



## Foreword

This strategy aims to make a difference to the way Lancaster city council and its tenants get on together. It will improve how we work as a partnership to ensure that living in a council property is the best experience we can make it. Lancaster is proud to be one of only two councils in Lancashire to have council housing. Making sure those houses and their neighbourhoods are warm, safe, secure and suitable for the twenty-first century is a job that needs not just our efforts as a council but also the strong voice of our tenants. It is also good to see that the voice of our leaseholders will also be heard.

Through the engagement strategies outlined here we aim to build up our current relationships, to provide very clear information on everything we are doing and to give many opportunities for tenants to get involved, comment on and scrutinise our work. It will take the effort and determination of everybody involved to make sure that we develop our service to be fully accessible, supportive and open to being held to account. I look forward to three years of hard work but also a good bit of fun and plenty of sandwiches and cake as we achieve the strategy aims.



*Caroline Jackson*

Portfolio Holder (Housing and Homelessness)



## NATIONAL CONTEXT

In recent years there has been a much stronger focus on the 'tenant voice' within social housing, to make sure tenants are kept informed and are able to shape and meaningfully influence the decision making of their landlord, and that homes are provided which are warm, safe and secure.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) will have new responsibilities and powers and a new focus on proactive consumer regulation. This will include using inspections and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to help to monitor social housing landlords are meeting the new Consumer Standards.

The new Consumer Standards reflect the Regulator's revised statutory objectives as set out in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, as amended by the Social Housing Act 2023, and the expectations set out in the Social Housing White Paper in respect of a revised consumer regulation role for the Regulator.

There are four Consumer Standards:

- The Safety and Quality Standard
- The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- The Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- The Tenancy Standard

Of particular relevance to this strategy will be the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard which will require Lancaster City Council to be open with tenants and ensure:

- They are treated with fairness and respect
- They can access services, raise complaints, and influence decision making
- They can hold us, as their landlord, to account

## LOCAL CONTEXT

In line with this national context:

**Lancaster City Council has made a service commitment in our Service Improvement Plan 2023-2025<sup>1</sup> to:**

- Maximise efficiency and seek to be transparent with the services we deliver.
- Involve and empower tenants and ensure those who require support receive it.

**These commitments are reliant on engagement with tenants and residents to deliver:**

- Best Value for Council resources and more residents benefit from support/services.
- Increased opportunities for effective and continual tenant involvement and provide opportunities for tenant scrutiny.
- Tenants are able to hold the service to account and have the ability to engage in different ways that meet their needs, and that engagement is meaningful.
- Community Plans developed in consultation with tenants on all Council Housing estates giving them a say in how their neighbourhood is managed.

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<sup>1</sup> This is reviewed on an annual basis.

For more information about the consultation process regarding the introduction of Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and the measures themselves, please visit: [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-introduction-of-tenant-satisfaction-measure](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-introduction-of-tenant-satisfaction-measure)

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Act makes tenant involvement a central part of how their homes are managed, working “in partnership” with the council. The Council is committed to meeting diverse needs of tenants. Tenants must be treated fairly, listened to and respected to help shape the future of housing services. It is crucial we keep tenants involved in a meaningful way to help shape the future of our housing services across the Lancaster District.

The Tenants Voice Strategy aims to strengthen the tenants voice by being transparent and ensuring tenants can genuinely influence decision making at every level. It also aims to encourage tenants to improve their communities. We want our tenants to feel they are listened to and can see the difference their involvement makes. The strategy aims to set out the direction for tenants’ involvement and support our commitment to co-regulation by involving tenants in governing, shaping, co-designing and scrutinising services.

### **Every social housing tenant should expect from their council:**

- To be safe in their home
- To know how your landlord is performing
- To have your voice heard by your landlord
- To be supported to take your step to ownership
- To be treated with respect
- To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in

We believe that good quality housing is a basic human right. The places that we call home have a significant impact on our health and happiness and on what we can achieve in our lives.

The Council will work with tenants to ensure that they have a voice and meaningful influence at every level of decision making across the organisation and will assess its performance against tenants’ experience. The tenant voice, and the diversity of that voice, can get lost, which is why the Council recognise tenants as key partners in delivering services.



We are committed to working together with tenants to create excellent homes in strong, safe, and sustainable communities. The focus on gathering feedback from all tenant involvement will ensure we know what our tenants want and their views of the services we provide. Our Customer First approach ensures we listen to our tenants, enabling us to learn and then respond appropriately and effectively.

## VISION

Our vision is for tenant involvement to continue to be ingrained in our organisation's culture, with tenants influencing all that we do at every level of the organisation and helping to shape and improve services. We want tenants to know that their voice has been heard, listened to, valued and their views acted upon. We want tenants at the heart of everything we do.

## STRATEGY AIMS

To offer a range of accessible ways to be involved and encourage a diversity of tenants to be actively involved in shaping, improving and scrutinising services.

To demonstrate the impact of tenant involvement through an outcome led approach.

To ensure we are responsive to the changing environment and new legislation and regulatory requirements are met.

To improve standards on information and transparency.

## OBJECTIVES

We recognise that we can only improve on our services by working together in partnership with tenants. To do this we must collect opinions and views using methods which are convenient, regardless of circumstances, location and individual needs.

### 1. Maximise engagement with council tenants

The council aims to create an engaged tenant register and contact these tenants to help shape services. All tenants will be invited to be included on the register.

### 2. Use feedback to shape services provided by the Council

The council will use feedback from tenants to shape services provided by the council. Wherever possible the council will feedback the results we receive through a "You said, we did" approach. The Tenant Scrutiny panel will feed in their recommendations to the Councillor with responsibility for Housing and Homelessness, and the Chief Officer-Housing & Property.

We will use the results from the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to help to focus on where we are not performing as well and speak to tenants to understand their concerns.

### 3. Increase the skills of tenants

The Council will be providing training and development opportunities to help tenants build on their

individual and community skills. Those involved in scrutiny and decision influencing activities will receive training on a wide range of democratic processes where necessary. All tenants can join the TPAS online community free of charge. Tenants involved in tenant groups will be offered training where appropriate to help them to run the groups in accordance with their constitution.

#### **4. Develop strong and vibrant communities**

The council will promote and encourage community improvements such as, community fun-days and community plans, improvements to estate open spaces and drop in events and will assist tenants who want to form a community group. We will also utilise the Neighbourhood Community Projects Fund to encourage tenants to positively impact on their estates and communities. Tenants will be an integral part of the decision-making process, with relation to how this fund is spent. There is a Tenant Assessment Group who look at applications for the scheme and make decisions on applications.

#### **5. Develop Social and Financial Inclusion Strategies to reduce loneliness across our estates**

The council is committed to implementing Social and Financial Inclusion Strategies to reduce loneliness across our estates and to create a safe, joyful and closely-knit community where all tenants can thrive.

## TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Social housing providers must use the new **Tenant Satisfaction Measures** system to ensure their homes are in good condition, are safe, complaints are handled effectively and tenants are engaged with helpfully and respectfully, allowing tenants and leaseholders to hold their landlord to account.

Each of the measures are listed in the table below.

### TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES FROM TENANT PERCEPTION SURVEYS

Code	Title
<b>TP01</b>	· Overall satisfaction
<b>TP02</b>	· Satisfaction with repairs
<b>TP03</b>	· Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair
<b>TP04</b>	· Satisfaction that the home is well-maintained
<b>TP05</b>	· Satisfaction that the home is safe
<b>TP06</b>	· Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
<b>TP07</b>	· Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
<b>TP08</b>	· Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect
<b>TP09</b>	· Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints
<b>TP10</b>	· Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well-maintained
<b>TP11</b>	· Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
<b>TP12</b>	· Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour

### TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES GENERATED FROM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Code	Title
<b>CH01</b>	• Complaints relative to the size of the landlord
<b>CH02</b>	• Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
<b>NM01</b>	• Anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases relative to the size of the landlord
<b>RP01</b>	• Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
<b>RP02</b>	• Repairs completed within target timescale
<b>BS01</b>	• Gas safety checks
<b>BS02</b>	• Fire safety checks
<b>BS03</b>	• Asbestos safety checks
<b>BS04</b>	• Water safety checks
<b>BS05</b>	• Lift safety checks

# ACTION PLAN

## OBJECTIVE ONE: MAXIMISE ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNCIL TENANTS

Aims	How	Who	When
Support and encourage tenants to attend meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Pay for transport (Taxi, Bus, Mileage etc).</li> <li>· Pay for child care.</li> <li>· Promote meetings and engagement activities to all tenants via social media, flyers &amp; targeted letters/email/text messages.</li> <li>· Provide meetings in a variety of forms and convenient locations for tenants wherever possible. (Webinars, phone conferencing, in person at local venues)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Housing Management Team</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process.
Promote engagement with new and existing tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· New tenants to be advised on the Menu of Engagement at post-allocation visit(s).</li> <li>· Engagement activities to be advertised to local tenants via social media targeted flyers/posters/emails/text/in person.</li> <li>· Engagement information and opportunities to be provided in two monthly newsletters, quarterly rent statements, targeted emails/text phone calls and in person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Housing Management Team</li> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Customer Services</li> <li>▷ All staff</li> <li>▷ All</li> </ul>	Continuous Process.
Engage with tenants in more ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Promote digital engagement via our website, email groups, online surveys and social media.</li> <li>· Deliver a range of engagement opportunities that allow people to participate in ways that suit them.</li> <li>· Preferred and most up to date contact method to be requested/checked at every interaction with tenants</li> <li>· Information screens and free wifi in all communal areas of Independent Living Schemes to improve communication about events/changes to staff/community engagement opportunities/keeping safe and warm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Communications Officer</li> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process.
Take engagement out of council buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Engagement activities to take place in community buildings where possible.</li> <li>· Carry out estate walkabouts twice a year on all estates and invite stakeholders in advance, including tenants, tenants groups, councillors and police</li> <li>· Attending community events organised by the community - coffee mornings/community fun days/community meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Housing Management Team</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process.
Seek new initiatives and ideas to widen tenant engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Share good practice with other housing providers and professional bodies (such as TPAS, HQN). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and enable tenants to attend conferences and training.</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Welcome new ideas and initiatives from all sources including tenants, staff, councillors and voluntary organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process
Work collaboratively to ensure all members of communities are included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We will continue to work with the Community Connectors, voluntary sector and schools to ensure that marginalised groups of people have a voice when it comes to tenant and resident engagement (e.g., young people, BME Groups, LGBTQ+).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Connector Team</li> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process

## TENANT VOICE STRATEGY

Engage transparently and honestly about Building and Fire Safety with tenants in communal flats and high-rise properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Regular updates on building and fire safety are to be included in our newsletters and website and on social media.</li> <li>· Community events will be used to promote building and fire safety.</li> <li>· We have created a Building and Fire Safety Group.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Tenant Engagement Strategies for our high-rise blocks in partnership with residents.</li> <li>• Use of notice boards in communal areas to promote awareness and provide up to date information.</li> <li>• Work with the community fire safety officers to promote awareness.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Compliance Officer</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> <li>▷ Fire and Rescue Service</li> </ul>	Continuous Process
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## OBJECTIVE TWO: USE FEEDBACK TO SHAPE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL

Aims	How	Who	When
Monitor satisfaction regarding our service performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Carry out regular service specific satisfaction surveys (e.g., Repairs, ASB, Call Handling, block cleaning).</li> <li>· Carry out a an annual survey of tenants and leaseholders (tendered out to 3<sup>rd</sup> party research company) to benchmark satisfaction against other landlords through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures -TSMs</li> <li>Use our complaints procedure to understand recurring themes around satisfaction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Service Managers</li> <li>▷ Policy &amp; Performance Officer</li> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Every year and ongoing
Carry out ad-hoc surveys to seek the views of tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Tenant surveys are carried out with tenants on an ad-hoc basis on a variety of matters (such as pets in communal buildings and service standards). These will be advertised on social media/ webpages and surveys will be sent via email/text to try and increase uptake.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> <li>▷ Communications Officer</li> </ul>	Continuous Process.
Feedback results of customer surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Published in the bi-monthly newsletters, and at the tenants Voice, as well as via website and social media in a You said we did format.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Policy and Performance Officer</li> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Communications Officer</li> </ul>	Bi monthly & Quarterly
Carry out tenant scrutiny and auditing of various services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Tenants will scrutinise council housing services, such as void properties, planned maintenance (such as kitchen replacements, reroofing etc), general repairs and complaints. We will recruit to the scrutiny panel and a regular basis. Members of the scrutiny panel will receive appropriate training to fulfil their role in an independent manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Independent Tenants Scrutiny Panel</li> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Chief Officer – Housing &amp; Property</li> <li>▷ Councillor with Responsibility</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process

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## TENANT VOICE STRATEGY

Provide feedback on actions shaped by tenant engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We will provide feedback of actions shaped by tenant feedback in the form of a “you said, we did” statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process.
Strengthen tenant's influence over our decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Create task and finish groups for specific matters, to better help us understand the impact our services have on tenants, and create better responses                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to develop and involve the Council Housing Advisory Group</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Manager of Service Area</li> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process.
Provide opportunities for tenants to prioritise spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Tenant Assessors to make decisions on awarding applications to the Neighbourhood Community Project Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Tenants &amp; Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Engaged residents</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Quarterly / On receipt of application
Improve services to better meet the needs of council tenants and leaseholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Tenant feedback will shape decision making at a service delivery level. We will consult with tenants regularly and refer to their views and satisfaction levels when making decisions.</li> <li>· The creation of a leaseholders' forum and an Independent Living Scheme forum and a young person's forum to discuss matters specific to their needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Income Manager</li> <li>▷ Residents</li> <li>▷ All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process
Work with residents and other stakeholders to develop neighbourhood specific community plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We will work closely with residents, local councillors, and other community partners to develop community plans to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Capture the priorities and lived experience of residents</li> <li>○ Agree community level actions plans</li> <li>○ Ensure community needs and aspirations are reflected in service delivery</li> </ul> </li> <li>- We will review Community Plans once every two years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community engagement officer</li> <li>▷ All staff</li> <li>▷ Local Ward Councillors</li> <li>▷ Local partners and agencies</li> <li>▷ Wider council services</li> </ul>	

Note: We will always ensure that our decision-making processes are open, honest, and transparent to ensure we are accountable to our tenants.

OBJECTIVE THREE: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENANTS TO INCREASE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Aims	How	Who	When
Keep tenants and partners informed through promotion and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Regular updates via social media                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of notice boards and flyers</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Through bulletins provided in the quarterly rent statements                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the Tenants Voice meetings and residents' groups/residents' groups social media.</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Two monthly newsletter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▷ Policy and Performance Officer</li> <li>▷ Communications Officer</li> <li>▷ Customer Service</li> </ul>	Various points through the year on a regular basis
Facilitate lifelong learning for tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We will continue to supply funding for local community centres, that provide an educational and recreational space for tenants</li> </ul>	▷ Chief Officer- Housing & Property	Funding agreed on an annual basis
Provide training for tenants to support engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The council will provide and facilitate training in:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Committee skills</li> <li>o Setting up Tenants Groups</li> <li>o Food hygiene and first aid</li> <li>o Awareness days for important topics for tenants</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process
Acknowledge tenant achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The council will celebrate tenant achievement through an annual tenant awards event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ All Staff</li> <li>External Services</li> <li>Public Bodies.</li> </ul>	From 2025 onwards
Promote the digital upskilling of tenants and residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The council is providing free WiFi in the communal areas of our Independent Living Schemes</li> <li>· We will continue looking into providing more opportunities to help tenants get connected with the council through digital platforms.</li> </ul>	▷ All Staff	Continuous Process.



## OBJECTIVE FOUR: DEVELOP STRONG AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Aims	How	Who	When
Provide funding to improve community spaces on council owned estates and neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplied via the Neighbourhood and Tenancy Support Fund and Neighbourhood Community Projects Fund.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▮ Tenants Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▮ Housing Officers</li> <li>▮ Councillors</li> </ul>	on receipt of application
Encourage engagement with communities and implement a community plan tailored to the needs of the tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council will promote community engagement through completing surveys with tenants at their homes. Community Fun-days in the targeted areas as a thank you for taking part and a chance to engage with other services by providing a multi-agency presence on the day.</li> <li>Contacting tenants who expressed an interest in going involved after the event to help shape their Community Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▮ Housing Officers</li> <li>▮ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>▮ Housing Management Team</li> <li>▮ All Staff</li> </ul>	Two estates per year.
Build and support community capacity in Council neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with tenants to support them to access opportunities in their communities through maintaining contact and close working relationships with partner organisations.</li> <li>Support community and tenant groups enabling them to become independent and beneficial to their local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▮ Housing Officers</li> <li>▮ Community Engagement Officer</li> <li>All Staff</li> </ul>	Continuous Process
Collaborate with internal and external partners to deliver shared priorities and pooled resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with external agencies to deliver targeted services that address the community's needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▮ Housing Officers</li> <li>▮ Community Connectors</li> <li>External Agencies</li> </ul>	Continuous Process

This strategy (including the policy, objectives, and action plan) will be reviewed every three years by tenants and staff.

There will be performance information for this selection of tenants and staff, so they'll know if the strategy's working. This includes TSMS, number of tenants engaged, and qualitative information like customer feedback and testimonials about their estates. The information will be used by tenants and staff to perform a desk top review and provide feedback for alterations. Tenants will approve the final draft.

The following will contribute to tenant engagement success:

- Satisfaction with service has increased.
- Overall satisfaction increased.
- Through digital platforms, tenants and landlords can communicate more effectively.
- More tenants registering their interest in engagement.
- Improvements to the look and feel of estates and communities.
- Improvement in meeting the diverse needs of residents.

**We look forward to working in partnership with tenants to improve our services and make a positive difference to individuals and the wider community.**