



North Warwickshire
Borough Council



TENANT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

2023-24



An agreement between
North Warwickshire Borough Council and its Tenants



FOREWORD

Dear Tenants

We are pleased to present the 2023/24 North Warwickshire Borough Council Tenant Partnership Agreement. It has been reviewed by the Borough Wide Tenants Forum and Officers of the Council and demonstrates our continued commitment to working more closely together.

The aim of the Agreement is to give you a greater say in the way housing services are delivered through a range of opportunities for involvement. The Agreement outlines how you can become more involved, and we hope that more tenants will take up this invitation to influence the housing services delivered by the Council. The Council is committed to listening to our tenants and working to improve the services that we provide.

The key achievements made during 2022/23 were:

- Reviewing the Council Housing Service Standards and Key Performance Indicators to ensure they meet the required regulatory requirements.
- Monitoring the Tenant Participation budget updates and quarterly performance information and making suggestions for improvement.
- Reviewing the complaints and compliments procedure for Council tenants.
- Monitoring the quarterly complaints and compliments performance information and making suggestions for improvement.
- Reviewing the information provided to tenants regarding the cost of living rises and where they can find help and support.
- Reviewing the Asset Management Plan for Council Housing.
- Reviewing and monitoring the Tenant Partnership Agreement and Forward Work Plan.
- Contributing to the Tenants Link Newsletter and promoting the work of the Forum.
- Reviewing and monitoring the actions for housing as stated in the Climate Change Action Plan
- Representing the Borough Wide Tenants Forum at Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) conference events and other membership events – understanding, learning, and sharing ideas with tenants from other areas.

We would like to thank all partners for their assistance in making these achievements. We would encourage all our tenants to get more involved in a way that suits them. This could be by completing satisfaction surveys, getting involved in local community groups and tenant meetings arranged by the Council.

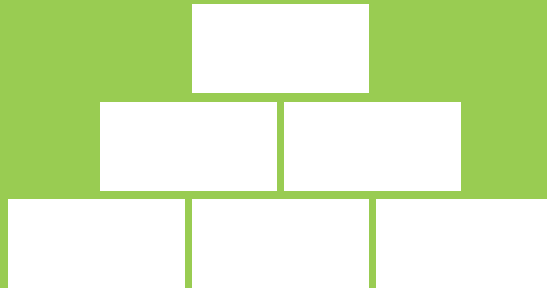
To find out more please contact the Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer on 01827 715341 or tenantparticipation@northwarks.gov.uk

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2,615
homes managed



33
new homes developed



12
properties sold

1. INTRODUCTION

The North Warwickshire Tenant Partnership Agreement (also referred to in this document as “the Agreement”), sets out how Council tenants can participate in housing issues that affect them. It outlines how tenants, and the Council will work together in a spirit of equal partnership, co-operation, and mutual respect to enable tenants to influence decisions about their homes and the services they receive.

The Agreement sets out how tenants can participate by offering a range of ways for tenants to:

- Get more involved in decision making
- Tell us about their priorities
- Give feedback and tell us where services need improving as well as letting us know when we get things right
- Influence decisions about their homes and the services they receive
- Scrutinise the housing service

The Agreement is a continuously evolving document that will change with time and work undertaken within the Housing Services Division. The Social Housing White Paper – A new deal for Social Housing sets out five principles for ‘a new, fairer deal for housing residents’ which includes empowering tenants to ensure their voices are heard so that landlords are held to account. This Agreement sets out how the Council will work with its tenants to meet these requirements.

ABOUT US

During 2022-23, 12 properties were sold under the right to buy scheme and 33 new homes were developed for Social Housing. The Housing Service Division is responsible for managing 2,615 homes in North Warwickshire. This includes delivering services such as:

- Responsive repairs
- Planned improvements
- Letting properties
- Rent Collection
- Neighbourhood Services
- Tenant Participation

The Housing Services Division aims to provide a customer focused service and is committed to working in partnership with the Borough Wide Tenants Forum to achieve our aims and objectives.

OUR VISION

“ To give every tenant the opportunity to have a say about how and what services are provided for them in a way that suits them, to listen and use their feedback to make improvements ”

Shared Principles

The Agreement is based on the following that the partners will:

- Commit to meaningful tenant involvement and see it as a fundamental part of the Housing Strategy.
- Support and encourage tenant involvement at a level and pace decided by the tenants of the Borough.
- Empower tenants so that they take an active role in the management of their homes and communities at a level they are happy with.
- Provide and increase varied types and levels of involvement, giving more opportunity for all groups and sections of the community to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Ensure that all tenants have equal and fair access to participate.
- Recognise that changes will occur that affect the Agreement and that the Agreement will be regularly reviewed.
- Agree that changes will not be made to this Agreement without the agreement of each partner.
- Value diversity and inclusiveness and be committed to ensuring that all tenants have the opportunity to influence policies, strategies and the delivery of a customer focussed housing service.
- Be open and honest and work together to deliver change and improvement.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

“ North Warwickshire Borough Council will not discriminate on the grounds of nationality, political opinion, race, religious opinion, age, sex, sexuality or disability ”

This Agreement is intended to encourage ways that all groups within our community can be involved. It is intended to work with partners and other external bodies to improve the current involvement levels from hard to reach and under-represented groups within our community.

2. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

EACH PARTNER HAS A ROLE IN ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF THE AGREEMENT

TENANTS

Individual tenants have a key part to play in the success of the Agreement. Tenants will contribute to the success of the Agreement by:

- Reading information provided by the Council about housing services and opportunities for involvement – for example, in newsletters, personal letters, on the Council’s website www.northwarks.gov.uk and on community notice boards.
- Deciding how they want to get involved – being positive in responding to surveys and questionnaires, giving views in consultation exercises, attending local groups, Community Panels and focus groups.
- Reading the Tenants’ Handbook and making use of the information contained in it to help resolve problems arising in their neighbourhood or in their homes.
- Being a good neighbour – taking a positive approach to the community where they live and abiding by their Tenancy Conditions.
- Co-operating with and respecting the Council’s staff and contractors.
- Ensuring any group’s terms of reference and standing orders are adhered to.
- Community Panel members should ensure that they are familiar with the Community Panel bidding process. They should consult and seek agreement from members of their panel regarding any bids for improvement money from the Council. Requests for any neighbourhood improvements should reflect the views of those tenants living locally.

In addition, every tenant has the right to:

- Access relevant papers or background information (excluding those of a confidential nature) to make an informed decision on services provided for them.
- Be involved in decision making processes concerning Housing Services, working in partnership with the Council.
- Have their views recorded to reflect a true, accurate measure of their needs and to ensure there are no misunderstandings.
- Establish a local Tenants Group.
- Co-operation and respect from council staff and contractors.

COUNCILLORS

Councillors are elected by local people to be responsible and accountable for policy and strategic decisions and ensuring legal requirements are met. Councillors will (either individually or through Council systems):

- Consult, communicate and address the needs of tenants when policies are amended and developed.
- Be honest, listen and be non-judgemental when approached by tenants for a change of housing strategy or policy.
- Provide feedback and information regarding any issue.
- Be supportive, strengthening links with tenants to promote close understanding of local community issues and the implementation of the Agreement.
- Support staff in their work to broaden involvement opportunities and customer focussed housing services.

COUNCIL STAFF

Staff will work at every level ensuring the success of the Agreement by:

- Adopting a customer focus in the delivery of all aspects of the housing service.
- Constructively responding to tenants' needs, views, and priorities when they develop and review housing policies and services.
- Allowing adequate time to consult tenants when developing or reviewing housing services and policies.
- Providing easy to understand, attractive and accurate newsletters, performance information and consultation materials to help tenants get involved in monitoring and developing services.
- Listening to and respecting the views of tenants and other service users.
- Learning and adapting services based on feedback from tenants and other service users – through meetings, compliments and complaints and customer satisfaction surveys.
- Giving feedback to tenants on what has happened because of their views being considered.
- Working in a flexible way to meet the needs of tenants, arranging meetings and events at times and in places to suit tenants.
- Arranging training events between tenants and the Council to build skills and a shared understanding of effective tenant involvement.

THE BOROUGH WIDE TENANTS FORUM

The Borough Wide Tenants Forum is our borough wide tenant representative group. They are tenants who come from all areas of the Borough and want to be involved in the decision-making process and improving services to all tenants. The members may also be involved in Community Panels in their local areas.

They will:

- Review and monitor the Agreement and action plan.
- Participate in the formation of new policies and service standards
- Monitor and oversee tenant scrutiny activities.
- Participate in service and maintenance contract reviews.
- Participate in tenant inspection programmes.
- Monitor the Tenant Participation Budget.



OUR APPROACH....

The Council offers a range of ways for tenants to get involved in a way that suits them. However you choose to get involved, we will **LISTEN** to your feedback and **ACT** to make improvements to the way in which the housing service is delivered.

**Building Stronger
Safer Communities in
North Warwickshire**



**Mystery
Shopping**



Tenants Voice

Tenant Scrutiny Projects / Performance Group, including Complaints & Compliments

Keeping tenants informed – Letters, Newsletters, Website, Annual Report

A choice of hybrid and face to face meetings and social media platforms are offered

Tenant-Led Community Panels

Borough Wide Tenants Forum

Tenant Surveys

Task & Finish Groups

Focus Groups

Informal Local Tenant Meetings

Home Improvement Liaison Meetings

Equal access for all







3. INVOLVEMENT OPTIONS

There is a wide range of options available to tenants who wish to get involved in the Housing Service. The involvement options set out below are designed to ensure that all tenants can get involved at a level they choose. All tenants can have their say in a way that they are comfortable with and what fits their lifestyle. You may choose to get involved through just one involvement option or in an area that is of particular interest to you, or you may decide to get involved through several options and in several areas. The decision is yours.

All of the options will need some commitment. This ranges from half an hour on an occasional basis, through to several hours a month. To help tenants decide which options might suit them, we have graded them and explained the amount of time commitment required.

GRADING OUR OPTIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT

 LOW (OCCASIONAL) this can just be a one-off commitment, attending a focus group, reading information, or coming along to a tenant meeting to discuss neighbourhood issues.	 LOW (REGULAR) agreeing to give a little of your time occasionally. For example, by suggesting and submitting articles to contribute to the Tenants Newsletter, attending an editorial group or completing our customer feedback surveys.	 MEDIUM LEVEL for example, becoming a member of a local Community Panel Group, which meet regularly during the year.	 HIGH LEVEL for example, becoming a member of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum which meet at least every two months and has an important role in guiding housing policy, strategy, and service development.
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If you would like to get involved in any of the activities, please get in touch with the Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer, email tenantparticipation@northwarks.gov.uk or telephone **01827 715341**. Information will be accessible and freely available. Important documents will be provided for all tenants and are available on our website www.northwarks.gov.uk. Key issues will be highlighted in the tenants newsletter, "Tenants Link". Information is available in alternative formats e.g., in large print, on audiotape, in another language or through face to face discussion – please just ask.

Letters, Leaflets and Questionnaires



The Council's Housing Division will write to you throughout the year for a variety of reasons. Some will be confirming repairs you have reported or informing you about your rent account and changes in rent. Others may be informing you of new services and some may be inviting you to special events and meetings. Housing Services may also write to you asking for your views and comments on issues.

An annual tenants survey will be conducted by an independent organisation. This will be to gather satisfaction data and views of tenants on all aspects of the housing and maintenance service. Other surveys will be conducted by different methods to obtain customer feedback on particular aspects of the service. Outcomes from surveys will be reported in the Annual Performance Report, discussed with the Borough Wide Tenants Forum, and be used to inform service improvement plans.

Very little time is needed from you, but very important information can be given in this way. Some letters you receive are purely to keep you up-to-date and inform you. Others may require a response and we will provide Freepost envelopes.

Leaseholder Questionnaire

If you are a leaseholder then you are invited to complete an annual questionnaire, which will give leaseholders the opportunity to raise issues.

An opportunity to highlight leaseholder issues with no fixed commitment. We will provide Freepost envelopes.

Focus Groups



These are small gatherings of between six and twelve residents and are usually one-off sessions designed to gather information on one or more issues. Meetings usually last between one and two hours and residents will be able to attend face to face or remotely using a media platform such as Outlook Teams, Zoom or WhatsApp. Focus Groups form a key part of service improvements and external inspections, which look at improving specific aspects of the housing service.

This is suitable for tenants who want to share their views without giving a regular commitment.

Informal Local Meetings

Where Community Panels do not exist, local tenant meetings will be held at least once a year to keep tenants informed about the service. The Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer will notify tenants and Councillors in the locality of the meeting details including time, date, and venue. Tenants will be encouraged to raise matters that are important to them, a record of the meeting will be retained, and the Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer will follow up the agreed action points.

This is a good opportunity for tenants to discuss issues that affect them and their neighbourhoods generally, without a regular commitment.



1 Planned Maintenance and Improvement

The Housing Division will arrange consultation events for all future improvement works that are undertaken to tenants and leaseholders' homes. Events will be organised in partnership with the contractor to talk to tenants and leaseholders more directly about future works.

This requires very low commitment but is an excellent opportunity for tenants to discuss any questions about the works or clarify any issues they may have with either Housing staff or the contractor.



2 Mystery Shopping

Mystery Shopping exercises may be used as a method of testing the quality of the services. An individual (for example, an existing customer tenant or an independent person) will ask for information or test out the process of reporting a repair or other service request. They may also visit a neighbourhood to examine caretaking standards to see how well services are being delivered.

This is an easy way to get involved in testing the quality of housing services and contribute to service improvements with minimum time commitment. Training will be provided.



3 Tenant Led Community Panels

This is an opportunity to focus on what is happening in your local neighbourhood and meet with other residents, the Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer and other key staff. Your neighbourhood issues will be discussed, and you will be able to work together to plan service improvements and community activities. You will receive news and performance information from the Council. Other statutory and voluntary organisations will be encouraged to send representatives to discuss issues of local interest. The Panel meetings are led by tenants and have a constitution. All residents will be invited to attend, and we will promote the meetings by letters, posters and flyers. Community Panels can apply for funding for minor improvements that will help address an issue or improve the local area.



4 Task and Finish Groups

Task and finish groups will be used for one off pieces of work about a particular aspect of the service. This may involve a specific task that needs completing and has a beginning and an end. Once the task or tasks have been completed the group will not need to meet again unless there are further tasks identified. The group will meet when needed and will report back and provide updates to the Borough Wide Tenants Forum. Any tenant is able to attend a task and finish group as well as nominated members of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum.



The Borough Wide Tenants Forum



The Forum is an independent body that acts as one voice to represent tenants' views to North Warwickshire Borough Council and the Housing Service. The Forum meets regularly and set their own agenda for the meetings. The meetings are held at the Council House and members can attend in person or remotely. These hybrid meetings will enable members to attend in a way that suits them. Any tenant can request to join The Forum and usually they will already be involved in their local area. Community Panel Chair and Vice Chairs will be encouraged to attend The Forum meetings to represent their local areas and provide an update on what is happening in their local meetings.

The Council's Housing Services Team is committed to listening and responding to the views of the Forum and provides financial and practical support to the group. It will work with the Forum and support them to develop and agree an annual forward work plan which will include the actions to be worked on during the year. Housing Officers will provide information and updates on the areas of work identified in the forward work plan and provide regular updates in the agreed timescales.

The Forum will review quarterly key performance information about the housing management and maintenance service. This will include looking at specific performance targets, satisfaction levels, complaints and compliments and the cost of services. They will review any policy and service improvements proposals with Council Officers and provide input and feedback from a customer perspective. The Forum may identify aspects of the service they wish to scrutinise in more detail. Members of the Forum may establish a task and finish group in order to undertake a scrutiny project.

Regular commitment is required to attend meetings, take part in discussions, reading and commenting on documents, share information with Community Panels, Local Tenant Groups and to local people.



Tenant Scrutiny Projects

Where The Forum has identified an aspect of the service it wishes to look at in more detail, a Tenant Scrutiny Project will be established. Members of the Tenant Forum may nominate themselves to attend the meetings where they have a particular interest in the project that is chosen. The Tenant Scrutiny Project will run in a similar way to a Task and Finish Group and have a beginning and an end. It is a tenant-led independent group that decides projects based on performance and customer feedback information. It reports its findings and recommendations to the Senior Housing Management Team. The Council will provide support to the scrutiny project by arranging meetings and providing information and resources. The Council will consider the recommendations that are presented and provide feedback and a response that will include any actions to be taken with timescales for completion. A representative from the scrutiny project will provide updates to the Borough Wide Tenants Forum until the project has ended.

The Council will actively seek the views of all tenants on all key aspects of the housing service and ensure these are considered and acted upon as part of its scrutiny and improvement programme.



4. CORE STANDARDS

STANDARDS FOR RESOURCES FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION

The Council is committed to providing the resources needed to support the Agreement and the involvement activities it describes. There is a full time Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer, whose role is to actively promote participation and involvement. The whole Housing Division is committed to a customer focused approach in delivering housing services. This means that other officers will support participation and involvement, and work alongside the Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer.

It is important that the Council achieves good value for money from the resources it puts into initiatives to involve, engage and empower tenants. The Housing Services team will closely monitor the impact of what is spent on involvement activities, discuss the outcomes with tenants and agree what works well and not so well so that this information can be used to inform forward work plans.

We will regularly review the expenditure on tenant participation activities and provide the Borough Wide Tenants Forum with an annual budget report detailing all income and expenditure in relation to tenant participation. We will undertake an Impact Assessment with tenants, which will evaluate the cost and benefits of all involvement activities. These will be ranked using a simple evaluation system, scoring the impact of each involvement activity and a value for money assessment. The outcomes of the impact assessment will be used to inform the following year's Tenant Participation Action Plan.

FINANCIAL HELP

All tenants groups will receive, as a minimum, the following support from the Housing Services:

- Help with invitations, posters etc. for local meetings
- Payment of room hire if necessary
- Payment for specialist services (e.g., signers for British Sign Language)
- Reimbursement of reasonable expenses (e.g., transport, childcare and carers' costs)
- Office facilities, including stationary, photocopying, telephone, laptop or PC
- A small start-up grant, if required, for constituted tenants' groups
- Provision of office accommodation where facilities are available*
- Training costs – training needs will be identified, and an annual plan agreed by the Council. The Council will pay only for those courses agreed within the annual training plan.

* These office facilities are usually sited in a local communal room and are available for Community Panels and local tenant meetings.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND TENANT

Involvement Officer will organise transport and technical help for people who need it e.g., interpreters, signing for the deaf etc. All reasonable costs incurred for the above, along with any carer expenses, will be met by the Council. Any reasonable out of pocket expenses will also be considered for payment by the Council on completion of an expenses form, which is available from the Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer.

An annual budget will be made available for locally agreed neighbourhood improvements. Financial systems and local consultation will be put in place to make sure that this budget is spent wisely on projects which tenants want.

ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

The Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer will:

- Offer and coordinate useful sources of information and advice (including independent advice from organisations like the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS))
- Work with tenants and colleagues within the Council to develop and encourage support for local tenant networks
- Seek out useful sources of training and good practice from regional and national tenant involvement organisations
- Send a newsletter to all tenants containing a range of useful information, along with contact numbers for sources of further advice. The newsletter will give all tenants an update on issues discussed by the Forum and any changes made as a result of feedback from tenants.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Resources will be made available to provide training and capacity building for tenant representatives and tenant groups. Grants and other sources of external support will be explored to support the training budget. The quality of training and the benefits it brings will be evaluated as part of the annual Tenant Participation Impact Assessment.

A review of training needs will be undertaken annually. The Tenant Participation Officer will work with the Borough Wide Tenants' Forum, Community Panels and local groups to identify training needs. Where there are training opportunities that would benefit Councillors and staff, arrangements will be made for joint courses. Information about

the courses on offer will be given to the Borough Wide Tenants Forum and other tenant groups.

STANDARDS FOR MEETINGS

The Borough Wide Tenants Forum and Community Panels will each have a written Constitution that include the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct that sets out how they will conduct business. Other informal or occasional meetings will elect a person to lead the meeting and will agree the purpose of the meeting at the outset.

For all meetings an attendance sheet will be completed to ensure that a copy of minutes, along with any other information requested, is sent to everyone attending. At the Borough Wide Tenants Forum and Community Panels, the Secretary (or the Neighbourhood and Tenant Involvement Officer) will take minutes of the meeting and distribute these with any other relevant documents to all members within an agreed timescale. The Forum minutes will be distributed within ten days of the meeting taking place. The minutes will contain a clear action plan to deal with matters arising. Target dates for action points will be agreed at each meeting.

PUBLICISING MEETINGS AND MAKING THEM ACCESSIBLE

The Forum and Community Panel members will be responsible for publicising meetings in good time and details will be advertised in prominent

locations. Other local and occasional meetings will be well publicised to enable as many tenants as possible to attend. The purpose of meetings will be made clear on posters, invitations, and agendas.

The venue for any meeting should be accessible, so as to not exclude anyone for any reason (e.g., people who are disabled or partially sighted etc.) Facilities such as hearing loops should be made available, whenever possible. We will plan involvement activities at times and in locations that suit tenants and leaseholders, recognising that they are volunteers and give their time freely.

A standing invitation will be extended to all local Councillors to attend meetings in their areas. Councillors will be invited to attend Forum meetings three times a year. Minutes will also be circulated to local Councillors.

FAIR AND DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS

Meetings must be chaired in line with the agreed Code of Conduct, and it is important that everyone has the opportunity to have their say. Chairs will receive training to enable them to be effective. The Chair will ensure the meeting is run in a democratic way and that everyone's views are given consideration and discussed in a fair manner. Minutes and information will be made available.

STANDARDS FORM INFORMATION

Good quality, comprehensive and easy-to-read information is essential to achieve effective tenant involvement and engagement. Information will be widely and freely available. Tenants and the Council are committed to providing accessible information which is clear and avoids jargon and any form of racist, sexist or other biased language. Information will also be available in large print, on CD, in translation, or through face-to-face discussion.

The Council will provide tenants with any information requested, so long as it is available, and its disclosure does not breach confidentiality. An 'open government' policy will be adopted by the Council in its provision of information to tenants.

Important documents such as the Tenants Handbook and a summary of this Partnership Agreement will be provided for all tenants. A copy of this Partnership Agreement will be available on request from the Council's offices and will be available on the Council's website, there is a specific Tenant Web Page on the website. Meeting dates and minutes of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum will be placed on the website and will be available on request.

Housing Services will produce an Induction Pack for the Borough Wide Tenants Forum and Community Panels.

Information will be timely and adequate – this means that enough time will be allowed, and enough information provided for proper consultation and participation to take place. Notices of meetings or other events will be sent out well in advance.

The Council will review the feasibility of using social media for engaging with tenants such as Facebook and Twitter linking into Council-wide initiatives. It will consider new and innovative ways of communicating and interacting with tenants including texts, emails and networking applications.

STANDARDS FOR TENANTS GROUPS

A WRITTEN CONSTITUTION

The Borough Wide Tenants Forum and the Community Panels have an agreed written Constitution. This helps ensure they exercise their decision-making role effectively. The Constitution sets out the aims, powers, membership, and procedures for meetings. A Code of Conduct is attached to the Constitution.

DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICIES (INCLUDING RACE EQUALITY POLICIES)

All members of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum, Community Panels and informal Tenant Groups must uphold equal opportunity and respect diversity. Tenant Groups must promote and work

towards the elimination of all forms of racism and discrimination and strive towards good relations amongst all members of the community. Training needs will be identified and offered to enable all those involved to keep up to date with the relevant policies and legislation.

REGULAR ELECTIONS

Committee members and Officers of the Forum and Community Panels will be elected at the Annual General Meetings (AGM).

The Forum will hold their AGM at its first meeting after 1st May. Not less than 28 days' notice will be given in writing to all existing members.

Community Panels will usually hold their AGM between 1st March and 30th April each year. Not less than 28 days' notice of the AGM shall be given in writing to Members, Tenants and Leaseholders living within the area.

OPEN FINANCIAL RECORDS (AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS IF APPROPRIATE)

A Treasurer will maintain the financial records for the Forum and each Community Panel if necessary. Financial records will be open to audit by a local authority finance officer.

OTHER TENANTS MEETINGS

The Council will support informal Tenants Groups as well as the Forum and Community Panels. Officers will work with the tenants involved in these informal groups, agreeing the frequency and topics of meetings, and assisting them in meeting good standards of conduct.

MEMBERSHIP CLEARLY OPEN TO ALL TENANTS

Membership of all tenants groups will be free and open to all tenants and leaseholders regardless of age, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation, disability or religious opinions. Non-tenant residents will also be invited to attend certain meetings. However, these residents will not be able to vote on matters regarding housing issues.

BEING EFFECTIVE – MEETING OBJECTIVES AND ACQUIRING SKILLS TO WORK EFFECTIVELY

Where the Forum and Community Panels agree objectives and Action Plans, these will be reviewed from time to time. Tenants involved in decision-making groups agree to develop their skills and understanding by attending the necessary training arranged by the Council.



STANDARDS FOR HOUSING SERVICES

Tenants can play an important role in the delivery and improvement of housing services. Tenants will be consulted on an equal and open basis. Where they get involved in developing standards and improving services, they will be seen as equal partners with the Council's officers and members. However, it is recognised that the final decision rests with the Elected Members. The Council values the input of tenants in the decision-making processes and will provide feedback where appropriate.

- Developing the Council's housing policies, Strategy and Asset Management Plan.
- Renovation and maintenance improvement programmes.
- Budget, finance and rent setting.
- Management of housing services (including repairs, tenancy management and the Council's Letting Scheme, tenant involvement, neighbourhood management services and customer services).

The Council's service standards set out the standard of service you can expect to receive from the Council as a landlord. It includes the allocation of our properties as well as their management and maintenance. We will revise our customer promises annually in consultation with tenants. A copy of the standards is available from the Council offices and on our website www.northwarks.gov.uk

COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

We encourage you to complain if we get things wrong so we can put things right as soon as possible and make improvements to prevent them happening again. We also appreciate you telling us when we get things right so we can continue to provide an excellent service. The Council's complaints procedure covers all complaints relating to compliance with the Agreement. These may be about the lack of consultation or participation and could include specific comments (for example, the Council changing heating without consultation), or general (for example, the Council is not supporting Community Panels as set out in the Agreement), or a complaint about any Tenants Group. Publicity contained within the Tenants Handbook, the leaflet 'Complaints and Compliments' and the Council's website will ensure tenants are fully aware of this procedure. Complaints and compliments received will be reported to the Forum as part of performance monitoring and reporting. Compliments will be recorded and reviewed as a way of reinforcing good standards of service across the whole Borough.

5. MONITORING



THE TENANT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND ACTION PLAN

The Agreement and Action Plan sets out the aspirations and targets for Tenant Involvement. It is important that we monitor, evaluate and measure the success of this Agreement. Progress will be monitored against the Action Plan's targets and standards, as well as by using National and Local Performance Indicators. The Action Plan will be monitored and evaluated at least twice per year by the Borough Wide Tenants Forum.

HOUSING SERVICES

Key performance information will be reported to and monitored by the Borough Wide Tenants Forum at least quarterly. The Forum may identify aspects of the housing service for further scrutiny and establish a Task and Finish meetings to undertake scrutiny projects. The findings and recommendations from the tenant scrutiny meetings will be considered by the Housing Senior Management Team and a Service Improvement Action Plan agreed. The agreed action plan will be reported to and discussed with the Forum and information will be provided to monitor progress and ensure all the agreed actions are implemented.

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Surveys will be carried out in accordance with regulations specified within the government guidance. This will include an annual postal survey to a representative sample of tenants and other smaller surveys linked to specific service areas that may be conducted by a variety of methods including telephone, on-line and text and email. The results will be fed back to tenants in the Annual Report and through our newsletters which will be available on the Council's website. The Council will monitor and report on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures required by the Social Housing Regulator which will include:

- The percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided
- The percentage of tenants satisfied that we listen to their views and act upon them
- The percentage of tenants satisfied that we keep them informed about things that matter to them
- The percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management and decision making.

As well as measuring performance using the indicators above, evaluating outcomes and quality of services will be an important part of our performance framework and will include:

- Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of different approaches to tenant participation and involvement using an impact assessment
- Monitoring and assessing the outcome of consultation and surveys to find out whether or not change has resulted
- Comparing performance with other Housing organisations (this is also known as benchmarking)
- Having a system in place to address dissatisfaction or non-compliance with the Agreement
- Monitoring complaints and compliments relating to the housing service
- Monitoring Equal Opportunities to ensure that all tenants are able to be involved in a way that suits them and that there are no barriers to them doing so

6. ACTION PLAN

A detailed Forward Work Plan will be agreed annually with The Borough Wide Tenants Forum. It will be regularly reviewed at Borough Wide Tenant Forum meetings and updated to include any additional meetings or events.

THE KEY ACTIONS FOR 2023/24 ARE:

1. Review the Tenant Partnership Agreement ensuring the information is clear and concise
2. Review the information about the housing service on the Council's website to ensure it is clear accurate and up to date
3. Undertake an impact assessment to evaluate the outcome of tenant involvement and scrutiny activities
4. Establish focus groups on 1) Damp and Mould Policy 2) Complaints and Compliments 3) Anti-Social Behaviour/Noise Complaints 4) Interactive Applications, consider the benefits of implementing a mobile application that enables tenants to interact with their landlord 4) Rent Collection – consider the benefits of moving to 52 weeks annual rent collection, having regard for best practice and guidance set out by the Housing Regulator
5. Monitor the Action Plan set out in the Asset Management Plan 2023-2026 and establish task and finish groups where appropriate
6. Consider and monitor quarterly performance reports and make suggestions for improvement
7. Consider the impact of the cost of living rises and the energy crisis on NWBC tenants and ensure that tenants are aware of the support and information that is available to them
8. Consider the climate agenda and what the Council is doing that is relevant to NWBC tenants
9. Produce an Annual Report to inform tenants of the performance of Housing Services
10. Produce 2 tenant newsletters focusing on the work of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum and good news stories

7. USEFUL CONTACTS

North Warwickshire Borough Council Housing Staff

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Repairs

Telephone: 01827 715341

Email: customerservices@northwarks.gov.uk

Borough Wide Tenants Forum Members

Chair - Mr Roger Price

Email: tenantparticipation@northwarks.gov.uk

Vice Chair - Mr John Holt

Treasurer - Vacant



8. GLOSSARY

Action Plan	Summary of action to be taken - should be SMART-specific, measurable, action-orientated, realistic and time-bound
Allocations	Process of allocating empty properties
Board	A Council Board of Borough Councillors that determines policy for the local authority
Borough Wide Tenants Forum (also referred to in this document as The Forum or The Tenants Forum)	Forum made up of tenant representatives of local groups and individual tenants
Community Panel	A local group for tenants and other residents working to improve housing services and other community priorities
Customer Involvement Strategy	A strategy setting out the way the Council's Housing Service will meet its objectives to offer customer- focused services and good opportunities for tenant involvement
Decent Homes	A standard set out by the government for homes owned by councils and housing associations – includes standards for the outside of buildings (wind and weatherproof), for warmth and insulation, and for reasonably modern kitchen and bathrooms
Environmental Works	Works carried out to improve the environment or neighbourhood
Housing Ombudsman	Deals with complaints about registered providers of social housing in England, including local authorities about their landlord functions. Independent and impartial, the service is free of charge.
Housing Policy	An agreed method of achieving the objectives of the Council in relation to the provision of its housing service
Housing Strategy	Document produced by the Borough Council outlining the strategy it will undertake to meet housing need in North Warwickshire

8. GLOSSARY

Hybrid Meetings	A combination of a traditional in-person, face-to-face meeting, and a remote meeting, held over a conference call platform. Hybrid meetings usually occur when some attendees are present and available in a physical space, while others are not.
Impact Assessment	Evaluations of the outcomes from tenant participation activities undertaken
Improvement Programme	Works carried out to council homes to bring them up to modern standards (e.g., bathroom or kitchen replacement)
Leaseholder	A person who has purchased the lease of a former council dwelling (usually a flat)
Lettings	See “Allocations”
Local Tenant Group	Informal group of tenants
Mystery Shopping	A method of testing the quality of services whereby an individual (for example, an existing customer, or an independent person) will ask for information, or test out the process of reporting a repair or visit neighbourhoods to examine caretaking standards – to see how well services are being delivered
Neighbourhood Services or Wardens	A service introduced by the Council in 2006/7 to offer a responsive local service around our neighbourhoods
“North Talk”	The regular North Warwickshire Borough Council newsletter sent to all households in the Borough
Performance Plan	Document outlining performance standards to be achieved by the Council (published annually)
Scrutiny	A detailed study of an activity or service area undertaken by an independent group of tenants
Sheltered Housing	Housing provided specifically for those with special needs because of age or disability
Stakeholder	Individual or organisation with an interest in a particular service (e.g., tenants, contractors, staff, councillors)

Stock Condition Survey	A survey of the Council's properties undertaken every five years to assess the condition. This informs the Council's capital programme for improvements
Task and Finish Group	A group of tenants and nominated members of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum used for one off pieces of work about a particular aspect of the service
Tenancy Agreement	A legal agreement between a landlord and tenant setting out the obligations of both parties
Tenant Association	A group of tenants who have decided to adopt a formal constitution and form an association
Tenant Champions	Individual tenants selected from the Borough Wide Tenants Forum or Community Panels with a particular interest in or knowledge about an aspect of the housing service – they will work with staff and councillors on working groups and represent the interests of tenants on that particular topic
Tenant Partnership Agreement (also referred to in this document as the Agreement)	Agreement between the Council and its tenants describing how tenants will be involved in the decision-making processes affecting the delivery of the housing service
Tenant Partnership Advisory Service	TPAS is a not-for-profit membership organisation that provides information, consultancy, training and conferences on all aspects of involving tenants in their housing management
Tenants Link	Newsletter published by Housing Services together with an Editorial Panel of tenants distributed to all tenants
Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM)	The measures form part of a system developed by the Regulator of Social Housing to assess how well social housing landlords are doing at providing good quality homes and services
Void	Empty property awaiting allocation to new tenant

CONTACT US

Email: housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk

Telephone: 01827 715341
(between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs Telephone: 01827 715341
(calls will be directed to the lifeline centre which is
manned 24 hours a day)

Write to:
Housing Division
North Warwickshire Borough Council,
South Street,
Atherstone,
Warwickshire,
CV9 1DE

Website: www.northwarks.gov.uk

North Warwickshire Borough Council and the Borough Wide Tenants Forum are committed to working in partnership with tenants to ensure that our neighbourhoods are places where people choose to live and can contribute to their community.

If you require a version of this document in large print, audiotape or in another language, please contact us.



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

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