

BRIEFING NOTE FOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

DATE 13 January 2026

PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING NOTE

To inform the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning and Management Team of tenant involvement activities in 2025 undertaken by the housing service.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Management Team were briefed in July 2023 regarding the pending increased regulatory framework for social housing, notably the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Housing Regulator Consumer Standards which would include a requirement to ensure that tenant voices are heard and that tenant influence is at the heart of the Council's decision making.

It was identified that the support offered to tenants from all backgrounds needed to be increased to ensure their opinions were sought and considered to strengthen our tenant and landlord relationship.

In 2025 numerous tenant involvement actions were taken to ensure tenants were involved in decision-making as this leads to the development of more effective, inclusive and responsive housing solutions which are vital for creating sustainable and thriving social housing communities where every tenant feels valued, heard and included. We have been focused on improving our tenants overall wellbeing, not just their housing needs. By making timely referrals to both internal and external support services, which you will see outlined below, we have helped tenants access the right assistance at the right time.

CURRENT POSITION

In 2024 four Tenant Involvement Officer posts were created to ensure that the additional obligations could be met.

In 2025 the key tenant involvement achievements include:

- quarterly newsletters (Tendring Reports) sent to all tenants and an Annual Housing Report.
- quarterly Tenant Panel Meetings held. The Tenant Panel is a consultative decision-making body on all housing policy, strategy management and maintenance issues.
- created three new Tenant Panel subgroups to allow tenant representatives to scrutinise housing policies, procedures, data and case studies to help us develop our housing service and influence positive change. The three subgroups are:
 - Anti-social Behaviour, Neighbourhoods and Rents
 - Repairs
 - Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Complaints
- made 84 referrals for tenants to frontline support services.
- signposted 102 tenants to frontline support services.
- canvassed 12 potential Resident Associations.
- canvassed 11 potential Area Representatives.
- held 17 Sheltered Housing Residents Meetings
- held 24 Estate Walkabouts attended by 31 tenants which involved small groups of staff and tenants visiting the exterior and communal grounds of our estates to collaborate and discuss how any issues can be tackled.
- visited 724 tenants in their homes to complete tenancy checks to ensure tenants are safe and

secure in their homes and to discuss their opportunities to be involved in the delivery of the housing service. This is approximately 24% of our housing stock. Including the 315 visits that were undertaken in 2024, we have visited 35% of our tenants.

- 58 tenants attended our housing advice drop-in surgeries in Lawford.
- 5 additional housing drop-ins were held in various locations across the district.
- 55 income maximisation visits were undertaken.
- 115 income maximisation telephone reviews were completed.
- 78 tenants attended our income maximisation drop-ins.
- created a Customer Involvement Register to record tenants' involvement preferences and give them the opportunity to be involved in a way that suits their needs.
- held 6 community events at the new Honeycroft, Lawford Community Room.
- Tenant feedback from the annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey (2024/25) led to an Action Plan being created to identify and tackle key areas for improvement.
- created a new Tenant Involvement Guide.
- drafted a new Tenant Handbook.
- drafted a new Sheltered Housing Handbook.
- produced a Tenant Involvement Action Plan detailing over 40 methods of communicating or engaging with tenants.
- developed a set of Service Standards to provide tenants with accessible information of what to expect and how to hold the Council to account.
- created a Housing Facebook Page.
- began creating a Housing Communications Plan.
- drafted a useful information video for tenants to view when they sign their tenancy agreement.
- arranged for the NHS to attend all sheltered housing schemes to deliver Covid-19 and flu spring and autumn boosters for eligible residents.
- implemented a range of new housing policies.

2026 will see a further expansion of the tenant involvement opportunities including:

- canvassing for neighbourhood and block champions.
- canvassing to create a reading group for those tenants that do not want to attend meetings but would be keen to scrutinise housing policies and procedures from their own homes.
- form a '*You said, we listened*' website page to be created to put tenant feedback at the centre of positive change and to continually learn and improve.
- host a networking event for residents to get to know their council services

PROPOSAL

- To inform the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning and Management Team of tenant involvement activities in 2025 undertaken by the housing service.
- To create a website 'splash' of 2025 tenant involvement achievements and to inform tenants of way to be involved in the service.
- The Tenant Panel to review the 2025 tenant involvement achievements (at their March 2026 meeting).
- For tenant involvement briefing notes to be provided to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning every six months to ensure that members and the residents have sight of tenant involvement opportunities and to ensure that our improvement journey is accessible.

DELIVERING CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Tenant involvement work contributes to the priorities in the Corporate Plan for:

- Pride in our area and services to residents.

- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities.
- Championing our local environment.
- Working with partners to improve quality of life.

KEY GOVERNANCE ISSUES AND/OR DIRECT LINKS TO OTHER MATTERS

The actions undertaken link to the Tenants Satisfaction Survey Results 2024/25.
The actions link to the obligations within the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Housing Regulator Consumer Standards.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Outcomes to be reported to the Council's Tenant Panel and to Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning.

FINANCE, RESOURCES & CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

Finance: All activities are funded from within existing HRA budgets.

Other resources (e.g. external parties): N/A

TDC Capacity: No capacity issues.

LEGAL DUTIES, POWERS & RESTRICTIONS (EXISTING, NEW RESPONSIBILITIES OR EMERGING)

Compliance with Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and Consumer Standards Code of Practice.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Failure to comply with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and Consumer Standards Code of Practice could result in enforcement steps being taken by the Regulator of Social Housing.

NEXT STEPS & MILESTONES

- Two Tenant Involvement Officer posts are currently vacant following internal promotions; however, one new employee started with us on w/c 5th January and another will begin w/c 19th January 2026.
- To create a website 'splash' of 2025 tenant involvement achievements and to inform tenants of way to be involved in the service.
- The Tenant Panel to review the 2025 tenant involvement achievements (at their March 2026 meeting).
- For these briefing notes to be provided to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning every six months to ensure that members and the residents have sight of tenant involvement opportunities and to ensure that our improvement journey is accessible.

APPENDICES

None

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Name	Matthew Wicks Jessica Woods
Job Title	Senior Housing Manager Senior Tenant Involvement Officer