

Working together to improve housing services



Tenant Involvement Strategy 2016-2019



Making a difference - our promise to work with tenants and leaseholders

Tenants, leaseholders and the Tenants Panel have played a crucial role in shaping and monitoring Waverley's housing services.

To build on this we will continue to develop consultation and involvement opportunities to make sure that tenants and leaseholders can be involved in the decisions that affect their:

- housing services
- homes and
- neighbourhoods.

We will offer involvement opportunities that are convenient and provide scope for personal development and training.

We will continue to work to the Homes and Communities Agency regulatory framework which sets out the principles of co-regulation. Our service will offer opportunities to scrutinise our performance.

In consultation with the Tenants Panel we have created this Tenant Involvement Strategy for the next three years to offer opportunities for everyone to make a difference.

Meet the team

Jeanette Arnold – Tenant Involvement Officer

TenantInvolvement@waverley.gov.uk or telephone 01483523196

Kate Douglas – Community Development Officer

tenancyandstates@waverley.gov.uk or telephone 01483523068

Claire Williams – Community Development Officer

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Adrian Waller - Tenants Panel Chairman

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Previous strategy successes

Tenants Panel

The Tenants Panel evaluated the work they undertake to ensure their contribution makes a difference for all Waverley tenants.

Part of the work they have undertaken is to meet with tenants who have recently moved to their new home to gain feedback on their experience.

The Panel also produce a newsletter and annual work plan which is shared with tenants, housing team and councillors.

Result

The Tenants Panel has become a resilient group of volunteers who are able to evaluate and assess their work as evidence for tenants, elected members and Waverley officers.

Tenant and leaseholder scrutiny

Working with tenants and councillors a scrutiny group was formed in 2013. The group is part of Waverley's commitment to co-regulation. The group has undertaken training with the Housing Quality Network (HQN), an independent national housing organisation. In 2014 the Scrutiny Group produced its first scrutiny project on communal cleaning. This was well received by committee and has been identified by HQN as an area of good practice.

Result

In 2016 the Housing Service will offer improved cleaning arrangements for communal areas

Ten maintenance and asbestos contracts

Tenants became involved as *procurement volunteers* helping to award major maintenance and asbestos contracts. The volunteers undertook 25 interviews, 38 site visits and evaluated the maintenance contractors' proposals with the housing team. helping to award major maintenance and asbestos contracts. All those who participated were a key part of the procurement process.

Result

Appointed new contractors for maintenance and asbestos

Designated persons complaints panel

In 2013 as part of the Housing complaints process and influenced by national standards we formed a new panel. Panel members consider level 3 complaints which have been referred to them by the tenant. The Panel also reviews performance figures and Housing ombudsman case studies.

Result

Resolving issues locally rather than refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman

Digital inclusion

In 2014 the "mouse@home" project was launched to provide opportunities to access the internet for sheltered scheme residents. Each scheme was offered a recycled computer and office furniture. Training was provided by DropBy a local charity.

Result

Residents using online services to shop, contact family and book medical appointments.

Focus and reading groups

Tenants and leaseholders took part in focus groups to help shape the housing service Customer Service Standards and EasyMove Scheme.

Result

Housing services reviewed through a better understanding of tenants' priorities

We are always keen to involve more tenants and leaseholders in improving services, homes and neighbourhoods. The following are ways you can volunteer right now. Whether you only have a small amount of time to commit, or can make a full commitment to the Tenants Panel or Scrutiny Group we will welcome your involvement.



Acorn activities for those with only a small time to commit

Neighbourhood Friends - Volunteers work in their local area offering whatever free time they have available. To report any local issues, offer guidance and befriend neighbours.

Reading Group - Volunteers can take part from their home reviewing letters, policies leaflets and the Waverley website. To ensure information is clear and relevant.

Surveys - Volunteers can take part in surveys using their experiences to help improve the service.



Sapling activities For those who can make a medium level commitment

Designated Persons Complaints Panel - Members meet every three months and may be required for further meetings, if reviewing a case, to find a local mutually agreed solution.

Resident Associations - An opportunity for the local community to come together to champion issues in the local area and be good neighbours.

We can help tenants and leaseholders wishing to create an association by ensuring you have somewhere to meet and providing officer support. There is also an opportunity to access start-up funding (subject to a few conditions) and training.

Please call our tenant involvement officer to discuss these opportunities



Oak tree activities - For those who can make a bigger commitment

The Tenants Panel

The Tenants Panel is recognised by Waverley as being our co-regulation partner. Members of the panel work with elected members at the highest level forming part of Waverley's Overview and Scrutiny Housing Improvement Committee.

They collect tenant views and represent tenants at meetings with the Head of Housing Operations, Portfolio Holder for Housing and at committee meetings.

Using their independent budget the Tenants Panel strives to ensure tenants and leaseholders are informed throughout Waverley.

The group meets monthly and holds open meetings around the borough every three months.

There are a range of roles within the panel including event planner, tenant visitor, advocate, chair, secretary, treasurer, website editor, social media editor.

Waverley Scrutiny Group

The Scrutiny Group identifies aspects of housing which need further examination through performance data, tenant's views and officer feedback. The group's work helps to ensure:

- customer focus in the housing service
- the drive for continuous improvement in service delivery
- the best use of resources.

A report is produced on the findings of each project area which includes recommendations. Once shared with officers the report is presented at committee level for consideration.

There are a range of roles and skills to be developed including research, analysis, interview skills and report writing

TenantInvolvement@waverley.gov.uk or call 01483 523196.

Plans for the future

Decision Making

We will :

- organise a welcome meeting for those volunteers joining a council committee to get to know elected members in an informal setting.
- offer greater support for resident associations from the Tenants Panel by providing an opportunity for association members to attend and speak at the Tenants Panel meetings
- Offer opportunities for consultation to hear tenants' views on reinvestment decisions.
- We will involve tenants and leaseholders in the procurement of our major contracts to ensure value for money and excellent customer service.

Training

- We will continue to develop an NVQ for volunteers each year.
- We will ensure each training opportunity is evaluated with those taking part.
- In response to the wishes of tenants who have attended our training courses we will try to keep training events to no longer than half a day.
- We will review volunteer development plans on a regular basis including a mentoring scheme to support those involved.
- We will seek new ways to encourage more tenants to become Neighbourhood Friends by making contact with local groups .
- Working with Waverley Training Services

we will promote and support young persons training and apprenticeships. We have a great track record in kick-starting careers for young people with over 75% of our apprentices securing employment either at Waverley or elsewhere.

Communications

- We will further develop our editorial tenant group for publications such as Waverley Homes & People, the Annual Report and housing web pages.
- We will find new ways to promote tenant involvement i.e. Job Plus Centres, Voluntary bureaus, gumtree.
- We will explore community events to promote neighbourhoods, good neighbours and involvement.
- We will include an offer to attend an estate walkabout to identify local issues.

Services

- We will progress with the gardening project aiming to encourage neighbourhood participation.
- We will expand and promote our social media contact channels, using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to promote news and events.

Useful contacts

Waverley Tenant Involvement

The Burys Godalming Surrey GU7 1HR
Telephone: 01483 523196
Email: TenantInvolvement@waverley.gov.uk
Twitter: @WaverleyBC
www.waverley.gov.uk

Waverley Community Development

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Telephone: 01483 523068 or 01483 523469
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Waverley Tenants Panel

C/O The Burys Godalming Surrey GU7 1HR
Telephone: 07765 604082
Email: tenantspanel@waverley.gov.uk
Twitter: @tenantspanel40
<http://www.waverleytenantspanel.co.uk>

CIH (Chartered Institute of Housing)

Octavia House Westwood Way Coventry
CV4 8JP
Telephone: 024 7685 1700
Email: customer.services@cih.org

Housing Ombudsman Service

81 Aldwych London WC2B 4HN
Telephone: 0300 111 3000
Email : info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

HQN Residents Network

Rockingham House, Maurice Road, York YO31
7JA
Telephone: 0845 4747 004
Email: theresidentsnetwork@hqnetwork.co.uk
www.hqnetwork.co.uk

TPAS LTD (Tenant Empowerment Organisation)

Suite 4b Trafford Plaza, 73 Seymour Grove,
Manchester M16 0LD
Telephone 0161 868 3500
Email: info@tpas.org.uk
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Trafford Hall

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**Large print versions of this document are available
on request.**

Please contact Tenant Involvement on 01483 523196



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

Waverley
BOROUGH COUNCIL