

ROTHERHAM COUNCIL'S TENANT ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

(2022–2025)



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FOREWORD

We are extremely grateful to all our tenants and residents who have worked with us for many years to strengthen and develop our housing services. We want to continue to expand opportunities to enable more tenants to become involved so that service delivery is reflective of customer needs.

Providing high quality homes alongside safe, healthy and vibrant communities is what will make Rotherham Council, the best housing provider in the country.

The successful implementation of the 25 Ward Housing Hubs across the borough and our digital transformation journey during the pandemic has enabled us to continue to engage existing tenants as well as expanding opportunities for further involvement.

I am extremely proud of our communities who have worked hard to look out and help each other ensuring support to our vulnerable residents during the pandemic and would like to personally thank the community for all their great work during what has been a very challenging time.

The fantastic work by Rother Fed and the Befriending Volunteers won the Richard Crossley Excellence in Community Action Award at the TPAS (Tenant Engagement Experts) Awards in 2021. Rother Fed have also successfully been awarded the Queen's award for Voluntary Service which is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK.

The Council is a member of Tpas which assures tenants that our tenant engagement approach is effective and offers excellent value for money.

I am very delighted and proud that we have just recently achieved Tpas Exemplar status. Tpas Exemplar is for those organisations who have been awarded the Tpas PRO accreditation three times and have consistently demonstrated their exemplar approach to tenant engagement.

Tenant Engagement has evolved significantly in the past three years, especially during the pandemic where digital opportunities have been further increased giving tenants more flexibility in how they want to put their views forward, to ensure no one is left behind.

The Social Housing White Paper places a greater emphasis on accountability, thriving communities and tenant empowerment. How we will implement those expectations is what will make us succeed in our goal of excellence.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in the development of this framework, and I look forward to continuing to work with our tenants and residents to further develop and improve our housing service during the next three years.



Councillor Amy Brookes,
Cabinet Member for Housing

THE VISION FOR TENANT ENGAGEMENT

Our vision is to put tenants at the heart of everything we do, ensuring that council tenancies and estates are sustainable to create vibrant communities in which people feel happy, safe and proud.

We are passionate about tenants having a greater voice and influence over the way in which decisions are taken about their homes and the services provided to them, ensuring our tenants are kept informed and are equipped to have their say, scrutinise, challenge, learn from complaints and hold us to account. This will help us formulate proposals and recommendations for service improvement and how that is then reported into the Council's governance structure for oversight and to support decision making.

We have developed five key outcomes in consultation with our tenants to enable us to achieve our vision and meet the requirements of the Social Housing White Paper:

Outcome One:

Putting our customers at the heart of everything we do.

Outcome Two:

Delivering a range of options to give all our tenants an opportunity to get involved.

Outcome Three:

Supporting our tenants to get involved in their community, providing help to each other, and taking pride in their neighbourhood.

Outcome Four:

Enable tenants to scrutinise and challenge our performance by providing open, transparent and accessible information.

Outcome Five:

Ensuring the relationship with our tenants is built upon a culture of openness, understanding and mutual respect.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Tenant Engagement Framework ensures that we meet the national standards required to engage and empower tenants in housing services and emphasises the benefits this brings to the services.

Regulatory Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

The standard is a legal requirement for housing providers to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the development of policies, decision making, scrutiny, right to manage and agreeing local offers.

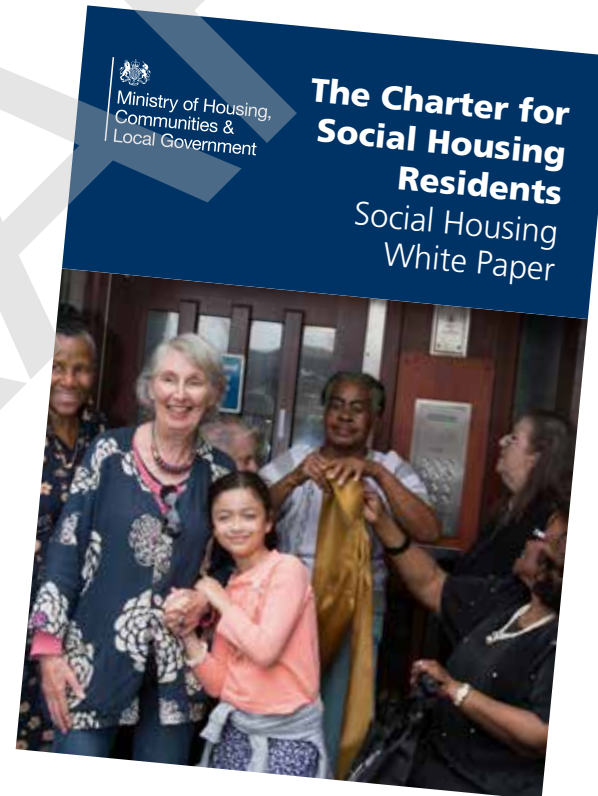
Social Housing Regulation Bill

This is legislation intended to improve the regulation of social housing to “strengthen the rights of tenants and ensure better quality, safer homes” which was announced in June 2022. The Bill builds upon the proposals set out in the White Paper below, and provides amongst other things, a legislative framework to strengthen the landlord and tenant relationship.

The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper

Tenant engagement is characterised by constant change; the Social Housing White Paper ‘A New Deal for Social Housing’, proposed changes to the consumer regulation of social housing to strengthen the accountability of landlords relating to providing safe homes, quality services and treating residents with respect.

The charter puts a duty on the RSH (Regulator for Social Housing) to require landlords to show how they have sought out and considered ways to improve tenant engagement at all levels. The paper sets out proposals and regulatory changes under seven key chapters. We have set out our actions under each chapter stating how we plan to achieve and respond to each of these:



Chapter 1: To be safe in your home

- We will continue to ensure we have robust arrangements in place to support vulnerable residents and help customers sustain their tenancies.
- We will explore thermal improvements and green technologies which will reduce the carbon footprint of our housing as well as reducing tenant's energy bills.
- We will continue to consult with tenants and leaseholders on their health and safety requirements.
- We will consult with tenants on electrical safety to build on fire safety work which has already been carried out.

Chapter 2: To know how your landlord is performing

- Our new housing IT system will help improve the way tenants can manage their bills, report repairs and request tenancy changes.
- There will be a greater emphasis on tenant satisfaction including benchmarking ourselves against other social housing landlords and where we need to improve things further for our tenants.
- We will communicate and engage with our tenants on our performance and publish our progress on our website.

Chapter 3: To have complaints dealt with promptly

- The Council's Complaints Team will continue to have a strong focus on any housing complaints raised by our tenants.
- We will report on all complaints to show tenants how they are dealt with and the outcomes to maintain a 'Learning from Complaints' culture.
- We will raise awareness, so tenants understand their rights and how to complain.
- We will demonstrate greater accountability by publishing details of any cases determined and published by the Ombudsman in relation to the service.

Chapter 4: To be treated with respect backed by a strong regulator

- We will treat our tenants with respect.
- We will continue to reach out to the underrepresented to make sure their needs are heard and understood.
- Our new housing developments will include bungalows, apartments, specially adapted properties, and larger family accommodation to ensure a wide range of needs are met.
- We will be inspected by the national Regulator of Social Housing to make sure we continue to meet the standards set.

Chapter 5: To have your voice heard by your landlord

- We will continue to consult and engage with all our tenants to help improve our services.
- We will make sure our staff are equipped with the right skills and training to provide effective support.
- We will continue to build on the flexible engagement methods we have developed during the pandemic to give more tenants the opportunity to have their say and scrutinise housing services.

Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in

- We will bring empty properties back into use for the people of Rotherham.
- We will continue to help more homeless people into housing.
- We will continue to make improvements to existing housing stock.
- We will continue to involve tenants to make environmental improvements so that their neighbourhoods are pleasant places to live in, through the Ward Housing Hub Budget.
- We will continue to work with tenants to tackle and address Anti-Social Behaviour ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place building on the recommendations from the Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Review.

Chapter 7: To be supported to take your first steps to ownership

- We will involve tenants and communities in the development of new homes including new council housing.
- We will continue to build good quality, affordable housing in places people want to live and based on their housing needs.

A Connected Society: A Strategy for Tackling Loneliness

The Tenant Engagement Framework also has strong links to the national strategy for tackling loneliness.

We are undertaking a range of initiatives in support of this agenda including:

- Tenancy health checks to identify loneliness and mental health issues, discussing potential support and referrals and signposting to community activities.
- Friendship Calls through Rother Fed to some of the most vulnerable people who were/are feeling lonely, isolated, and unconnected particularly during the pandemic.
- Installing Wi-Fi within some of our neighbourhood centres to enable tenants to get online which will connect people, particularly older and disabled people.
- Empowering residents with the management of assets and pro-active involvement in their communities through community asset transfer including community buildings, allotments and greenspace.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Council Plan (2022-25)

The Council Plan builds on the foundations that have been laid in recent years, setting out an ambitious programme to improve the lives of people in Rotherham.

Delivery of the Tenant Engagement Framework and empowering and supporting our tenants and residents to take an active role in their communities directly contributes towards the delivery of 'Every Neighbourhood Thriving' and 'A Cleaner, Greener and Local Environment':

Housing Service Plan (2022-23)

The housing service plan sets out our key service priorities for 2022/23.

A key priority which links to tenant engagement within the plan is:

Empowering tenants - We support active citizenship and engagement through effective locality partnership working and community empowerment so that residents feel safe and satisfied within their homes and neighbourhoods.

This will be achieved through having a diverse workforce, confident in working together to deliver the best possible service for residents. We will reinforce the culture of mutual respect between officers and tenants, through joint pieces of work, for example, Rother Fed's Tenant Scrutiny Panel Scrutiny Review of Communications with tenants.

Housing Strategy (2022-25)

The Housing Strategy provides an overview of Rotherham's housing needs and local housing market related issues. The delivery plan sets out how the Council and key partners will address each of the priorities identified.

The Housing Strategy's six key priorities for the 2022-25 period are:

- High quality new homes
- Affordable homes to meet local need
- Investment in existing homes
- Bringing empty homes back into use
- Supporting people to live independently
- Strengthening communities

The Tenant Engagement Framework will contribute towards strengthening communities through supporting tenants and residents to get involved in and benefit from housing development, green spaces and improve existing homes working towards making them zero carbon.



The Lanes, East Dene: 217 homes brought up to EPC rating band C.

Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy (2019-22)

The new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy (2022-25) is under development and the main areas of focus are:

- To support people with complex needs
- To prevent homelessness and offer rapid housing solutions to get people in urgent need rehoused quicker
- To increase support for young people to prevent homelessness
- To end rough sleeping and begging
- To improve access to tenancy support, employment and health support services
- To ensure there is sufficient decent emergency accommodation

With further increase in demand following the pandemic, we will continue working with our tenants to better understand their needs and how they would like us to work with them to effectively support them to sustain their tenancies to prevent homelessness.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022-25)

We want to reach out and listen to our under-represented groups and use our customer data to ensure services are accessible and meeting the diverse needs of our tenants and neighbourhoods by contributing to the following:

1. Understanding, listening, and engaging across all communities
2. Delivering fair, inclusive, and accessible services
3. Empowering people to engage and challenge discrimination and to promote good community relations

Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy (2018-25) - further updated in July 2022

Adopting a strength-based approach by councillors working with local people to find solutions to local issues and to build on our heritage and assets. We will help create Thriving Neighbourhoods by ensuring communities are at the heart of everything we do to make people feel happy, safe and proud.

To do this, we will make it easier to get involved in the local community, work closely with our partners and local voluntary and community groups, green spaces and effectively tackle community issues.

Below is some of the work we have done and will continue to do to add value:

- 25 Ward Housing Hubs have been implemented successfully across the Borough since April 2021 engaging with wider diverse tenants through a flexible menu of options to add value to Neighbourhood and ward-based working. We have geographically aligned some of our budgets on a ward basis to ensure investment and involvement within each ward area.

- We have been continually improving green infrastructure and community hubs through Ward Housing Hubs and environmental works investment in our greenspaces, play areas and neighbourhood centres.
- We have been working with Rother Fed to increase the number of TARA's across the wards and making use of our assets such as neighbourhood centres enabling residents to socialise and participate in activities.



Financial Inclusion Strategy (2019-22)

The Financial Inclusion Plan (2022-25) is under development and this aims to coordinate existing and develop new local services designed to tackle the effects of financial exclusion.

We want to better understand what our tenants require from the tenancy and financial support service in order that we can provide effective support to tenants to enable them to manage their finances and sustain their tenancies.

Rotherham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-25)

The Strategy sets out the key aims and objectives to improve health and wellbeing in Rotherham.

We are contributing towards delivery of the objectives by:

- Working with Rother Fed to increase community-based activities and use of our neighbourhood centres through an appointed Activities Coordinator. This will enable us to tackle loneliness and social isolation, provide a support network for vulnerable older people and have a positive environmental impact of a single facility used rather than multiple individual homes.
- Empowering groups with management of community-based assets to enable them to make a difference to their communities.
- Identifying any care and support needs and signposting people to support available through our revised tenancy health check process.

Rotherham Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy sets out the ambition and plans we have for putting technology and information at the forefront of our journey to become a modern, efficient council.

We want to improve our offer through the implementation of a new computer system which will enable our tenants to self-serve and get involved online. We are also installing Wi-Fi within some of our Neighbourhood Centres to enable more of our tenants and residents to get online.

Customer Access Strategy

The Strategy details the priorities to become a modern, efficient Council which provides value for money and has the needs of our residents at the centre of our decision making.

We are installing Wi-Fi within our centres which will enable tenants to self-serve thus saving time spent on the phone as well as reducing the number of calls and visits to the Council, to enable us to target our resources more effectively prioritising the people and communities who need help the most.

We want to make sure all our services are accessible so that regardless of anyone's personal situation, no one feels disadvantaged. We realise that going online isn't for everyone and for some services there may be other self-serve options available too.

Valuing Volunteers Policy

The policy states how we will build trust and respect with volunteers to develop a two-way commitment which benefits both the volunteer and the Council. Rother Fed will provide the training and support to enable our tenant volunteers to have their say on housing services and contribute towards their neighbourhoods.

Consultation and Engagement Policy

We will ensure our Tenant Consultation and Engagement activities apply the standards and principles established in the Council's Consultation and Engagement Policy. This will enable us to effectively engage with our tenants and listens to their views to help shape and design housing services and inform policy making.



Consultation took place at the Rotherham Show (2022) on the refresh of the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

2019-22 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The previous Rotherham Tenant Engagement Framework (2019-22) has proven to be a great success and has been showcased as good practice regionally and nationally.

We are very proud and grateful for all the time and outstanding work our tenants and residents have achieved during the last three years which includes:

Tpas 'Exemplar' Accreditation (2022-24)



In 2022, the Council was successful in being 'Exemplar Accredited' by Tpas, the national tenant engagement organisation. Tpas are England's leading Tenant Engagement experts. They promote, support and champion tenant involvement and empowerment in social housing across England. The Accreditation process has supported us in placing tenants and residents at the heart of everything we do, and we take every opportunity to involve them in decision making. This will ensure that we are fully accountable to the needs of our tenants. Tpas Exemplar is for those organisations who have been awarded the Tpas PRO accreditation three times and have consistently demonstrated their exemplar approach to tenant

engagement. Rotherham Council is only the 3rd Housing Provider so far in the country to achieve this feat. Our Tpas Accreditation will last two years and has left us with useful recommendations for improvement and has highlighted where we are doing things well.

Vulnerable Tenant Calls

Housing Services carried out over 5,600 proactive telephone calls to potentially vulnerable tenants during lockdown measures to check on their wellbeing, offer appropriate support and organise referrals where required.

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel is supported and facilitated by Rother Fed on behalf of the Council. They have completed four reviews in the past three years including Anti-Social Behaviour, Aids and Adaptations, Customer Satisfaction for Repairs and Maintenance and Communications. The outcomes from the reviews have helped to improve and develop services to meet customer needs. Please see Aids and Adaptations and Tenant Satisfaction with Repairs case studies below:

TENANT SCRUTINY 4: Aids and Adaptations

Priority	Recommendation	Progress
A	Team resources to meet demand Up to full complement to meet the work demand.	An additional two Adaptations Application Officers, one Project manager and one Technical officer now in post. Manager post focusing solely on adaptations to be filled. <i>Target date for completion – July 2022</i>
B1	Re-draft the policy document Work with tenant representatives and include a summary version for the general public and guidance on the re-housing of tenants to previous adapted homes.	Some benchmarking taken place; but full policy not to be drafted until new operational manager and adaptations manager are recruited. <i>Target date for completion; previously December 2021/ June 2022. Now March 2023</i>
B2	Five-year rule Policy to state that tenants must stay in their home for five years in line with the policy for private households.	Discussed by Housing SMT and agreed not to pursue this recommendation. <i>Target date for completion; NA</i>
C	Targeted publicity Accessible for hard to reach and vulnerable people, including people without access to the internet.	Housing SMT decided not to advertise but to ensure all key contacts and professionals are up to date. <i>Target date for completion; NA.</i>
D	Leaflet Expectations when using the adaptations service.	Customer liaison officers now manage the customer journey and signpost to relevant services if necessary. <i>Target date for completion: November 2021.</i>
E	Written communication About the process sent out once a referral has been made.	Adaptations Application Officers use personal approach to improve customer journey. Letters to be generated as part of the new ICT. Direct contact numbers for team and individuals used. <i>Target date for completion: March 2022.</i>
F	Regular contact intervals/key contact To keep customers up to date with the progress and works scheduling.	Application Officers allowing for more regular contact intervals and key contact approach. New ICT will also help. <i>Target date for completion: March 2022.</i>
G	Budget for urgent work To keep some aside each year for urgent work.	This has been arranged and is now in place. Budgets monitored monthly to maximise budget capabilities. <i>Target date for completion: March 2022.</i>
H	Assess the spending Between minor and major adaptations to allow for separate budgetary monitoring for each.	Now in place through the new contracts for repairs and maintenance. Annual budget uses forecasted demand and no delays in minor works. <i>Target date for completion: February 2021.</i>
I	Customer satisfaction survey For minor adaptations.	To be arranged at a future date when team is fully staffed. <i>Target date for completion: March 2022</i>

TENANT SCRUTINY 5: Tenant Satisfaction with Repairs

Priority	Recommendation	Progress
A	Appointments Improve the communication around re-arranging or cancelling appointments.	Call Centre staff asking for up to date information and Northgate system has improved the accuracy of contact details. <i>Target date for completion: March 2022</i>
B1	Complaints processes Let tenants know how to complain about a repair	To run an article in Home Matters (now Spring/Summer 2022). Decided not to include on 'tenants not in' cards. <i>Target date for completion: July 2022</i>
C	Customer Satisfaction measurement Find other ways of measuring tenant satisfaction rather than just the text service.	Hand-held technology will be explored again following Covid. Officers to regularly 'phone and obtain feedback from customers.. <i>Target date for completion: February 2022</i>
D	'Right First Time' measurement Find other ways to measure 'Right First Time'.	Discussion and agreed culture of 'Right First Time' for jobs where possible. To hold tool-box talks and maintain van stocks. It is a key performance indicator. <i>Target date for completion: Completed.</i>
E	Text Questions Make the text survey questions and the scoring methods the same across both contract partners	Mears and Equans having ongoing discussions to develop standard questions. <i>Target date for completion: March 2022</i>
F	Response rates Find out why Mears customers respond less to the text survey than Equans customers.	Mears and Equans have compared response rates. Mears looking at a simpler text process (previously used a link) <i>Target date for completion: March 2022</i>
G	Customer Satisfaction sub-group Form a sub-group to consider quality and tenant satisfaction, including representatives from Rotherham Federation and contract partners.	Sub-group arranged and meeting monthly/bi-monthly. <i>Target date for completion: Completed</i>
H	Publicity about the learning Share the learning from tenants about improving the repairs and maintenance service.	'You said/we did' to appear in Spring Home Matters showing improvements as a result of customer satisfaction feedback. <i>Target date for completion: May 2022.</i>
I	Staff behaviours Look to reduce the number of complaints made about staff behaviours.	To be picked up via toolbox talks and staff meetings. <i>Target date for completion: Unknown.</i>

Jo Workman (Council tenant) says



I am a council tenant, 3 years ago I attended a course run by Rother Fed about working in the community which I really enjoyed and this sparked my interest about helping in my community. When I attended this, I was told about the Housing Involvement Panel and Tenants

Scrutiny Panel working alongside Rotherham Council. I was really excited to join these meetings, as working in partnership is the best way to make a difference. Since then, I have attended the meetings and have gained lots of knowledge around tenant engagement. I also run 2 SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) youth clubs in Dinnington and Dalton and by doing tenant involvement, this has given me the confidence to take those youth clubs forward to bigger

things. I have recently been able to join the Mears Your Voice Board which involves getting tenants ideas and thoughts about how Mears are working within the community which is represented from people all over the UK.

The Housing Involvement Panel and Tenants Scrutiny Panel meetings are a great way for people to come together and feel part of helping their community. I have met some amazing people and it has opened many doors for me to help people.

'I am on the Rotherham Federation Tenants Scrutiny Panel which makes sure that Rotherham Council does what it says it will – we give a tenant's voice and scrutinise a service working with senior managers and officers. We have a different topic for each review. I'd recommend it as the Council have shown us that they are listening to us as we are already seeing outcomes and improvements to housing services which are benefiting tenants further.'

Tenants and Residents Associations (TARA's)

Rother Fed supported and empowered 75 TARA's and community groups during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure they had the right skills and equipment to offer support to vulnerable residents within their communities. The work undertaken by TARA's has helped to support delivery of the Thriving Neighbourhoods agenda and ensured support to those most in need including tasks such as shopping, prescriptions and food banks etc. Rother Fed supported TARA's to deliver community events such as virtual coffee morning and outdoor exercise sessions within COVID restrictions.



Case Study

(Harthill with Woodall Community COVID 19 Support Group)

The Harthill with Woodall Community COVID 19 Support Group was set up in response to the first pandemic lockdown in 2020. The group was formed over a very short period of time out of the desire of many residents in Harthill, Woodall, Thorpe Salvin and Laughton to take some positive action to support and minimise the risks to local residents during the pandemic. It was completely volunteer-led and run.

The Group delivered food parcels, dog walking, individual parcels and medicines to people who were vulnerable or self-isolating.



Digital Inclusion

The Council and Rother Fed supported residents to get online and utilise technology during the pandemic so that they could continue to be involved in housing services. The tenants looked at video tutorials which allowed them to learn and to become more confident.

Rother Fed also facilitated online activities to keep people entertained including virtual bingo and coffee mornings. These tenants are now more confident to access the Council's online services and self-serve such as reporting a repair.

Rother Fed Santa Zoom Call during the pandemic.



Case Study (Winnie Billups)

Winnie Billups (Council tenant) said “During the pandemic and lockdown, the meetings were moving to virtual and I wanted to stay involved and keep in touch with what was going on, as I have been involved for many years. I contacted Sarah Fletcher at Rother Fed who supported me with a couple of 1-1 sessions at my house after the full lockdown restrictions had eased and we were allowed to meet in small groups. Sarah also continued to support me over the phone, asking me to describe what was happening on the screen when I became stuck. I was pushed to go digital; this wasn't something I was interested in before the pandemic, but I have to say I have enjoyed the journey and experience, I know a lot more than I did before lockdown and still lots to learn.”



Ward Housing Hubs

25 Ward Housing Hubs have been set up across the borough since April 2021 enabling a diverse range of tenants to become involved to have a say and add value to Neighbourhood and ward-based working.

Ward Housing Hubs provide tenants with the opportunity to allow the tenants to have a say on how money will be spent on environmental improvements.

Case Study

(Keeton Hall Road Lighting, Wales Ward)

The tenants who live on Keeton Hall Road residents raised issues around lighting around the bungalows, they felt lighting would help them feel safer and more secure. It was also noted this would help with their own safety too, as many are elderly with mobility issues. The majority of tenants are older or disabled and were struggling in the dark.

The Ward Housing Hub funded installation of Solar security lighting which provided light to all bungalows on the street and now feel much safer and there has been no reports of ASB and Crime either.

“Mrs Hagan above (council tenant from Keeton Hall Road who had solar lighting installed on her bungalow), stated that she is very happy with the lighting, as it was dark previously in the area.

Also stated it has improved issues around the rear of the property, as previous issues with youths running along the back.

She also stated she was happy that they are solar powered as this helps especially during the current situation with energy price rise”



Case Study

(Green Lane Bulb Planting, Rawmarsh East Ward)

Recently a number of wooden posts were installed (which was funded by local Councillor's) along the length of highway grass verge to prevent verge parking and stop damage caused to the wide grass verges and local tenants and residents said the area would look even nicer with spring bulbs. Therefore Ward Housing Hub funding was used to fund the planting of approximately 10,000 spring bulbs to create a more positive look within the area. I feel this would be a benefit for both local residents and the wider community as well as visitors to the area.

"John Nixon (council tenant below) lives locally, not too far from this location and often litter picks this site as part of his voluntary work in the community. John is part of a local litter picking group and covers various sites in Parkgate and Rawmarsh. John stated the bulb project on Green Lane looks so much nicer when all the flowers are in bloom."

The verge areas look more tidy and cleaner, improving the appearance of the area, making the area look nice and welcoming. It's good projects like this makes an impact on a busy area used by pedestrians and traffic also helps for people to take pride in their area. "



TPAS TENANT ENGAGEMENT STANDARDS

The overall aim of tenant engagement is to understand the needs, expectations, aspirations, achievements, and experiences of Council tenants and to improve services as a result of this.

Tpas (Tenant Engagement Experts) are a national organisation that promote, support and champion tenant involvement and empowerment in social housing across England. The Council has been successful in achieving a culture of engagement by meeting Tpas's seven National Engagement Standards through the Tpas Exemplar Accreditation that we have recently been awarded.

The Council has been a member of Tpas since 2016 and will continue to work with them to meet the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing, Housing Ombudsman, the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance as well as the proposed Building Safety regime.



HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR OUTCOMES

Symbol (*) is also a recommendation from TPAS Exemplar Accreditation.

OUTCOME I: PUTTING OUR CUSTOMERS AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO	
ACTIONS	IMPACT MEASURES
*Review the website ensuring that tenants have access to information and can provide feedback on services.	**Online Survey tool developed for tenants who cannot attend meetings to feedback on services and polices.
*Undertake wider consultation with tenants on the Tenant Engagement Framework Action Plan and to monitor progress.	*Reviewed biannually at the HIP meetings. *Available on website for tenants to view and feedback on. *Increase in tenants having their say on action plan.
Review the Tenant Engagement Governance Structure and ensure it reflects the changes and learning in recent years.	Tenant Engagement Governance Structure reviewed and agreed. Increase in number of tenants getting involved in the Housing Involvement Panel, Ward Housing Hubs, Tenants Scrutiny Panel and Rother Fed. * Tenants Scrutiny Panel minutes added to the website to see who is on the panel as well as how people could contribute/join the group.
*Review of the HIP (Housing Involvement Panel)	*Increase in the number of tenants involved in the HIP which is reflective of our customer base. *Online Survey tool developed for tenants who cannot attend meetings to feedback. New Terms of Reference for the HIP agreed.
Ensure core customer data is captured and updated at every opportunity to enable services to be developed and tailored to meet individual needs.	New Housing Integrated Management System in place providing more data and intelligence to improve services further.

Establish an online Housing Customer Portal for tenants to self-serve.	Online Housing Customer Portal developed and implemented.
*Continue to build upon our tenant engagement offer ensuring that we deliver high quality tenant engagement services after successfully achieving Tpas 'Exemplar' Accreditation status.	Recommendations from 'Exemplar' Accreditation Status met.

OUTCOME 2: DELIVERING A RANGE OF OPTIONS TO GIVE ALL OUR TENANTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED

ACTIONS	IMPACT MEASURES
Improve engagement with our under-represented groups, such as younger tenants, working tenants, disabled and minority ethnic tenants to make a positive difference to the services we provide.	Increase in tenants involved from under-represented groups.
Develop a hybrid approach to our tenant engagement meetings to provide more choice and flexibility to tenants to join meetings and events.	Increase in offices and relevant buildings having hybrid equipment installed to enable meetings and events to adopt a hybrid approach to meetings and events for tenants.
Rother Fed will support the Council to enable more tenants to get involved digitally, self-serve and access online services.	Increase in number of tenants receiving digital training.
Enable tenants to get online by installing Wi-Fi within a number of our neighbourhood centres.	Number of neighbourhood centres with Wi-Fi installation.

*A toolkit that supports implementation of the Tenant Engagement Framework and the role that other staff teams play in enabling engagement and involvement.	*Toolkit published on website.
Provide a wider range of access routes and opportunities for on-line service access, reflective of the demographics of our customer base.	Increased web-forms and self-service options on the website.
Promote tenant involvement at every opportunity including Rother Fed, Engagement Events/ social media, Home Matters (tenant's magazine), events and tenancy health checks.	Increase in number of tenants involved.
*Communicate to residents how they can access and request information about services and key plans.	Action Plan developed to deliver recommendations and progress monitored against Tenants Scrutiny Panel 'Investigation into how Rotherham Council could improve its communications with tenants' Scrutiny Review.

OUTCOME 3: SUPPORTING OUR TENANTS TO GET INVOLVED IN THEIR COMMUNITY, PROVIDING HELP TO EACH OTHER AND TAKING PRIDE IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD

ACTIONS	IMPACT MEASURES
Continue to deliver the successful Tenant Federation Contract through Rother Fed, ensuring that we can continue to provide effective support to our neighbourhoods.	Number of tenants and groups actively involved in improving their estates and neighbourhoods. Number of TARA's accessing support and funding opportunities
Provide support and training to individuals and groups to equip them with the necessary skills, tools and knowledge.	Number of tenants and groups actively involved in improving their estates and neighbourhoods.
Provide tools and equipment to groups and individuals who want to make a difference to improving and maintaining their communal areas.	Number of communal areas improved and maintained.
Promote active engagement by communities in general stewardship and work to improve their neighbourhoods.	Number of community-based activities.
Work with Rother Fed to grow the interest and usage of Neighbourhood Centres through an Activities Co-ordinator.	Number of activities taking place in Neighbourhood Centres. Sustain level of activity after funding for Activities Coordinator ceases.
Empower and enable tenants to make better use of assets such as Neighbourhood Centres, Housing Land and Garages.	Number of asset transfers completed.
Ensure that tenants can get involved in the health and building safety aspects of their homes.	*Building Safety Action Plan in place. Number of health and safety improvements made, as a result of on-going engagement with tenants at Beeversleigh Flats.

OUTCOME 4: ENABLE TENANTS TO SCRUTINISE AND CHALLENGE OUR PERFORMANCE BY PROVIDING OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

ACTIONS	IMPACT MEASURES
Modernise our approach to gathering customer feedback and satisfaction to continuously develop and improve the service through diverse methods of collecting tenant's satisfaction including a refreshed Tenant Satisfaction/Perception Survey.	Tenants Satisfaction Survey results published.
*Feedback outcomes and impact using Home Matters, social media and the website, so tenants can see they have made a positive difference to services they have influenced.	*Outcomes and impact fed back through HIP meetings and published on website and Home Matters to show difference made capturing the 'lived experience' and tenant influence. * Wider resident insight and experiences reflected and fed back.
*Invite challenge and feedback from wider tenants on performance reporting.	*Make dashboards available for HIP meetings and on website across housing services performance to show benchmarking and trends. Provide opportunities for tenants to benchmark against other housing providers to seek out best practice and areas for improvement.
*Publish our performance in an Annual Report in consultation with tenants to be made available in the Home Matters Magazine and the website.	*Number of tenants involved in the development of the Annual Report. Annual Report published in Home Matters and on website.
*Widen tenant involvement in sharing lessons and improvements to services as a result.	Available and published on website. HIP minutes.

*A diagram that sets out key staff and their responsibilities for tenants to view on the website.	*Published on website and Home Matters.
Meet the RSH Consumer Standards	Assistant Director for Housing named as the responsible person to ensure compliance with the consumer standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing. This person will ensure that the landlord is delivering good customer service and drives cultural change where deficiencies are found. Action Plan produced in response to the Regulator's Consumer Standards.
Feedback performance and complaints progress so that tenants can see how we are measuring against our performance/complaints and effectively monitor and challenge.	Performance, Learning from Complaints, Risks and Local Offer reports/dashboards presented to Housing Involvement Panel and published on the website on a quarterly basis.
Learning from Complaints to be a standing item on the Housing Involvement Panel Agenda. This will enable tenants to identify key trends and provide challenge and scrutiny to ensure we use learning from complaints to improve services.	Monitor progress against Council's Complaints Action Plan in response to Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code. Number of service improvements made as a result of Learning from Complaints.
Tenants Scrutiny Panel continue to carry out scrutiny reviews of Housing Services to ensure we are accountable and that service improvements are delivered as a result of the review outcomes and recommendations.	Scrutiny Reviews published on website. Number of service improvements made as a result of scrutiny reviews. *Ideas from tenants for a review can be done through website.

OUTCOME 5: ENSURING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR TENANTS IS BUILT UPON A CULTURE OF OPENNESS, UNDERSTANDING AND MUTUAL RESPECT

ACTIONS	IMPACT MEASURES
*Seek out best practice and consider how we can continually improve the way that we engage with social housing tenants.	*Attendance at TPAS, Sheffield City Region (Together with Tenants) and House mark meetings sharing good practice around tenant engagement. *Benchmarking our performance through Housemark.
Ensure that there is an environment of mutual respect between the housing service and tenants/residents with steps taken to identify and tackle negative stereotyping including understanding the impact of language and behaviours.	Number of positive case studies and tenant soundbites fed back at HIP meetings and published on website and Home Matters magazine promoting tenants as excellent role models to tackle negative stereotyping. Volunteer achievements published in Rother Fed's Tenants Voice Newsletter and website. Number of compliments received. Decrease in complaints.
Review professional training and development to ensure residents receive a high standard of customer service.	Number of employees given appropriate 'customer experience' training to deliver excellent customer service and set clear standards to measure how this is achieved to ensure appropriate language and behaviour towards their customers. Promote corporate training opportunities by developing working groups across the directorate to contribute to the Big Hearts Big Changes Customer Experience project and with focus groups where staff can contribute to the refresh of the workforce development plan for Housing.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED AND HAVE YOUR SAY

There are a number of ways that you can become involved in our services at differing levels and formality to suit you. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, as new mechanisms will continue to be developed to offer maximum choice and opportunities for people to get involved.

INFORMATION	CONSULTATION	ENGAGEMENT	EMPOWERMENT
Rother Fed Engagement Events/Social Media and Pre tenancy workshops	Customer Inspection Group	Ward Housing Hubs (25 Ward Housing Hubs across the borough)	Tenant Scrutiny Panel
Tenancy Health check	Customer Satisfaction Subgroup	Rotherfed Tenants Voice	Housing Involvement Panel
Website/Online Housing Customer Portal	Tenants Open Day/Housing Hub Activities	Rother Fed Facebook Tenants Group	Community Groups/ Tenants and Residents Associations
Home Matters (Tenants Magazine)	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments	Rother Fed BAME (Black & Minority Ethnic) Tenants Council	Right to Manage
Digital Inclusion		Young Tenants Forum supported by Rother Fed	
		Estate Inspections	

INFORMATION

The Council provides information about its services and how to get involved or feedback.

Rother Fed Engagement Events/social media and Pre tenancy workshops

Purpose	Provide information to tenants in relation to housing services and how they can get involved.
Key Features	Opportunity for tenants to find out how they can get involved and access further services.

Tenancy Health check

Purpose	Tenancy Health Checks are visits to your home by your Housing Officer. The purpose of the visit is to check the property, verify who is living in it and to identify any issues you may need help with. It is a person, property and place-based approach ensuring that we proactively identify issues and provide appropriate support.
Key Features	This process helps increase engagement, builds more capacity, improves community self-help and resilience, prevents social isolation, improves health and wellbeing and maintain independence.

Website/Online Housing Customer Portal

Purpose	Keeping tenants up to date about the Housing Service and accessing online services.
Key Features	Easy access to information about services, self-serve and how to get involved including online housing related consultations and engagement activity e.g. Ward Housing Hubs.

Home Matters (Tenants Magazine)

Purpose	Keeping tenants up to date on what is happening in Housing and your area and provides information on performance.
Key Features	Produced 4 times per year and sent to all tenants. Tenants can be involved as part of the Editorial Panel.

Digital Inclusion

Purpose	To provide all tenants and residents with the opportunity to learn about Information Technology, make the most from the benefits of being online and get involved with social media.
Key Features	Rother Fed run support groups and classes with tenants and residents, targeting those who are not currently making use of digital services and helps them with the initial steps in understanding how going digital can help them in everyday life. This could be paying bills, saving money, connection with others and improved social interaction.
Further information or to get involved	If interested, tenants and residents can contact Rotherham Federation on (01709) 368515 or email on info@rotherfed.org .

CONSULTATION

The Council offers options and listens to feedback to improve its services.

Customer Inspection Group

Purpose	The Customer Inspection group tests housing services and provides feedback in relation to any issues identified to the respective service managers ensuring that learning outcomes are embedded.
Key Features	Using a variety of access channels and methods e.g., mystery shopping, reality checking exercises, observations, website tests, exit polls, journey maps, test performance against Local Offers. They also conduct additional activities to see the service through the eyes of the customer.

Customer Satisfaction Subgroup (Council's repairs and maintenance service)

Purpose	A sub-group for the Council's Repairs and Maintenance service that considers quality and tenant satisfaction, including representatives from Rotherham Federation, tenants and contract partners (Mears and Equans).
Key Features	Explore best practice and diverse methodologies across the service and partners to maximise opportunities and resources to collate tenant satisfaction.

Tenants Open Day/Housing Hub Activities

Purpose	Updates in relation to housing performance and information about other services and how you can get involved.
Key Features	This is your chance to find out what's happening in housing services, get involved and put your questions to members of our staff.

Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments

Purpose	A direct channel for complaints, suggestions, or compliments about our services to be formally received.
Key Features	<p>Contact can be made in a number of ways such as:</p> <p>Via the online form on the Council website: www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints</p> <p>Email: complaints@rotherham.gov.uk</p> <p>Email: compliments@rotherham.gov.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 01709 382121</p> <p>Text: 07860021447</p>



The TPAS Richard Crossley Excellence in Community Action Award Celebration Ceremony held at Riverside House in March 2022.

ENGAGEMENT

Working together. The Council and tenants decide together on what is best and work in partnership to carry out the work.

Ward Housing Hubs (25 Hubs across the borough)

Purpose	An opportunity for tenants to work with the council on issues that matter to them at ward level. The hubs are supported by an annual budget which is used to make mainly environmental improvements within our neighbourhoods.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ward Housing Hubs continue to shape the delivery of Council services and enables greater coordination of ward-based budget management arrangements.• Projects delivered by the Hubs support both community and council objectives, such as creating safe, clean, and attractive neighbourhoods and align with the Housing Services' general housing and estate management functions.• Responding to ward-based performance information in relation to housing and estate management issues.• A Hub to discuss and consult upon any changes to services at ward level.

Rother Fed Tenants Voice

Purpose	To engage with new tenants and ensure that any tenant that wants to get more involved in Housing services can do so.
Key Features	Rother Fed Volunteer Co-ordinator and Community Team will run tenant engagement events and engage with tenants online and on a one-to-one basis, building confidence and skills so that our tenants can actively contribute at meetings, forums and represent theirs and their communities' views.

Rother Fed Facebook Tenants Group

Purpose	To engage with tenants via social media providing a platform for tenants to contribute their thoughts and opinions.
Key Features	The Rother Fed team monitor and manage this forum, and share information, council updates, Rother Fed services and generally promote what is happening in relation to housing and community services. The key aim is to stimulate interest and gain feedback from tenants on the things that matter to them and what their opinions are regarding housing services.

Rother Fed BME (Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic) Tenants Council

Purpose	Tenants from Minority Ethnic Groups have a say in how housing services and policies can meet their needs.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feed into the Housing Involvement Panel.• Get involved in consultations and events which affect them.• Improve their skills and confidence through training.• Get to meet other tenants through social activities.

Case Study

(Rother Fed BME Female Council Tenants Eid Party)

Eid Party

We organised an Eid party. It was a good time for a celebratory event as it was the week after Eid al-Adha. After doing the outreach work, it was agreed to do a one dish party which took place at Rotherfed. It was a fantastic turn out, 22 people attended along with 4 professionals. Everyone enjoyed themselves and were very happy to be part of Rother Fed.

We received some fantastic feedback not only from the women but from the professionals who attended. All the ladies looked very comfortable. The ladies didn't shy away at this event as they are getting familiar with the staff at Rother Fed. This is great to see as at the first event in May the ladies were quiet and not as confident and sat with their backs towards the Staff. A few of ladies approached the staff and chit-chatted with them.

Some of the feedback I received:

"This party has given me confidence to attend more events and socialise more." **Mrs H**

"I live in a council house and have learned that I can register enquires online as I have found that the RMBC council enquiry line is very busy, this is something I will be getting my children to do in the future for me. I am unable to do this as I have a language barrier and no digital skills." **Mrs M**

"I would like to thank Yasmeen for picking me up and dropping me off at home. I wouldn't have been able to come otherwise. I am unable to read, write or speak English and I wouldn't be able to walk to Rother Fed because I have arthritis, I felt very happy being part of the Eid party." **Mrs W**

"This is the first time I have been to Rother Fed I was respected by all the members of staff there. I met Yasmeen at the Library and I am glad that she told me about the Eid party. I was very happy to be part of the party." **Mrs K**

"Thank you, Yasmeen for organising this party I haven't socialised or been around people since covid. I am always at home this is the first time I have come out." **Mrs Z**



Young Tenants Forum

Purpose

Young Tenants have a say in how housing services and policies can meet their needs.

Key Features

- Feed into the Housing Involvement Panel.
- Get involved in consultations and events which affect them.
- Improve their skills and confidence through training.
- Get to meet other tenants through social activities

Estate Inspections

Purpose

Meeting Council Officers, local Councillors and representatives from other agencies who work in tenants' areas to identify issues on the estates and how they can be improved.

Key Features

- Having an influence on what is undertaken to improve the local community and feeding back information on issues. Getting local housing and environmental issues dealt with and resolved.

EMPOWERMENT

Tenants are involved in making decisions about services

Tenants Scrutiny Panel	
Purpose	The panel provides an opportunity for tenants to scrutinise and challenge service delivery identifying areas of concern and opportunities for improvement.
Key Features	Scrutiny Reviews are used to challenge landlords' services and standards with the aim of improving performance and service delivery, value for money and tenant satisfaction. Once the review is finalised it is then reviewed by Senior Managers and Officers and the recommendations are worked through. An action plan for addressing the recommendations is then created which the council work through to enable service improvements and issues to be addressed. This action plan is then reviewed at monthly Scrutiny meetings to monitor the improvements, with outcomes then fed back to all who took part in the process.
Further information or to get involved	Should tenants and residents wish to be involved they can contact Rotherham Federation on (01709) 368515 or email on info@rotherfed.org

Housing Involvement Panel

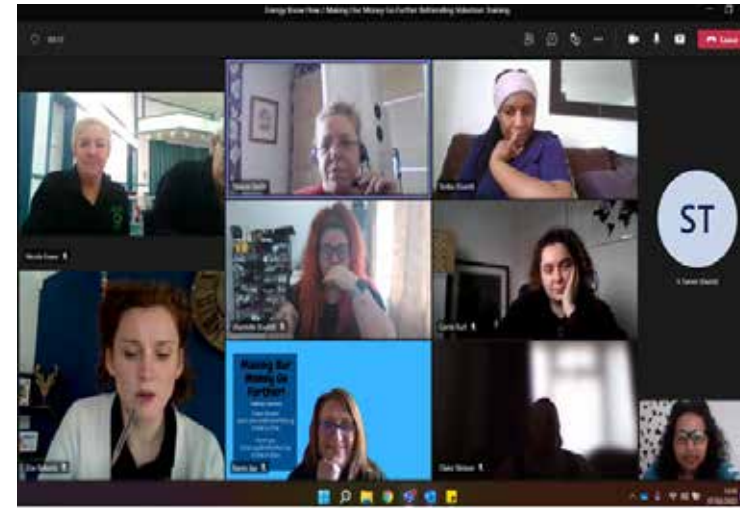
Purpose

The Housing Involvement Panel (HIP) is an engagement forum for tenants, residents and leaseholders for consultation and discussion on reports, service delivery and key strategic and policy changes ensuring we have tenant perspective and input.

Key Features

- Oversee the Tenant Involvement function ensuring that the council is effectively engaging tenants in housing services and their neighbourhoods, including monitoring progress against the Tenant Engagement Framework, Ward Housing Hubs, TPAS Accreditation and the Social Housing White Paper and we are meeting the regulatory requirements.
- Provides an opportunity for tenants and residents to have their say on housing service's performance and learning from complaints.

'Housing Involvement Panel Meeting at Springwell Gardens Community Centre' and a virtual 'Housing Involvement Panel' meeting that took place during the pandemic'.



Community Groups/Tenants and Residents Associations

Purpose	Anyone who wants to form or requires support to manage a community group or Tenants and Residents Association.
Key Features	Rother Fed provides training and support to set up and manage a community group. This includes a wide range of practical advice and services such as community accountancy, legal, insurance, various collective services, help with funding bids, marketing and communication services including advice and practical resources to produce newsletters, posters, and other resources, mentoring and support for community leaders and organisations in relation to safeguarding, including DBS checks for community leaders. Support with bookkeeping and yearly examination of accounts is also provided.
Further information or to get involved	Tenants can contact Rother Fed on (01709) 368515 or email on info@rotherfed.org

Right to Manage

Purpose	Housing law in England gives local authority tenants a collective right to take on the management of the council housing where they live.
Key Features	<p>This is where a local tenants' group believe that they could provide a better or more cost-effective service, like arranging repairs or estate cleaning, if they were to have direct control of the money that the council spends on that service.</p> <p>When tenants join to manage their own homes, they set up a 'tenant management organisation'.</p>

Rother Fed (Rotherham Federation)

The Council has a Tenant Federation Contract with Rother Fed who are responsible for promoting and encouraging tenants to become involved in housing services as well as equipping them with the skills and knowledge required.

Rother Fed also provide training and ongoing support to Tenants and Residents Associations (TARA's) and community groups to enable them to deliver community-based activities.

Rother Fed have obtained funding to deliver community-based activities from other funding providers which complement the tenant federation contract.

*Bevan Crescent Neighbourhood Centre
(Keith Stringer and a young volunteer).*



HOW WE WILL SUPPORT YOU TO GET INVOLVED

Although some of our tenants feel they would like to be more involved, there may be personal difficulties such as transport, childcare, and choice of venue. The Tenant Involvement Team, Neighbourhoods and Rotherham Federation will work with tenants to remove these barriers which enable people to become involved.

We may reimburse 'out of pocket' expenses subject to budget and need.

Rotherham Federation provides training on our behalf to provide confidence and skills for involvement.

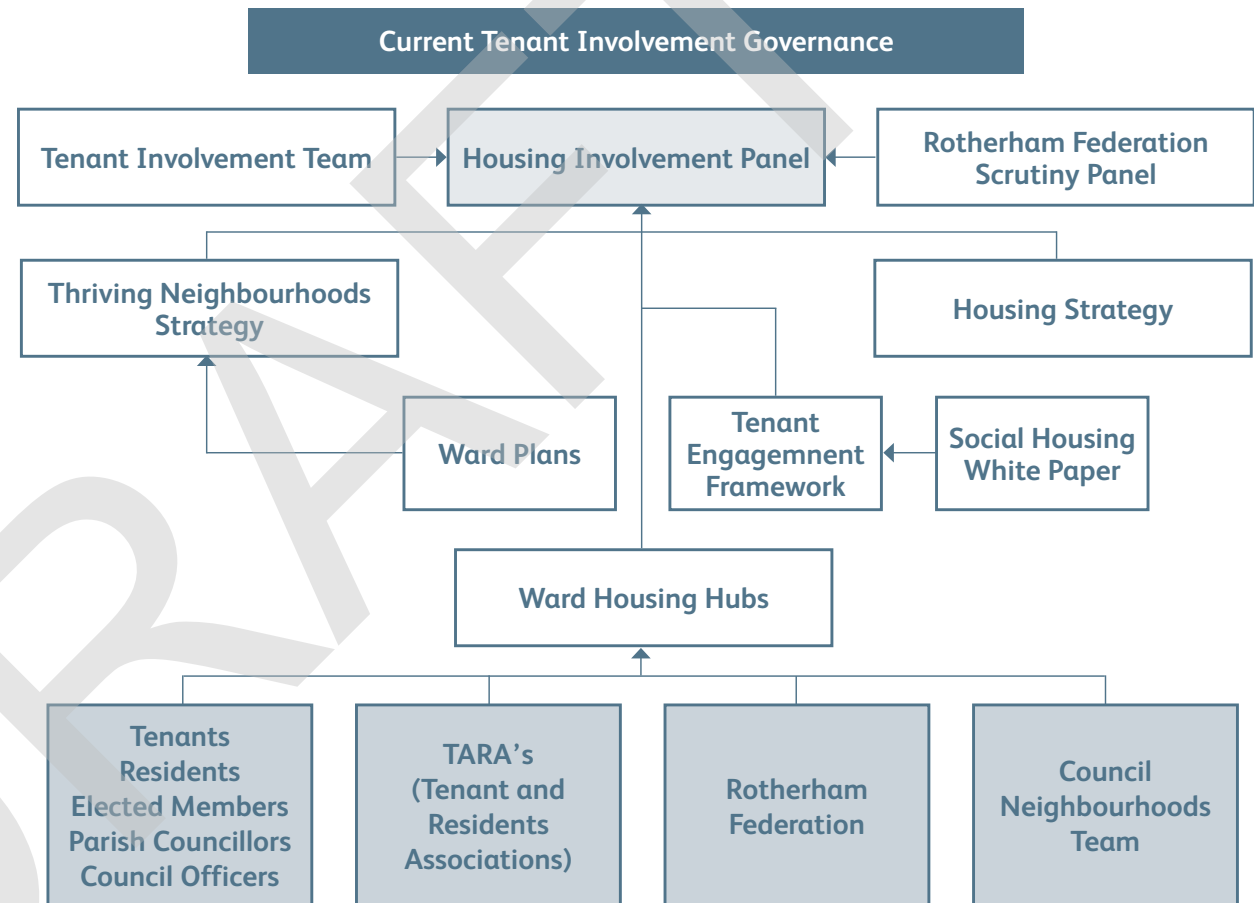


Community Skip Day on Woodland Drive in Aston and Woodsetts Ward

TENANT ENGAGEMENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The diagram reflects the current governance structure for tenant engagement showing the different engagement forums and the flow of information between each function.

The engagement forums can make recommendations and provide feedback on services but do not have decision making powers. The Council Constitution sets out how the council operates and the decision-making responsibilities of council members and Committees.



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Rotherham Council is committed to ensuring all parts of the community can access, engage with and benefit from services, and its Equalities Strategy sets out the three key priorities of:

- Understanding, listening, and engaging across all communities
- Delivering fair, inclusive, and accessible services
- Empowering people to engage and challenge discrimination and to promote good community relations

We want to make sure all groups and individuals have equal access and opportunity to engage in activities.

We require all groups and individuals involved with tenant engagement to act to promote equality and welcome participation and inclusion from all our communities.



Conway Crescent, East Herringthorpe - state of the art respite home for adults with learning disabilities and autism.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING THIS FRAMEWORK

How we monitor our progress against this Framework:

- We have created an action plan which will be actively monitored against each of the 5 outcomes to ensure we are meeting the objectives of the Framework
- We will ensure we meet the recommendations identified in our successful TPAS Exemplar Accreditation Report.
- Tenants and residents through the Housing Involvement Panel will monitor and review the Framework against the action plan bi-annually and progress.



Providing feedback on the Tenant Engagement Framework at a recent Housing Involvement Panel Meeting.

WHO CAN GET INVOLVED?

Any tenant, leaseholder, in Rotherham, applicant on the housing register or any other person who has a connection with any of the previous people, for example a carer.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Anyone interested in getting involved can contact us:

Tenant Involvement Team

Webpage: www.rotherham.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement

Email: customerinvolvement@rotherham.gov.uk

Phone: (01709) 822100

Twitter: @housingrmbc

Rotherham Federation

Phone: (01709) 368515

Email: info@rotherfed.org

*Residents finding out at Rotherham Show (2022)
how they can get involved.*