 minutes – 1 hour

Activity Type	Method	Overview	Skills	Frequency
Active Engagement	Estate Walkabouts	Tenants and leaseholders are invited to join Housing Officers and Senior Maintenance Officers on a walkabout of their neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of Tenancy &amp; Estates</li> <li>• Team work</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Observational skills</li> <li>• Finding solutions</li> </ul>	Annually
	Tenant Inspectors	Tenants supported to inspect services and ensure standards are being achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Observational skills</li> <li>• Finding solutions</li> <li>• Assessing quality</li> </ul>	Monthly
	Mystery Shopping	Customers supported to test services and ensure standards are being achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Research skills</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Identifying improvements</li> </ul>	2 - 3 occasions during project
	Community Champions	Tenants supported to act as a link between their community and the Housing teams, providing feedback on how services can be improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Advocacy skills</li> <li>• Research</li> </ul>	Monthly
	Social Activity Groups	Independent Living Tenants who manage social funds and organise activities for the benefit of residents at their schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Planning and organisation</li> <li>• Working with a budget</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> </ul>	Flexible
	Digital Champions	Trained volunteers who provide support and training to enable customers to get online.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT skills</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> </ul>	Flexible

### High Level Engagement – over 1 hour on a regular basis

Activity Type	Method	Overview	Skills	Frequency
Active Engagement	Resident Involvement Group (RIG)	Supports delivery of the Housing Engagement Strategy and considers service improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Meeting skills</li> <li>• Finding solutions</li> <li>• Making improvements</li> <li>• Interpreting data</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> </ul>	Monthly
	Housing Performance Group	A Working Group of tenants and elected members who meet to discuss the monitoring of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Meeting skills</li> <li>• Interpreting data</li> </ul>	Quarterly
	Task and Finish Groups	Undertake scrutiny reviews of a service, and make recommendations for service improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Finding solutions</li> <li>• Making improvements</li> <li>• Report writing</li> <li>• Presentation skills</li> </ul>	3 – 4 meetings over 6 months

Customers engaged at a high level are supported to attend seminars and training provided by emtpf (East Midlands Tenant Participation Forum) and TPAS (Tenant Engagement Experts). Support will also be provided for an engaged customer to represent the Council on the emtpf committee.

