

DRAFT V8 - Tenant Engagement Strategy for Council Tenants – Discussion Document

Welcome

Sandwell Council (SMBC) is committed to placing tenants at the centre of housing services. This Tenant Engagement Strategy sets out how the council will listen, involve, and work with tenants to shape the homes and communities they live in.

The key goals are to:

- Strengthen tenant voice in decision-making and service design
- Improve communication and transparency across all housing services
- Make it easy for everyone to get involved
- Promote accountability through regular feedback and performance monitoring
- Build trust and collaboration between tenants and the council

This strategy has been co-produced in partnership with a group of tenants and our key partner, Sandwell Community Information and Participation Services (SCIPS). It supports wider housing ambitions and reflects the commitment to quality, safety, and continuous improvement. Together, we will build a stronger, more responsive housing service—driven by the people who use it.

Introduction

SMBC housing stock consists of 27,781 homes including low and high-rise flats, houses, bungalows, and maisonettes.

Our tenants are diverse, and we want everyone – no matter where they live or who they are – to feel heard, respected and supported.

Our Housing Mission:

We will provide good quality, safe and affordable homes with access to good quality services that support residents to live independently in thriving communities

This Tenant Engagement Strategy outlines how SMBC will work in partnership with tenants, leaseholders, and residents to shape housing services and support communities. It is designed to empower tenants, enhance satisfaction, and build trust.

What is the strategy? It is a framework for meaningful partnership working between tenants and SMBC. It allows us to plan effectively to establish clear goals for tenant engagement which will support improvements in the housing service.

Who is it for? All SMBC tenants and leaseholders, regardless of age, background, or ability. Some of the activities delivered by the strategy may also benefit other residents and future tenants of Sandwell Council.

Why is it important? Tenants should be able to influence how their home and housing services are managed. To do this there needs to be improved communication and greater transparency with tenants. We need to demonstrate that the voices of tenants' matter.

Purpose: To give tenants meaningful opportunities to influence decisions, improve services, and contribute to community wellbeing.

The strategy sets out the range of opportunities for tenants to be able to influence policies and services that affect them and their communities.

Our Vision:

We share a vision with our tenants, that they know that, their views are welcomed, respected, and acted upon, and our properties and estates are places our tenants are proud to call home. We aim to:

- Rebuild trust with tenants
- Keep homes safe and well maintained
- Be inclusive and fair
- To be transparent and accountable
- Use tenant feedback and lived experiences to shape and improve the efficiency of services

As a council we know we need to improve:

- Providing timely and accurate feedback to tenant concerns
- Acting promptly, to lessons learned and viable recommendations made by tenants
- Raising awareness to the wider tenant community on the positive impact of tenant involvement
- Reaching underrepresented communities

Why Tenant Engagement Is Important to SMBC

Whilst it is a legal requirement, we also know that tenant engagement can help us build stronger communities. Involving tenants in decisions can improve housing plans, service delivery, and value for money.

Active tenant engagement will:

- Empower tenants and residents to work with Housing Services to achieve shared aims.
- Improve tenant satisfaction and trust.
- Ensure decisions reflect tenant input and lived experience.

Our Commitment:

We know that every contact with our tenants is an opportunity for engagement and therefore we commit to:

- Publishing clear service standards and performance indicators
- Requiring contractors and partners to support tenant engagement
- Offering tenants a range of opportunities for meaningful engagement.
- Promote open and honest two-way communication
- Engaging before action—this is a partnership
- Being open to feedback, challenge, and scrutiny
- Acting on tenant feedback and reporting back on outcomes
- Future projects will be shaped by tenant participation
- We will make reasonable adjustments for tenants who need extra support to get involved
- We will cover all reasonable travel and other agreed expenses to ensure involved tenants and leaseholders do not suffer financial pressures from being involved in engagement activities. Payments will be made on the day of the activity.

Embedding Tenant Engagement in Practice

We will embed engagement across our housing service through:

- The development and implementation of Tenant Engagement Service Standards
- Mandatory staff training and internal briefings on engagement principles
- Decision-making influenced by tenant input will be documented and shared.
- Publishing newsletters and using social media to share updates
- Offering Training and development opportunities for involved tenants

- Hosting town-based and local events
- Providing clear updates: “What you told us – What we did”

Our Core Values

- Respect, accountability,
- Honesty, transparency, and accessibility
- Equality and inclusivity
- Realistic goals
- Teamwork and openness
- Engagement before change
- A focus on tenant priorities

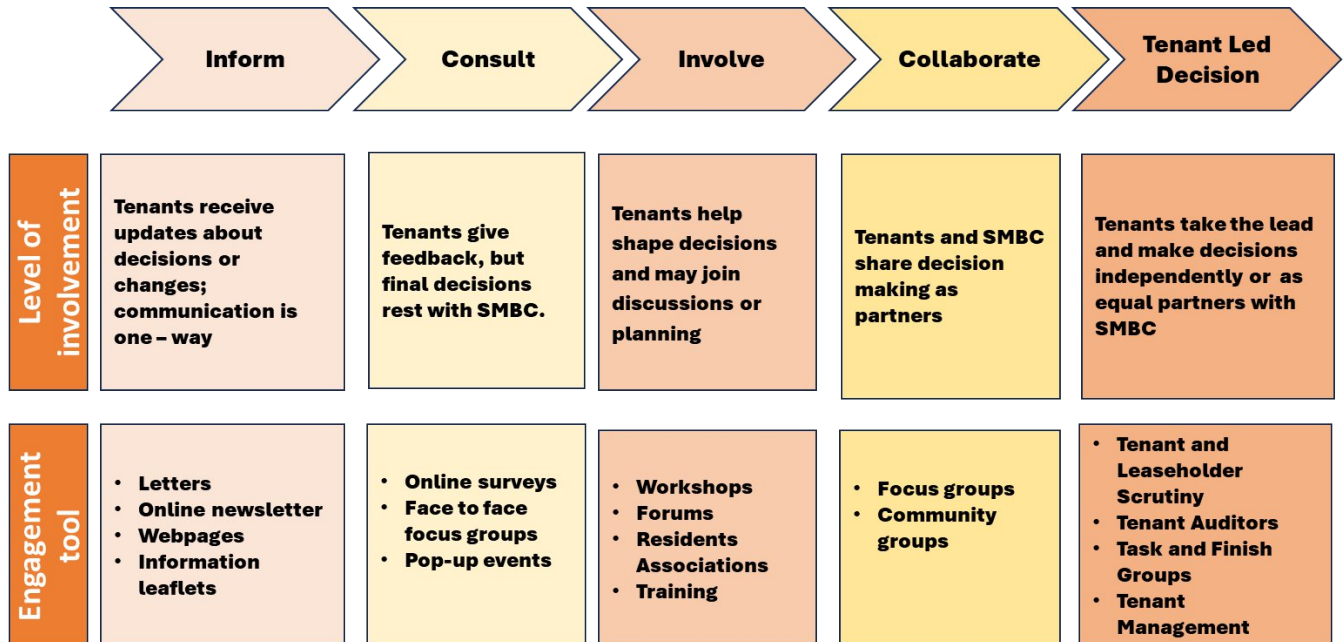
What does this Tenant Engagement strategy mean for me?

As well as contributing to improving housing services, getting involved will give you the opportunity to meet new people; be part of decision making and learn new skills that can be used in other areas of your life.

Opportunities to Get Involved

We currently provide multiple ways for tenants and leaseholders to get involved requiring different levels of commitment:

Here are examples of **levels of tenant engagement**, ranging from minimal to full involvement:

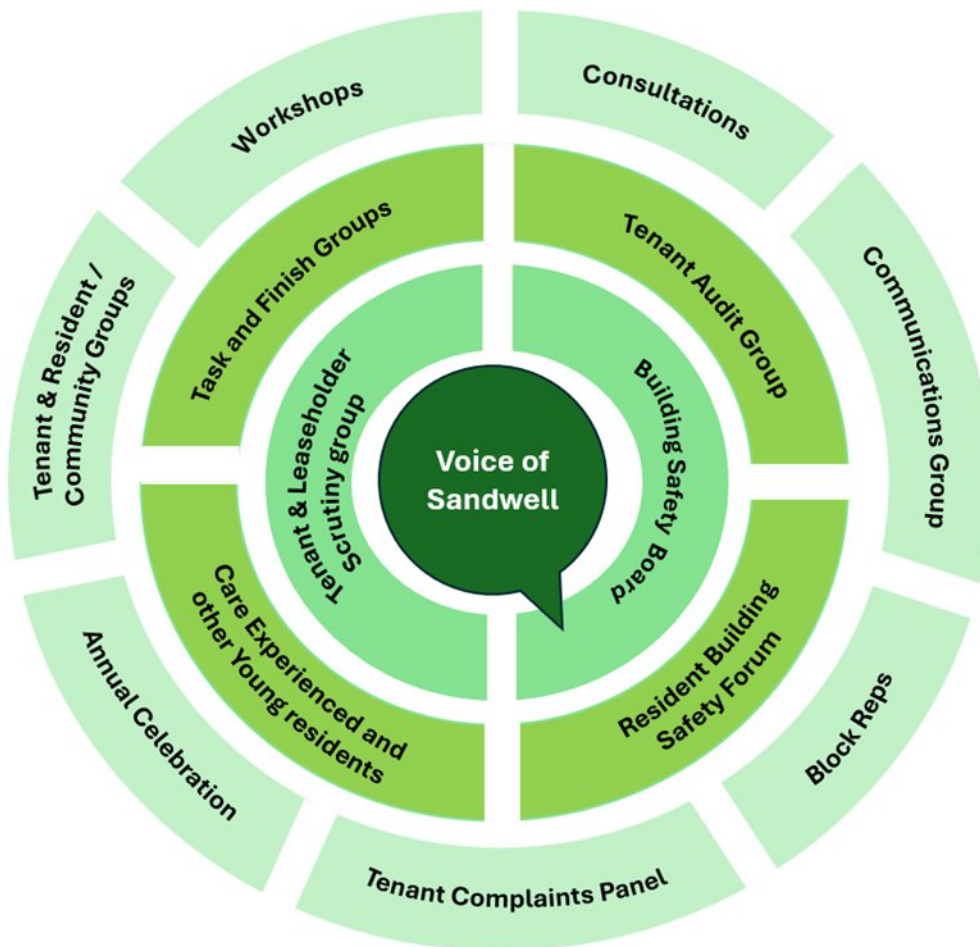


Each step reflects a deeper commitment to tenant participation, with **Empowering** representing full autonomy and leadership.

GET INVOLVED!

Tenant Engagement Framework

The model below shows the various ways SMBC tenants and leaseholders can get involved.



Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group: A group of residents who meet regularly with senior managers within housing and review the performance of housing services to hold the council to account.

Tenant Audit Group: Review operational services and make recommendations for improvements.

Resident Building Safety Forum: Ensure residents in high rise blocks have a say on all issues relating to building safety including fire, asbestos, gas, water etc.

Youth Involvement: Engage with younger tenants and residents.

Task and Finish group: Group set up to co-produce a policy or strategy over a specific period of time.

TRA/Community Groups: bring tenants and residents in local areas together to support community activities and contribute to the improvement of their neighbourhoods. (This service is delivered by our partner Sandwell Community and Information Services (SCIPS)).

Consultation: Completion of surveys, via text, email, or post.

Communication: We have recently set up a communications group to ensure that the letters, leaflets, and other materials we produce are easy to understand.

Workshops: More in-depth consultation with tenants, leaseholders, or residents usually in person.

Tenants Complaints Panel: We plan to establish a panel which will review closed complaints to review what if any lessons need to be learned to prevent further occurrences.

Annual Tenant and Leaseholder Conference: Attendance at annual tenant conference where various housing related topics are discussed, and tenants and leaseholders can share their experiences.

Key Performance Indicators

The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) requires us annually measure the satisfaction of our tenants and leaseholders in the following areas:

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

To gather this information the council contracts an independent market research company to contact a random sample of tenants from across the borough to find out how they feel about the measures above. The council does not know which individual tenants have been contacted.

Results of the annual tenant satisfaction survey are published online.

<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/housing/tenant-satisfaction-measures-2024>

In addition, internally we also measure engagement with tenants as follows:

TE1 Tenant Engagement Satisfaction Survey – Annual overall satisfaction with the overall service provided by SCIP's ¹

TE2 The number of tenants and residents that have actively engaged with us during the Quarter

CE1 Number of residents / service users involved in formal/ informal consultation groups (including digital) each quarter

¹ (SCIPS is a local community organisation managed by volunteers including SMBC tenants which is commissioned by the council to offer support, advice and guidance to new and existing Tenants and Resident Associations and community members)

To support the implementation of the new Tenant Engagement strategy we will be introducing two additional internal measurements:

TE3 – SMBC Tenant Satisfaction Survey – Annual overall satisfaction with engagement opportunities provided by SMBC

CE2 diversity of residents / service users involved in formal/ informal consultation (where information is supplied by resident/service user)

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Participation rates, satisfaction scores, diversity of engagement
- Annual review and reporting
- Clear feedback loops to show how tenant and/or leaseholder input has shaped outcomes

Conclusion

This strategy is all about making sure tenants are heard. Whether you're just looking for updates or want to help shape decisions, there's a place for you to get involved. We're committed to working together with tenants to build safer, stronger, and more inclusive communities. Your ideas, feedback, and leadership matter—and they help us improve the services you rely on. So, whether it's joining a panel, filling out a survey, or leading a project, we welcome your involvement.

Together, we can make a real difference.