



TENANT INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK

1. Vision

Our vision at West Lancashire Borough Council is to deliver excellent services. We will do this by empowering our Tenants and Leaseholders and supporting them to get involved in influencing and decision making in the housing services that we deliver.

2. Tenant Empowerment

Co-production, co-regulation, transparency, and accountability are at the centre of the Consumer Standards. Providing different ways for tenants and leaseholders to get involved and engage with the Council in its delivery of Housing is a critical element. How social landlords approach this and involve tenants and leaseholders in decision making is the responsibility of the social landlord. The Council has taken a co-production approach to engage tenants and leaseholders in shaping the engagement structure.

3. Our approach to tenant and leaseholder involvement

The tenant involvement framework has links to the key priorities and outcomes from the Consumer Standards, with a focus on listening to those who live in our homes and involving them in delivery and improving services.

The framework aligns with the Government's current regulatory requirements that apply to all registered social housing landlords and supports the future aims of the Council's Customer Strategy. It takes account of the:

- Social Housing (Regulation Act) 2023
- Consumer Standards
- The Localism Act 2011
- Housing Ombudsman Code

4. Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

The Social Housing Regulation Act strengthens the powers of the Housing Regulator to tackle failing social landlords. The Act has refreshed the Consumer Standards that apply to all social housing landlords. The objective of the Social Housing Regulation Act is to drive up the quality and safety of homes, whilst ensuring tenant empowerment and transparency are a key priority for landlords. Our refreshed framework puts this at the forefront of the work we do.

5. Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

In response to the Social Housing Regulation Act, the Regulator of Social Housing has produced a Consumer Standards Code of Practice and has been consulting on the Standards with all Registered Social Landlords and tenants. The 4 key Consumer Standards that apply to social landlords are:

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

These standards have agreed required outcomes and specific expectations.

The Regulator of Social Housing has the power to routinely inspect social landlords every 4 years and impose penalties for failing landlords.

6. Background to the Framework

In November 2022 the Council undertook a Tenant Satisfaction baseline survey. As part of this survey tenants were asked if they were interested in being involved in the shaping and delivery of Housing Services and which services were of interest to them. 98 responses were received and using this information we have:

- Set up meetings and drop in events with tenants and leaseholders across our community to review and refresh our engagement model.
- Recruited a dedicated Tenant Voice Manager to work with our tenants and with the Council's wider Customer Engagement Team.
- Contacted those tenants that told us they were interested in being involved, to identify a preferred method of involvement.
- Worked across the Housing Services Teams to raise awareness of the areas that tenants would like to focus on and to identify how this will work within the framework.

7. Current Engagement Position

Your Voice West Lancashire Platform – Digital Champions

- The Council has used a digital "Your Voice West Lancashire" platform for community engagement for several years and this will continue to be an option for tenants and leaseholders.
- On review of the "Your Voice West Lancashire" platform we established that there was a low number of tenant respondents who had taken part in the four housing consultation surveys in 2022/23.
- We will continue to promote the "Your Voice West Lancashire" platform as an opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to engage and provide feedback. We have contacted tenants and leaseholders that are registered to see if they have other preferred methods, that they would like to engage in using the refreshed involvement framework approach.

8. Landlord Services Working Group (LSWG)

The Landlord's Services Working Group is a Working group that is chaired by the Lead Member for Housing.

The membership of the group consists of Elected Members (Councillors) appointed at the Annual Council Meeting and co-opted Tenants. The Working Group meets 5 times a year, and its purpose is:

For its elected members, tenant and leaseholder members to ensure co-production, co-regulation, transparency, and accountability of landlord services as required by the Regulator of Social Housing

To support the Council in carrying out its constructive challenge and oversight function.

- a. To provide regular constructive challenge assurance and oversight of all landlord services.
- b. To consider reports and recommendations from Tenant Voice and Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory Groups.
- c. To monitor Tenant Voice performance against agreed key performance indicators
- d. To ensure all relevant strategies and policies in relation to Landlord Services are in place and updated regularly.
- e. To consider all relevant consultation reports and respond appropriately.
- f. To make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee/Council, when appropriate.

A meeting was held with the tenants of the LSWG to discuss the Consumer Standards and to share the refreshed involvement proposal. The proposal was shared informally with all members of the LSWG at a meeting held on the 15th November 2023.

To optimise tenant and leaseholder involvement in the LSWG and for continuity and succession planning, we have established an involvement structure and terms of reference for the groups who will represent the views of tenants/leaseholders and review the performance of Housing Services. The groups will be organic and allow for growth as more interest and trained tenants wish to become involved at the LSWG level.

The constitution and the terms of reference for the LSWG will require reviewing in line with the framework and in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. It is intended that a review of the Framework and those tenants active in the involvement structures, will be refreshed at least every two years. This is to ensure the framework remains current and relevant to changing needs and that we continue to have a rolling program of recruiting and training people to be involved.

9. How we have involved our residents in the Engagement Framework

In addition to contacting the 98 tenants who expressed an interest in being involved, we have undertaken a survey in the community asking how people want to be engaged and in what services. We have attended community hubs/centres, schools, The Birchwood centre, older people's clubs, the Council's Customer Services Point, and we are continuing to visit various events and establishments across the Borough, to obtain feedback on the framework from tenants and leaseholders.

The opportunity to get involved was included in the October 2023 edition of the Tenant Newsletter and we encouraged tenants to contact the Tenant Voice Manager via a dedicated telephone number and email address.

During our consultation and engagement period, we have been recruiting to the involved groups based on how much time individuals can commit and building up a bank of tenants/leaseholders that want to be involved in specific topic areas only.

We have finalised the members of the formal Tenant Advisory (Scrutiny) group and completed the consultation, and membership for the Tenant Voice Group at the end of January 2024.

To ensure we were able to obtain feedback from hard-to-reach groups and those digitally excluded, we worked with multi-agency organisations to promote the opportunities for involvement. We delivered a specific session for young Council tenants receiving support and attended Independent Living Schemes across the borough, to engage with older tenants. The work being undertaken to update our tenant data will support us to use a segmentation approach to engage with tenants/leaseholders, that have a registered disability or are part of an under-represented group.

The "Your Voice West Lancashire" platform will continue to support tenants that want to get involved digitally and as part of this process we are encouraging those who cannot commit time for in person meetings, to use this platform.

A tenant and leaseholder training programme has been established, to ensure that those involved have the skills and confidence they need to participate in decision-

making. Where necessary we will ensure opportunities will be available to become a member of the nationally recognised Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

10. The role of the groups

The Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory group will use performance information and information received from the LSWG or any of the Tenant Voice wider groups e.g., feedback from the Young Housing Advisory group, Community Road shows, Leaseholder group, Housing Services teams, and the wider community, to agree the services or issue to be reviewed.

Recommendations identified for changes will be supported by the relevant Service Manager and will be submitted to the LSWG for endorsement. The final decision for any changes will be considered based on the Council's Constitution and scheme of delegation. This will determine whether the Director of Housing and Environment Services, can make the final decision or through the Council's committee structure.

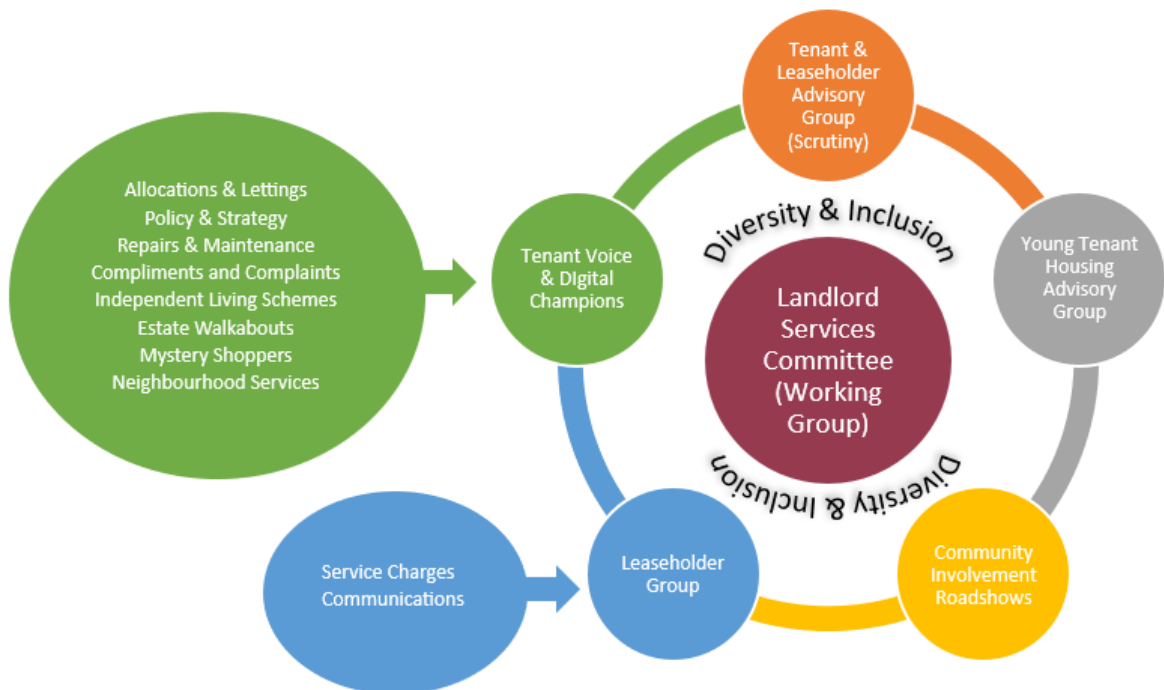
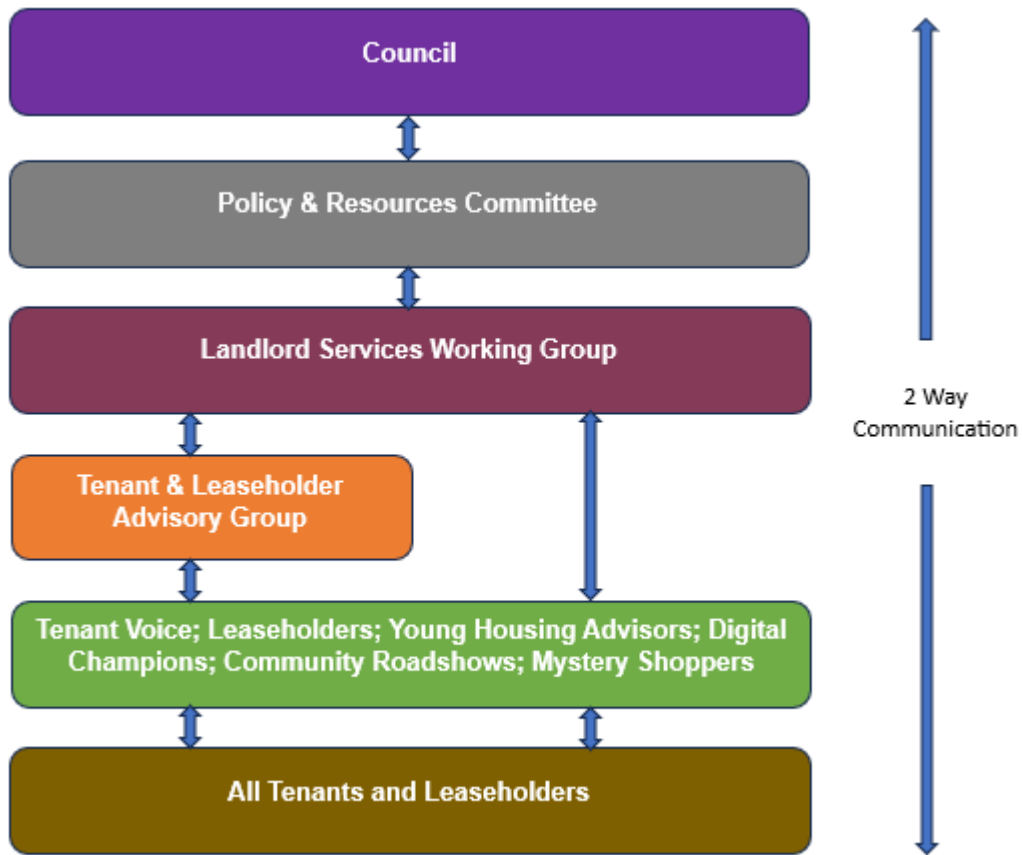
It is recommended that at least five Advisory group members or tenants from the wider groups, form part of the Landlord Services Working Group, including a minimum of one Leaseholder Member and one Independent.

Tenant Voice includes those Tenants and Leaseholders who have told us they wish to have opportunity to be engaged in one off or specific consultation themes. The group will work collaboratively with housing staff and external partners and be facilitated by the Tenant Voice Manager.

Each of the groups will be able to feedback and or make recommendations in conjunction with the relevant Housing Service lead dependent upon the service or issues. The recommendations including improvement plans will be presented to the LSWG by the relevant Service Manager and the group member.

This diagram below shows the groups relationship and direction of communication

Below is the range of involvement options with diversity and inclusion embedded in all areas. Decisions made at the Landlords Services Working Group will be passed to the Policy & Resources Committee, or Council, where appropriate



The role of each of the groups is included below

Landlord Services Working Group (existing role)

The role is for its elected members, tenant and leaseholder members to ensure co-production, co-regulation, transparency, and accountability of landlord services as required by the Regulator of Social Housing

To support the Council in carrying out its constructive challenge and oversight function.

- a. To provide regular constructive challenge assurance and oversight of all landlord services.
- b. To consider reports and recommendations from Tenant Voice and Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory Groups.
- c. To monitor Tenant Voice performance against agreed key performance indicators
- d. To ensure all relevant strategies and policies in relation to Landlord Services are in place and updated regularly.
- e. To consider all relevant consultation reports and respond appropriately.
- f. To make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee/Council, when appropriate.

It is recommended that following consultation and refresh with the LSWG group, the following is considered:

- Replace the naming of the Tenant and Resident Forum (TRF) to Tenant Voice and Tenant Scrutiny Group (TSG) to Tenant and Leaseholder Advisory group.
- To have 3 tenants, 1 leaseholder and 1 independent representative.
- 1 tenant and 1 leaseholder proposed to be appointed from the Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory Group and 2 tenants appointed from Tenant Voice.
- LSWG will review key performance indicators and will work with the Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory group to agree an annual workplan for services to be reviewed & scrutinised.
- The LSWG can delegate elements of the monitoring and reviewing of housing services to the Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory Group if required.

Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory group (Scrutiny)

The Tenant & Leasehold Advisory group will be an independent group that reviews and monitors the performance of the Council in relation to Landlord Services.

The services chosen to be reviewed will be identified from the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, key performance information and through customer feedback.

The group will make recommendations for changes. The group will have a maximum of ten and a minimum five members.

It is being recommended that 1 tenant and 1 leaseholder to be appointed from the group to attend Landlord Services Working Group.

Tenant Voice

Tenant Voice will work with staff and partner organisations to discuss Housing services as per the involvement options diagram, with a focus on finding solutions to improving processes or services. Individuals that are part of the formal group, can choose to participate as and when a specific topic or service is being reviewed, with the involved pool of tenants.

It is being recommended that 2 tenants will be appointed from the group to Landlord Services Working Group

Digital Champions (DC)

The Digital Champions (Your Voice West Lancashire platform) will continue to provide a digital consultation model for tenants and leaseholders that prefer to connect with the Council using a digital platform.

Young Housing Advisors

The young people involved in the Young Housing Advisors group will participate and influence service improvements based on their key challenges and agreed methods of engagement. (To be agreed with the group, when established).

Leaseholder group

This group will be for Leaseholders to review services and feedback on any recommended improvements. The Leaseholder representative must be an occupier.

Community Involvement Roadshows.

There will be an annual "Coffee & Cake" road show to enable the wider community to have their voices heard. This event will be attended by staff from services across the Council. We will also ensure that we work with Community Connectors and other teams within the Council, to provide additional involvement events e.g., community impact/clear up days, money advice roadshows. We will capture feedback about what is working well and what can be improved in the neighbourhoods at these events.

11. Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference has been produced for the Tenant & Leaseholder Advisory Group.

12. Budget

A tenant initiative budget is allocated to support the tenant and leaseholder involvement structure. Below is an indication of what the budget will be required to cover.

- I.T. equipment
- Training
- Out of pocket expenses
- Refreshments
- Venue Hire
- Annual appreciation event
- Gift vouchers

13. Supporting the Involvement Framework

The Tenant Voice Manager and Customer Engagement Officer will support the established groups retaining the continuity and the promotion of involvement opportunities.

They will ensure that tenant and leaseholder involvement is embedded across the Council's services. Staff from housing service areas will be expected to be involved and action outcomes from any specific topic meetings that take place that are relevant to their service. We have developed a lead 'Tenant Voice Champion' in each service area.

Training for Council officers will be implemented to ensure that they can facilitate specific meetings with tenants in their service areas. This can include TPAS, external training and inhouse training.

Training and support for involved tenants and residents will be planned and reviewed by the Tenant Voice Manager. A skills audit will be carried out with the involved tenants and leaseholder group to identify their training and support requirements. This will be linked to the services they want to be involved in improving. The Council's TPAS membership, will offer a range of courses and training for the individuals, plus an opportunity to share good practice with involved residents nationally. The government supported "Four Million Homes" tenant empowerment programme, will offer the opportunity for learning and engagement between landlords and residents.

The annual community events (Coffee & Cake roadshows) will be coordinated by the Tenant Voice Manager and delivered across the Borough with the support of staff from across the Council and housing services teams. This will help officers to build relationships and to embed a culture of listening and addressing tenants' issues.

14. Monitoring & Measuring Outcomes

A formal monitoring process and capturing of what each of the groups are aiming to achieve at the beginning of a topic or service review will be implemented.

We will continue to recruit tenants and leaseholders and provide them with training to ensure they have the confidence and skills to contribute to shaping services and be part of decision-making structures. We will have an ongoing recruitment plan for the pool of participants that want to engage in specific topics and service reviews.

The work of the advisory groups and the wider involvement groups will be published, to demonstrate how they have made a difference and improved services. This will be through the Council's housing annual report, the Council's website, and social media channels, at meetings and events.