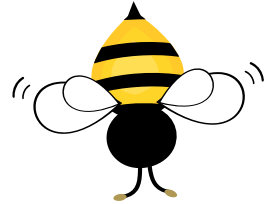


# Tenant involvement strategy 2021 to 2024

You are the experts of living in council homes.



# Tenant involvement strategy 2021 to 2024

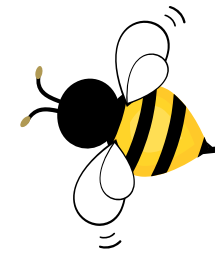
You are the experts of living in council homes.

We are proud of our tenant-involvement activities, including our Waverley-wide events in 2019 to celebrate 100 years of social housing.

Our tenants and leaseholders, the Tenant's Panel and the Scrutiny Group have all played a critical role in shaping and monitoring our housing services during the period of the last tenant involvement strategy (2016 to 2019).

In the next three years we want to increase the number of ways you can be involved and have your say in your homes and communities.

We want to involve more of you in more ways, and make sure that if you are interested in working with us, you can get any support you need.

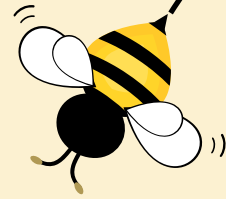


## Bee involved

If being involved in your community appeals to you, we would love to hear from you.

This document is for leaseholders as well as tenants. Throughout this strategy, the term 'tenants' means tenants and leaseholders.





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# Foreword from the Housing Head of Service

## Welcome to the Waverley Tenant Involvement Strategy 2021 to 2024.

I am delighted to introduce our vision to give everyone the opportunity to influence and shape our services for the next three years.

This strategy sets out how we intend to consult you and demonstrates how we will help you to get involved with us.

Your feedback is vital. We are committed to putting you at the heart of everything we do to make sure our communities thrive.

This strategy comes at an unprecedented and challenging time in our living history. We are adapting how we work to keep everyone safe during the Covid-19 pandemic. This presents an opportunity for you to get involved and contribute to how the service evolves.

It is encouraging to see more tenants using technology to keep in touch. This will not replace other ways we work together but does allow us to continue to hear what matters to you during this difficult time and to reach more tenants.

I look forward to working with you to improve our services and to create an environment that makes a positive difference to you and the wider community.

Thank you for being a Waverley tenant.

**Hugh Wagstaff,**  
Housing Head of Service



Help us  
bee the  
best

# Foreword from the Tenant's Panel Chair

The Waverley Tenant's Panel support this Tenant involvement strategy 2021 to 2024 and welcome the many opportunities it brings for tenants to have their say on how Waverley Borough Council should provide services to Waverley tenants and leaseholders over the next three years and beyond.

We truly believe Waverley Borough Council are fully committed to providing the best possible service to all tenants and leaseholders.

This strategy clearly lays out the council's intention to:

- provide homes that are fit for purpose, safe and secure
- provide a clean and safe environment around our homes, and
- continue to treat everyone with dignity.

The strategy also:

- tells us the many ways that tenants and leaseholders can become involved and be at the heart of future decisions on services, and
- enables tenants and leaseholders to help shape the future of local social housing, by becoming involved through housing groups like the Tenant's Panel or Scrutiny Group, attending open meetings, or contacting the housing officers or the Tenant's Panel to offer suggestions or raise issues.

Waverley provide the accommodation we live in, but we make it our home. Let's work with Housing Services to make sure we are provided with safe and secure homes for our future and the future of our families.



# Achievements

Here are some examples of tenant-involvement achievements from 2016 to 2019.

## A successful partnership between the Tenant's Panel, councillors and council staff

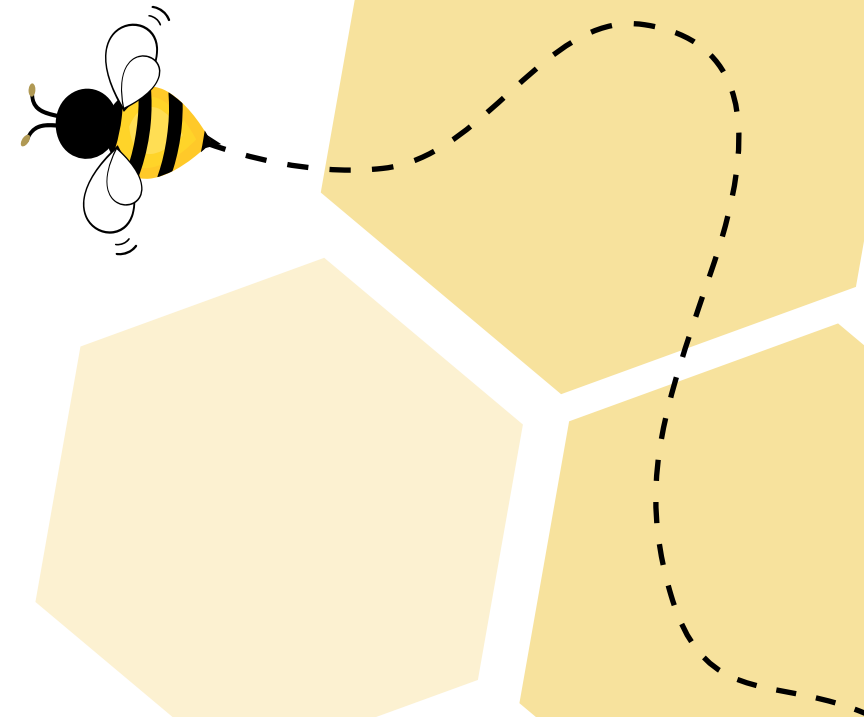
In response to the Government's 'A new deal for social housing', the Overview and Scrutiny Housing Committee carried out a survey to identify if there was a stigma to social housing and being a social-housing tenant. They also examined tenants' views of their homes, to develop future services, promote pride and remove stigma.

We shared our findings through the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). We and the other members of CIH are working to challenge prejudice and to improve homes and services, in order to prevent negative stereotypes and make sure everyone has a home they can be proud of.

## Tenant's Panel celebrate their 25th anniversary

The Tenant's Panel continue to be a strong and independent voice for all tenants. They use a variety of methods to gather and express views about our service and share feedback from Waverley tenants. Panel members meet regularly with the Head of Service, the Housing Portfolio Holder and councillors on the Overview and Scrutiny Housing committee.

The panel have also established links with other tenant groups, through the Housing Quality Resident Network (a national best-practice network), particularly Guildford Borough Council's TAG (Tenant Action Group) and the Community Housing Group Association.



**Bee  
proud**

## Having a say in repairs contracts

In 2018/2019, tenants were part of the process of awarding a £32m contract for repairs. We collected tenants' views before the contract specification was written, to make sure it reflected what was important to you. Three tenant volunteers took part in assessing the contractors' terms relating to working with tenants and then scored each contractor. We invited all the tenants involved in the process to a small gathering to thank them.



## Presenting views on recharges, empty properties and the mutual exchange process

The Scrutiny Group gather information, interview council staff and contractors, and gather tenants' views on a variety of housing-related matters.

In 2018/19, Waverley Scrutiny Group presented three reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Housing Committee and senior council staff. The reports focused on the following.

- Recharges (expenses we charge tenants, usually for repairs)
- Empty properties
- The mutual-exchange process

Each report contained recommendations which were incorporated in an action plan. As a result of the recommendations:

- the standard that homes must meet to be let out to tenants was reviewed
- a recharge policy was put in place, and
- the mutual-exchange process was put online.



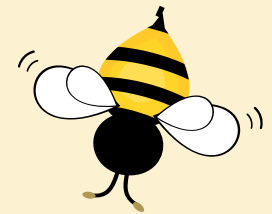
**Bee  
vocal**

## Family-friendly events providing opportunities to hear what matters to our tenants

Since 2016 we have held 12 family events that visit Godalming, Farnham, Haslemere and Cranleigh. These events, supported by the Tenant's Panel and the Scrutiny Group, have given us the opportunity to meet residents and hear what matters to them.

In 2019 we met with over 100 tenants at our parties celebrating 100 years of social housing.

# Bee inquisitive



## Making sure people in our senior-living housing are happy with where they live

In 2017, the Tenant's Panel took part in the review of the Senior Living Service. They presented a report of the comments they received, and their findings, to a Surrey County Council committee.

The Panel continue to monitor the service.



## Representing tenants

Tenant's Panel members represent tenants. They work with us and the tenant to resolve issues specific to housing.

The panel provide a way for tenants to find out about developments within the Housing Service and raise concerns. During the period from 2017 to 2019, 'All Tenants Open Meetings' were held around Waverley every three months.

## Dealing with complaints

The Designated Person's Complaints Panel are volunteers who can help to settle complaints relating to housing. Tenants who have not been able to resolve an issue with us can have their complaint reviewed by the panel before it is passed to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The panel meets every three months to study information on complaints and Housing Ombudsman case studies.

## Improving design standards

Members of the Tenant's Panel were involved in improving the design standard for our new homes – sharing their thoughts on what makes a home and what is best value for now and the future.

Communicating and receiving feedback has been an essential part of managing major building work at Ockford Ridge in Godalming. Local residents have helped by sharing their views and making sure we support the local community.

**Bee more  
involved  
in your  
community**

### Key priorities

We promise to:

- increase the number of ways we can work together
- make it easier for you to be involved, and
- listen to, consider and act on tenants' feedback.



## Making it easier to be involved

'Tenant involvement' can mean different things to different people and covers a range of activities. The activities can be informal (for example, giving feedback as a compliment, complaint, comment or suggestion) or more formal, such as joining the Tenant's Panel.

Whether the involvement is informal or formal, long term or short term, it gives us vital information about what matters to you in your homes and communities.

Over the next three years, we will be developing new ways of measuring the benefit of your involvement, with the help of tenant groups, to make sure that even more of what we learn helps us to improve services in the future. We want to be able to clearly show you the effect your involvement has had as we work together.

We recognise that tenant involvement requires a commitment from you, and that there may be barriers which prevent you from becoming involved, such as:

- lack of confidence
- transport issues
- family commitments
- limited time, and
- expense.

## Bee a team



We can support you by:

- providing training and support, and even supporting you to get a qualification, to boost your confidence
- offering alternative ways for you to voice your views
- reimbursing your travel or care costs, and
- arranging meetings at locations and times to suit you.

We are improving the training and support opportunities we offer. These range from helping you with the skills to join online meetings, to learning research skills. They will be available to tenants who are more formally involved with us, such as members of the Tenant's Panel.

We will carry out a large-scale satisfaction survey in 2021. This will give all tenants a chance to have a say. Look out for the 2021 STAR survey in the summer and the results in autumn. You know your community better than we do, and it is important that we learn what matters to you from you.

## Listening, considering and acting

We are open to listening to and learning from you and are committed to tackling difficult issues. All tenant-involvement activities give you the opportunity to have your say and influence future changes and improvements to the service.

## Bee involved



# Meet the team



## Tenant's Panel

If you join the panel, you will be offered:

- full training and support
- a chance to develop new skills
- a chance to meet new people
- a channel to learn about us, and
- the opportunity to take part in community-based activities.

You can also sign up to their more specialist roles, which involve:

- chairing meetings
- looking after the panel's budget and accounts
- communications on social media
- organising events, and
- taking notes during meetings.

For more information, email [tenantspanel@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:tenantspanel@waverley.gov.uk) or phone **01483 523196**.

## Tenant Involvement Officer – Jeanette Englefield

Jeanette helps tenants who are more formally involved (for example, members of the Tenant's Panel) to focus and develop their ideas, activities and communications to make sure they get their say. The role involves arranging and hosting meetings, supporting volunteers and making sure that tenants know what others are thinking.  
**[tenantinvolvement@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@waverley.gov.uk)**

## Scrutiny Group

Being involved in the Scrutiny Group makes a difference by helping us to:

- focus on customers when designing and providing services
- make the best use of resources available to us, and
- continuously improve services.

If you have an eye for detail, enjoy being part of a team and can be unbiased, being a member of the Scrutiny Group may suit you.

For more information, email [scrutinydirect@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinydirect@waverley.gov.uk) or phone **01483 523196**.



## Designated Persons Complaints Panel

The Designated Persons Complaints Panel can help to settle tenants' complaints if they cannot agree a resolution with us. The panel can review a tenant's complaint before it is referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service, to try to reach a solution.

Panel meetings are held every three months, unless the group are called to review a complaint before the next meeting is due.

For more information, email [tenantinvolvement@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@waverley.gov.uk) or phone **01483 523196**.



## Making comments, complaints or suggestions

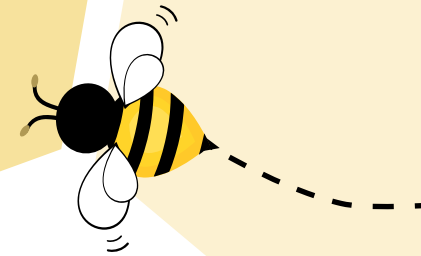
If you do not want to be more formally involved in a group or panel, you can give comments and suggestions to your local housing officer. To do this, please phone the Housing Customer Services team on **0330 119 3000** or email [housingcustomerservices@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:housingcustomerservices@waverley.gov.uk).

## Our plans for the next three years





With your support we want to plan for the future and offer more exciting ways for you to become involved. To help build on this we have created an action plan setting out what we will do.





Actions are prioritised from bronze to gold, with gold being the highest priority.

Let's get  
buzzing and  
make this  
happen



Aim	Actions	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>Keep to the 2020/23 Housing Service Plan</b></p>	<p><b>In line with the Corporate Plan, we will do the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support and develop an effective Tenant's Panel and Scrutiny Group.</li> <li>• Make sure our partners such as the Tenant's Panel and councillors receive information in good time.</li> <li>• Give members of the Tenant's Panel and the Scrutiny Group the opportunity to meet councillors, senior council staff and contractors.</li> <li>• Help volunteers to use platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, to give better access to opportunities to get involved.</li> <li>• Work with the Tenant's Panel and the Scrutiny Group to develop an annual planner for tenant-involvement activities.</li> <li>• Evaluate, track and monitor tenant-involvement activities, in terms of satisfaction and value for money.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Improvement Team</p>	<p><b>Gold</b></p>

Aim	Actions	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>Promote and maintain a sense of responsibility for our environment – promoting biodiversity and protecting our planet</b></p>	<p><b>In line with the Corporate Plan, we will do the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a new ‘Green Group’ of volunteers to monitor and carry out the actions in Waverley’s Climate Emergency Declaration.</li> <li>• Encourage members of the group to consider the effect their actions have on the borough, homes and the environment.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Improvement Team and the Sustainability Manager</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create ‘Neighbourhood Champions’ to support local communities and monitor contracts for the use and maintenance of green spaces.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Improvement Team, Housing Management and Commercial Services</p>	
<p><b>Continue to develop the council website and digital services to increase access services</b></p>	<p><b>In line with the 2020/23 Housing Service Plan, we will do the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research examples from other organisations to find successful digital practice.</li> <li>• Explore the possibility of online forums or virtual meetings for the Green Group and Neighbourhood Champions. This action would reduce the need to travel and provide an accessible channel for residents to share their views.</li> <li>• Trial digital options to increase feedback from previously underrepresented groups.</li> <li>• Explore offering an online calendar which would include tenant-involvement and community activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Improvement Team and Communications</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore developing an online version of our Homes and People newsletter.</li> <li>• Help volunteers be part of the Homes and People editorial group.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Improvement Team and Communications</p>	

Aim	Actions	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>Survey tenants and residents to help us plan and improve services</b></p>	<p><b>In line with the 2020/23 Housing Service Plan, we will do the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure our performance with organisations such as HouseMark.</li> <li>• Involve members of the Tenant’s Panel in designing the survey and deciding on action in response to the findings.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Improvement Team</p>	 <p><b>Gold</b></p>
<p><b>Review the government standards that set out the expectations and outcomes that housing providers such as Waverley must achieve</b></p>	<p><b>In line with the 2020/23 Housing Service Plan, we will do the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Tenant’s Panel to review government standards.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Improvement Team</p>	 <p><b>Silver</b></p>
<p><b>Promote the worth of all residents, regardless of income, wealth, age, disability, race, sex, gender or sexuality</b></p>	<p><b>In line with a council priority, we will do the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a variety of training options to support all volunteers in their roles and their personal lives.</li> <li>• Encourage interested volunteers to gain a CIH qualification, with our help.</li> <li>• Provide training in IT skills.</li> </ul>	<p>Service Improvement Team and the IT officer</p>	 <p><b>Silver</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider tenant involvement in all areas of the Housing Service, using feedback to improve services and involve tenants in a meaningful way.</li> </ul>	<p>All housing officers</p>	 <p><b>Gold</b></p>

## Waverley Equality Statement

'For our communities to thrive we need feedback and engagement from as many different groups in our communities as possible. To fairly represent the population of our tenants. We are particularly concerned that we do not have any formal involvement from tenants under the age of 35.

'Waverley do not discriminate and would like to encourage involvement from all who would like to get involved regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, religious beliefs or disability.'

# The bee's knees

## Climate Statement

'All over the world, climate breakdown is causing serious damage, impacting on people and ecosystems – from rising sea levels, shrinking glaciers and dying coral to increasingly severe flooding, droughts, hurricanes and other extreme weather. Waverley Borough Council has responded by officially declaring a Climate Emergency. This commits the council to regard climate change as a serious threat that requires urgent action to reduce carbon emissions and conserve biodiversity. In 2021 we will be offering you the opportunity to take part in our Green Group. Working with you we will develop plans to help both the environment and nature in your local community.'



