

Resident Involvement Strategy

2019- 2022

DATE: September 2019

Version 4

East Devon – an outstanding place

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The tenant participation team and resident volunteers wish to thank the following groups for their invaluable comments, suggestions and support for the Strategy Review Consultation Exercise.

List of bodies consulted:

- Tenants Involvement Forum
- Joint Community Action Panel (JCAP)
- Repairs and Maintenance Group
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- Designated Tenant Complaint Panel
- Conference Committee
- Editorial Group
- Wider Consultation – Focus Groups
- Residents who attended training sessions
- All Tenant and Residents Associations
- Housing Staff

We want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who took the time from your busy lives to make comments regarding our priorities and targets for 2019 -2022.

The tenant participation team appreciates and values these contributions, which are geared towards ensuring equal access and satisfaction of resident involvement for all people.

Without all your support, co-operation and contributions we would not have been successful in developing the priorities and targets to such a high standard.

Thank you.

This strategy sets out our commitment to developing the range of ways and extent to which residents (by which we mean tenants and leaseholders) can become involved in the housing service. We constantly strive to develop and improve our services by involving our tenants.

The Resident Involvement Strategy is part of a suite of integrated housing documents that sit under the Regulatory Standards that registered providers of social housing must meet, which is regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>).

The two main standards are: Economic standards, Consumer standards

The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard – 2017 comes under the Consumer Standard and states the following:

Consumer service, choice and complaints:

Registered providers shall provide tenants with accessible, relevant and timely information about:

- a) How tenants can access services
- b) The standards of housing services their tenants can expect
- c) How they are performing against those standards
- d) The service choices available to tenants, including any additional costs that are relevant to specific choices
- e) Progress of any repairs work
- f) How tenants can communicate with them and provide feedback
- g) The responsibilities of the tenant and provider
- h) Arrangements for tenant involvement and scrutiny.
- i) Providers shall offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint and set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about performance against the standards, and details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint

Involvement and empowerment:

Registered providers shall support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for involvement and empowerment, including by:

- a. supporting their tenants to exercise their Right to Manage or otherwise exercise housing management functions, where appropriate

b. supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them

c. the provision of timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in a form which registered providers seek to agree with their tenants. Such provision must include the publication of an annual report which should include information on repair and maintenance budgets

d. providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.

2.2.2 Registered providers shall consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery. This shall include how performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants and arrangements for reviewing these on a periodic basis.

2.2.3 Where registered providers are proposing a change in landlord for one or more of their tenants or a significant change in their management arrangements, they shall consult with affected tenants in a fair, timely, appropriate and effective manner. Registered providers shall set out the proposals clearly and in an appropriate amount of detail and shall set out any actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) to tenants in the immediate and longer term. Registered providers must be able to demonstrate to affected tenants how they have taken the outcome of the consultation into account when reaching a decision.

2.2.4 Registered providers shall consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.

Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants:

Registered providers shall demonstrate how they respond to tenants' needs in the way they provide services and communicate with tenants

East Devon District Council Resident Involvement Strategy

When we use 'resident' we mean East Devon District Council tenants and leaseholders.

Section 1

1.1 Introduction

This section explains:

- Why we have this strategy
- The Housing Service's Tenant Involvement Vision
- Why residents are involved
- Our involvement principles
- Who our partners are

This strategy is produced in two versions; a plain language short brochure for all residents, and this detailed resource package for people who are, or who intend to become, involved.

Residents and officers have worked together to write the Resident Involvement Strategy which contains our strategy as well as an action plan for us to monitor together going forward, to make sure contents of the strategy are achieved.

Homes England, under the Regularity Framework, requires landlords to involve residents and has established standards for involvement. Also see 1.4

The information contained within this pack is built on a determination to work well and to make improvements together, to build mutual respect and a better future for housing and communities.

A new structure for resident involvement is being implemented focusing involvement opportunities on achieving outcomes and improvement in service delivery.

The structure is aligned to the national regulatory framework standards and continues to provide an opportunity for information sharing and challenge at a variety of levels, including in depth reviews by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

More residents are involved in more activities than ever before, and we are determined to continue making progress as we plan to continue trying new involvement methods, while keeping the elements of the current structure that are working well to help residents influence and shape services. Plans will be actively monitored and targets regularly reviewed. These will develop, becoming better and more ambitious over time.

1.2 The Housing Service believes customers' ideas make a difference

The Housing Service's way of working involves putting customers at the forefront of all we do. We currently offer residents a range of engagement opportunities for consultation, participation and involvement, along with details of our governance arrangements.

These standards for engagement are detailed in appendix 1.

We want to provide the kind of service that customers really need, but we can only achieve this with the help of residents and leaseholders living on council estates, who know better than anyone, the type of improvements needed in their homes and on their estates.

Before decisions are taken and changes are made, we need to know what people think. As a council resident or leaseholder, your opinions will be sought on a number of issues, in a variety of ways, and you may see that your good ideas make a positive difference. We will keep you informed with articles in our Housing Matters magazine which you receive three times a year and is on the East Devon District Council's website.

Our main objective remains to continue to improve landlord services for our residents. The plan for achieving this includes:

- giving everyone the chance to have a say
- seeing stronger, supportive, more connected communities through involvement
- working together to be sure the best service is provided
- Working together to ensure services continue to improve, are effective and efficient.

1.3 Why do we involve you?

Our vision for the service is to deliver the best local authority Housing Service. We will achieve this by putting customers first and foremost.

Obtaining the views of residents and is vital in helping us to gain a better understanding of changing needs and aspirations leading to a constant improvement of services.

By involving people at whatever level they choose, there are many benefits for the Housing Service, residents and leaseholders. These benefits include:

- increasing customer satisfaction
- having policies and procedures that are fit for purpose
- Continuous improvement in service delivery
- creating sustainable communities
- having a role in decision making, helping people gain a better understanding, why some changes are gradual and some happen overnight.

1.4 The Tenant Empowerment

Programme

The Homes England's Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012 on the following link: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/homesengland

1.5 Our eight involvement principles

1. Open information Residents will receive regular magazines. They will also have, on request, access to information on all housing matters. We want people to have the information they need to give fully informed views on the service they receive.

2. Residents will decide their own depth and degree of involvement. The housing service would like to see residents involved at all levels, and in everything we do. But what residents get involved in will be up to them.

3. Everything in housing is open to influence

The council has certain statutory legal duties and, occasionally, things will be confidential. Beyond this, if something is of interest, residents can get involved.

There are no topics or services that are off limits.

4. Involvement is everyone's business

While the council has a specialist tenant participation team, all sections and staff in the housing service have important roles to play in our partnership with residents.

5. Early enough influence

We aim to start talking together before issues have been decided. Members of the Service Review Groups and Focus Groups will have the opportunity to influence issues at the earliest stage, before any formal decisions are made.

6. Getting everyone involved

We want everyone to have a chance to take part and will take steps to encourage people who are not properly represented amongst our current volunteers.

We want to remove barriers which can slow or prevent the participation of young people, young families, gay/lesbian couples, trans-gender, members of black or minority ethnic and faith communities, people with disabilities or with caring responsibilities.

7. Demonstrating that everyone's views have been taken into account and providing feedback

Local people need to know what happens next. We will provide feedback verbally, digitally, by letter or email and sometimes via newsletters. It is impossible to please everyone all of the time, but we will provide the outcome of consultations making sure recognition is given to groups/panels for their achievements.

8. Planning for successful involvement – and keeping the plans on track

Residents and the Housing Service will make and monitor joint plans. We want involvement to have a positive impact. Volunteers must feel their time and efforts are usefully spent.

Section 2

2.1 Opportunities for Involvement - Ways of Getting Involved

In this agreement when 'we' is used, our meaning is usually the Housing Service and residents, working together.

Any council resident or leaseholder living on council estates can get involved.

2.1.1. Ways of being involved

Getting involved can mean going to regular meetings, or becoming a committee member.

Many people find this method of involvement too formal or simply do not have the time or commitment for it. These options involve meetings with differing degrees of formality, but we will offer digital options as well for those who prefer them. They are straightforward ways and means of getting your views heard and making sure they are taken into account.

We want to make your involvement easy, not create obstacles. We want you to be able to be involved at times that are suitable to you and are developing more opportunities, including by digital on our website and social media, thereby providing you with 24 hour access.

2.1.2. Our invitation to all residents to become involved

There is a 'menu' of involvement opportunities - different ways in which residents can, and do, influence and shape the Housing Service and make it better.

You can become involved by:

- reading the letters we write to you
- reading the regular articles in Housing Matters magazine
- visiting our website www.eastdevon.gov.uk
- looking at our Facebook site by clicking on the link on our website, or searching East Devon Housing on your Facebook page: EDDC tenant participation
- Reading or commenting on our Twitter feed: EDDC home & people
- making a suggestion
- taking part in telephone surveys
- filling in questionnaires and consultations via traditional methods and online
- Coming to events and one off focus groups

- attending the Housing Review Board meetings held in public
- inspecting your neighbourhood
- coming to the residents' promotional events
- working with a local Tenants' and Residents' Association
- attending training courses
- coming to other housing-related meetings
- working with other voluntary agencies with a housing interest
- using the resident portal, email or via our website at tenantparticipation@eastdevn.gov.uk

....simply telling us what you think.

We will always listen

2.1.3. Promoting the involvement message

This is an important message and an important part of our strategy is to ensure it is communicated effectively by:

- Digital means: for example website and social media
- distributing copies of the Involvement Strategy brochure to every resident, and making copies available in all offices and community centres
- giving new residents information about involvement and its importance, when taking up their tenancies
- reinforcing the message in our publicity and promotions
- continuing to promote our message to all staff
- engaging with East Devon District Council's diverse communities. To help with this, we promote our message to agencies which work with all sections of the community in the district.

2.2. The parts of the service residents can become involved in

Examples of the housing services are listed on the following table and are open to resident involvement.

Some are already being shaped by residents' views.

Section 2.5 provides more information about some of the opportunities available. Suggestions of who will be involved and digital/consultation options are not exhaustive.

How you can get involved

Structures for involvement

(For council residents, leaseholders and where applicable, other local residents)

Anti-social behaviour policies and procedures

Who will be involved?

- Estate Management Officers
- JCAP (Joint Community Action Panel)
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP)
- Housing Review Board (HRB)
- Community Development Workers (CDWs)
- Police
- Social Services
- Mobile Support Officers
- Agencies
- Residents

Digital Options

- Email
- Texts
- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Meetings leave a lot to be desired

Consultation Options

- JCAP
- Policies
- Leaders
- Community Impact Assessment
- Neighbourhood consultation, some affected more than others, listen to those affected
- Letters
- Magazine
- Consultation (open days/face to face)
- Questionnaires
- Need new group

Management of local housing services

Who will be involved?

- Staff
- Residents
- HRB
- JCAP

Digital Options

- Email
- Texts
- Website
- Twitter
- Meetings leave a lot to be desired
- Magazine

Consultation Options

Feedback forums

Policies and procedures for repairs and maintenance, rent collection and rent arrears, empty homes

Who will be involved?

- Service Review Group (SRG)
- Staff
- Residents
- HRB
- Focus Group

Digital Options

- Email
- Texts
- Website
- Twitter
- Meetings leave a lot to be desired
- Magazine

Consultation Options

- Meeting with SRG's.
- Encourage residents to report problems early.
- Encourage residents to use Whistle Blowing policy if they suspect cheating.

Tenancy management and sustainability issues, tenancy agreements and conditions

Who will be involved?

- SRG
- Staff
- Residents
- HRB
- TSP
- Focus Group

Digital Options

- Email
- Texts
- Website
- Twitter
- Meetings leave a lot to be desired
- Magazine

Consultation Options

- Meetings – take on board residents' opinions/views & experiences.
- Formalise resident meetings (minutes & voting) HRB

Housing benefits, debt prevention and recovery procedures

Who will be involved?

- SRG
- Rental team
- Benefits team
- Senior staff
- HRB
- Focus Group

Digital Options

- Email
- Texts
- Website
- Twitter
- Meetings leave a lot to be desired
- Magazine

Consultation Options

- Meetings
- Cause and effect of debt in magazine (article)
- Identify possible problem residents

Leaseholder issues and charges

Who will be involved?

- Property & Assets team
- Leaseholders
- Finance team
- HRB

Digital Options

- Magazine
- Email
- Website

Consultation Options

- Set up consultation with leaseholders

Supported housing services

Who will be involved?

- JCAP
- Home Safeguard
- Mobile Support Officers
- HRB

Digital Options

- Magazine
- Email
- Website

Consultation Options

- Meeting with all groups. Listen to residents affected.

MSO's

Housing services and performance strategies, including Best Value or continuous improvement, and arrangements for monitoring and reviewing performance, addressing shortcomings and remedial action

Who will be involved?

- Strategic Lead
- HRB
- SRGs
- Regular focus group
- Staff
- JCAP
- Focus Group
- TSP
- External agencies
- Service Lead

- Residents

Digital Options

- Magazine
- Email
- Website

Consultation Options

- Meeting
- Monitor Performance
- Collection of data throughout the year.
- Collection of data to highlight shortcomings
- Other residents
- Resident Involvement Action Group
- Resident lead group
- Ask residents what they think
 - Magazine survey (data collection)

Setting, monitoring and reviewing services, performance standards and targets for housing management services. Ground maintenance, and cleaning.

Who will be involved?

- Strategic Lead
- SRG/forum
- Streetscene
- HRB
- JCAP
- Scrutiny
- Focus Group

Digital Options

Mystery Shoppers

Consultation Options

- Need new SRG to cover Streetscene
- Collection of data throughout the year.

Collection of data to highlight shortcomings

Developing the council's housing policy and strategy

Who will be involved?

- Tenant Scrutiny Panel
- Focus Group

Consultation Options

- Projects and focus groups

Drawing up and appraising options for housing investments and improvements

Who will be involved?

- JCAP
- SRG's
- Focus Group

Digital Options

- Repairs SRG

Consultation Options

- Tenants & Residents Associations (TRAs)

Drawing up the council's capital and renovation programmes

Who will be involved?

- HRB
 - TAFFS (Task & Finish Forum set by HRB)
 - Focus Group
- Repairs SRG

Digital Options

Repairs SRG

Consultation Options

- With other involved groups
- SRG's
- Feedback forms

Developing and implementing regeneration and improvement programmes

Who will be involved?

- HRB
- Residents
- Staff
- SRG's
- Focus Group
- External (Grenfell recommendations to be implemented)

Digital Options

Repairs SRG

Digital Portal

Consultation Options

- Specific groups
- Questionnaires
- Consultation with residents – choice of products
- TRAs consultation & choices

Budgets and finances

Who will be involved?

- HRB
- Focus Group
- HRA

Digital Options

Digital forum

Consultation Options

- Budget Group
- Focus Group

Allocations and lettings policies and procedures

Who will be involved?

- HRB
- SRG's
- Rental team
- Focus Group

Digital Options

Portal

Bidding process online

Consultation Options

- DTCP
- Homeless people

Proposals to contract housing services to other providers including through partnering contracts

Who will be involved?

- SRG's
- HRB
- Local residents
- Focus Group – as new repairs contract

Digital Options

Focus groups online

Consultation Options

- Other groups
- General needs & sheltered
- New resident group
- Question contractors – commitment to standards

Neighbourhood issues which affect residents' homes or the management of housing services

Who will be involved?

- JCAP
- Local residents
- HRB
- Agency involvement

Digital Options

Website

Facebook forum

Twitter hashtag

Consultation Options

- Need new group
- Questionnaires
- Face to face
- Meetings with local residents

Customer care

Who will be involved?

- SRG's
- All staff
- Residents
- Every group
- Everybody

Digital Options

- Website
- Social media
- E forum & surveys

Consultation Options

- Meeting & consultation with managers
- Keeping standards high, meeting obligations

Environmental works

Who will be involved?

- Local residents
- Estate management team
- Local environment groups
- JCAP

Digital Options

- Website
- Social media
- E forum & surveys

Consultation Options

- JCAP
- Focus Groups

Arrangements for providing information

Who will be involved?

- SRG proof reading of leaflets
- TP focus group
- TP team

Digital Options

- Website
- Social media
- E forum & surveys

Consultation Options

- Meeting SRG

Arrangements for resident consultation, involvement and influence

Who will be involved?

- TP
- Make every effort to include residents

Digital Options

- Website
- Social media
- E forum & surveys

Consultation Options

- Make consultation easy to take part in and inform those involved of the outcome of the consultation

Arrangements for complaints, comments and compliments with remedial action

Who will be involved?

- DTCP
- TP
- Focus Group

Digital Options

- Website
- Social media
- E forum & surveys

Consultation Options

- Housing Matters magazine
- Continue to encourage complaints and be seen to act on them.
- Encourage residents to comment on issues and pay compliments where earned

Community Events, projects and social value

Who will be involved?

- SRG's
- CDWs
- Tenant Participation

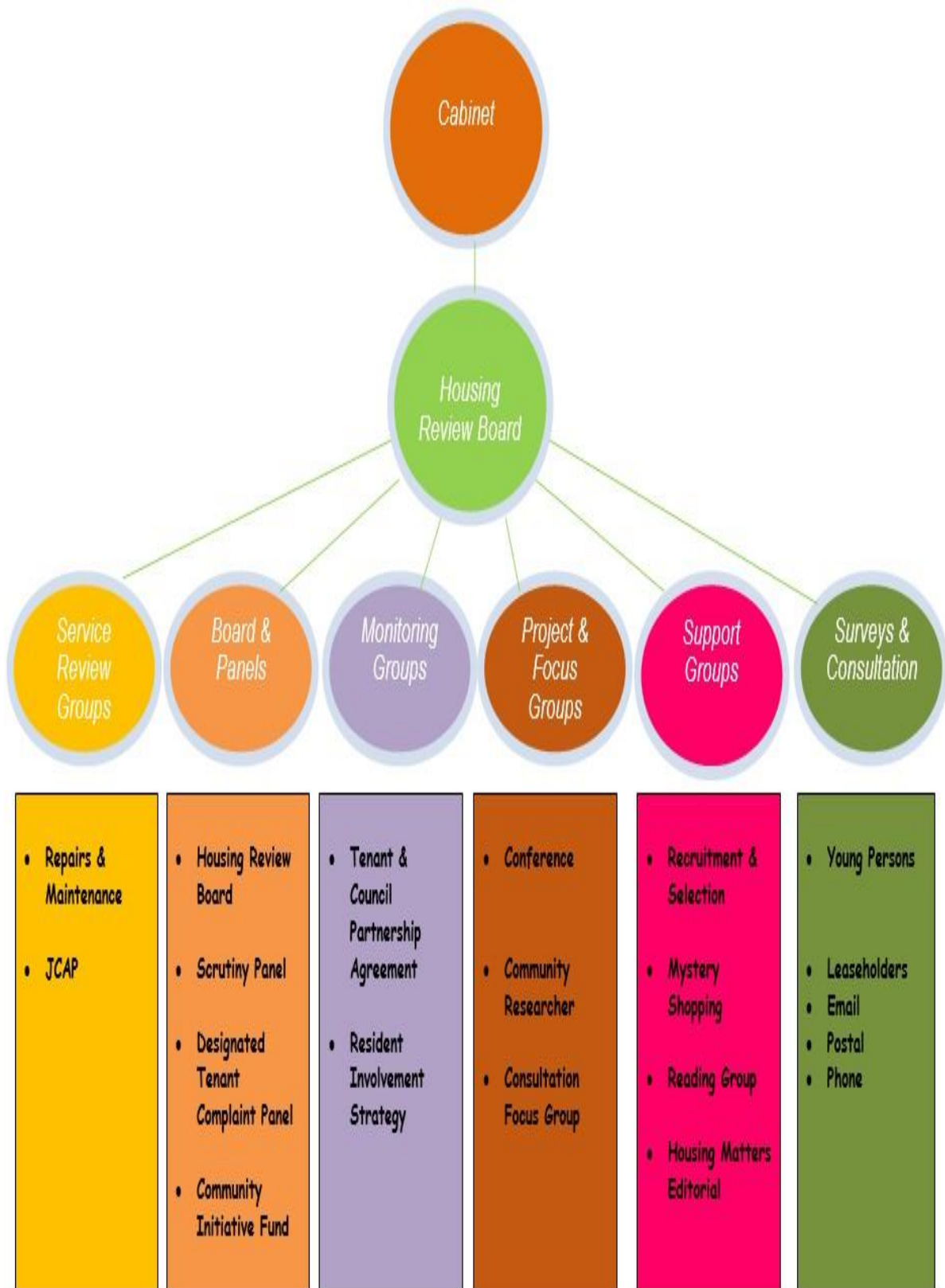
Digital Options

- Website
- Social media
- E forum & surveys

Consultation Options

- The events themselves

2.3 Structure for resident involvement from consultation/review



2.4 Our structure for involvement

The previous diagram shows the current involvement structure, the groups available and the way they relate to local issues. As part of our regular monitoring and review, the diagram will be updated and modified from time to time in line with ideas brought forward by residents and staff.

Updates will be loaded onto the council's website for customers to download. They will also be available from the tenant participation team.

2.5 How the involvement structure works

Time Commitment

This section helps give you an idea of the minimum time and commitment that an activity can take, and how much influence your involvement can have on services. Some of these activities can lead to a wider involvement and time commitment. This is however, optional. Activities are split into those that require a monthly commitment, quarterly commitment, those that happen once or twice a year and the last section includes activities where you choose how often you get involved.

2.5.1 Designated Tenants Complaint Panel (DTCP)

This panel which tries to resolve resident complaints at a local level. The complaint panel also monitors formal complaints and makes suggestions on how to improve customer satisfaction. If a resident remains dissatisfied with the council's response following stages one and two of the formal complaints procedure residents have the right to take their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman, and/or to the DTCP in the meantime. This group reports directly to the Housing Review Board.

2.5.2 Independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel is independent of other parts of the involvement structure and has its own Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct. The Panel undertakes reviews to investigate areas of concern, take an unbiased view of services to drive up performance, and give advice and suggestions to influence standards and improve service delivery. This group make recommendations directly to the Housing Review Board.

2.5.3 Housing Review Board (HRB)

The board was set up in 2006 and consists of five councillors, five resident and leaseholder representatives and two independent community representatives. The board considers matters relating to our landlord and housing management functions. It advises our executive board on housing policy and operational practice where this affects residents and leaseholders. It monitors

service delivery and promotes good practice. The Board meets at least 4 times a year, during the daytime, with other interim meetings also possible.

2.5.4 Joint Community Action Panel (JCAP)

Reviews the work of the Estate Management and the Housing Support Services. Takes part in estate visits to identify areas for improvement and reviews performance information. Produces a yearly plan of work for the group. They will consider value for money in these areas of the service. This review group is made up of both residents and staff. Monitor work coming out of walkabouts.

2.5.5 Repairs and Maintenance Group

Reviews the work of the Property & Assets team including programmed work and the performance of the contractors. Be involved in the decision making process at the earliest opportunity, in the setting of the annual budgets to maintain value for money and identify areas for improvement. To be actively involved in the obtaining of goods (doors, kitchens, bathrooms etc.) and services and the choices available for all residents. This review group is made up of both residents and staff.

2.5.6 Editorial Group

The Housing Matters magazine is produced three times a year, which is sent out to residents and leaseholders.

Residents, staff and councillors are asked to submit articles of interest to be included in the magazine. The magazines are put together and edited by an editorial panel made up of both residents and staff.

2.5.7 Conference Committee

Conference Committee organise a resident's conference once a year, open to all residents and leaseholders, which includes refreshments and a light lunch. Residents have an opportunity to meet staff and ask questions, take part in debates and share their views with managers.

Each year East Devon District Council residents hold a conference in a different area across the district. The committee are involved in finding the right venue, catering and subjects for the conference. The aim is to find the right formula to encourage more residents to come along.

If you have any ideas then we need you on this group.

2.5.8 Tenant Inspectors

Tenant Inspectors help monitor the quality of workmanship and standard of the service provided by our day to day repairs contractors and work alongside officers to ensure agreed standards are maintained.

2.5.9 Resident Involvement Strategy Monitoring Group

We have drawn up an agreement and strategy with our residents setting out our commitment to resident involvement with the Housing Service. This group will be constituted and will meet quarterly to monitor the strategy.

2.5.10 Join or start a tenants/residents association

A tenant/resident association is a group of people living in an area, block or street who have come together to take up issues of common concern in relation to their housing, community and general environment. As a resident living in your area you automatically qualify for membership.

The associations enable residents to have a say on housing and estate matters, to help towards building a friendly, caring community, to exercise choice in how services are delivered, and to find out more about how we work. Some of the projects tackled by associations include the landscaping of communal areas, securing a community meeting place, improving shared lighting, fundraising for a children's play area, and car parking problems.

2.5.11 Recruitment and Selection Panel

Be involved in recruiting new housing staff and acknowledge the resident perspective will help to recruit employees who are committed to customer focused services and resident involvement. Staff and residents on the interview panels are considered equal members of the recruitment process and receive the same training.

2.5.12 Community Initiative Fund Panel

Residents who have a project or an idea that benefits the residents of East Devon District Council can apply for a grant from the Community Initiative Fund. Each application is passed to the Community Initiative Grant Panel to approve or refuse. The applications are posted or emailed to panel members so this can be done from your home.

2.5.13 Focus Groups

Why not volunteer a little of your time for one off focus groups. We would call on you from time to time to help us improve and refine aspects of our services.

2.5.14 Annual Garden Competition

Each year we organise a garden competition that is open to council residents. There are a number of categories (for example, best overall garden, children's garden, containers and hanging baskets) with prizes awarded for each one. The competition is advertised in the spring edition of the Housing Matters magazine. Judging usually takes place in July with a prize-giving ceremony in September.

2.5.15 Surveys

Sometimes we may contact residents to ask for their opinions of the Housing Service. It may be about the area or their homes. We may ask how the service has performed, or ask for ideas or views. Surveys are carried out digitally or by post, door to door, by telephone, at community events, online, via Facebook, Twitter or a survey link.

2.5.16 Key Player Database

The Key Player register is a database, or record, of everyone who is interested in being consulted, or wants to be involved in resident involvement in some way. All the Housing Service's residents or leaseholders are entitled to register.

You choose the topics on which you want to comment and you choose how you want to be involved. You can choose which subjects you would like to be involved in from a list, on pages 12 to 26.

You can choose to be contacted about all of the above (and more), or just the one area that really interests you. The choice is yours. You can then decide how you would like to be consulted, from a range of options such as:

- Questionnaires and digital or telephone surveys
- Focus or working groups
- Roadshows and events
- Online or email surveys

You can choose to take part in one or more of the options available to you, by the Getting Involved form.

Residents who have registered on the Key Player Register will be contacted from time to time and asked for their views and opinions, regarding specific topics.

These views will be collated and will be passed on to project or focus groups to help the members of those groups make decisions.

So your views will, and do, make a difference.

Interested? If you want to register to be part of the Key Player database, ring 01395 517453 and ask to speak to a member of the tenant participation team or email

tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk

Section 3

3.1 Involvement Priorities and Targets 2019 – 2022

Resident Involvement priorities following consultation

PRIORITY 1

Increase customer participation to support evolution of service provision

1.1

Aim

Ensure structures are in place to allow residents to monitor performance of the housing service

Target/s

- Resident involvement framework provides a menu of opportunities for involvement
- Performance feedback through magazine and website
- Agreed performance indicators at Project and Focus Groups
- Groups to expand their knowledge by the use of wider consultations
- Providing opportunities for volunteers to benchmark performance with other housing providers and seek out best practice
- Provide an annual report

How this is monitored/measured

- Number of service changes and reviews recorded
- Through resident involvement
- Number of residents who provide feedback through a resident involvement opportunity
- House mark benching information presented annually to Housing Review Board and customer surveys
- Annual report
- Performance information available via the web and resident portal
- Agree performance indicators for every group

1.2

Aim

Ensure there are methods of involvement in place that allow residents to monitor the standard of estate management and safety in local communities

Target/s

Develop with JCAP (add to their 12 month work plan)

How this is monitored/measured

- Total number of walks and actions issued. Monitored JCAP.
- Total number visits and satisfaction forms received/monitored and evaluated

1.3

Aim

Resident recruitment to resident participation activities

Target/s

- 10 promotional activities per year
- Information to be given on sign up for new residents
- Information left after new tenancy visits at 6 weeks

How this is monitored/measured

- 100% Information to be given on sign up for new residents
- 100% Information left after new resident visits at 6 weeks

1.4

Aim

Provide support to Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TRAs)

Target/s

- Provide information to all TRAs of support available.

- Provide all TRAs with an opportunity for an annual review

How this is monitored/measured

- Number of TRAs accessing funding and support
- Annual Resident Satisfaction Survey/impact assessments

1.5

Aim

Ensure mechanisms are in place to feedback impact of resident involvement to active and non-active customers

Target/s

- Annual Report
- Articles in magazine
- Residents' Conference

'Thank you' event

- Feedback to be made through the following methods: rent statement, website, Twitter, Facebook or results of consultation published
- Report to HRB

How this is monitored/measured

Service Review Groups

Focus Groups

PRIORITY 2

Provide support to individual residents and Tenants' and Residents' Associations to give them the necessary skills, knowledge, information and resources to enable effective involvement

2.1

Aim

Provide support to individual Tenants' and Residents' Associations and all involved residents

Target/s

- Undertake training needs analysis of involved Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TRAs) annually
- Ensure that training is available to provide residents with Housing knowledge, legislation and policies and procedures
- Assess all TRAs against the recognition criteria and where appropriate work with the committee to help them meet the criteria to enable them to access funding available
- Provide training on Self Service Resident Portal and the new Councils website within local communities
- Mandatory Training

How this is monitored/measured

- Number of deliver capacity building training courses, to develop an individual's personal skills and knowledge when required
- Number of opportunities to network with other providers to increase their awareness and learn from others
- 100% of all TRAs wanting to access funding are enabled and supported to do so
- Number of people signed up to self service
- Opportunities through Ian Williams' social value activities
- Monitor service plan

PRIORITY 3

Assess customer satisfaction, and seek feedback from a range of customers to ensure equality and diversity in all services.

3.1

Aim

Address barriers to involvement, working with underrepresented groups

Target/s

Identify and contact partnerships with other organisations to ensure representation

How this is monitored/measured

All consultation activities are, as far as reasonably possible, representative of the customer profile data

Equality Impact

Assessments

PRIORITY 4

Monitor Resident Involvement Strategy 2019 – 2023

4.1

Aim

Monitor Involvement Strategy to continue partnership and to meet regulatory requirements

Target/s

Review annually with impact assessments and update actions

To improve standards

How this is monitored/measured

Final Involvement Strategy 2023 approved by all parties

Appendix 1 - Standards for Involvement – How We Will Support You

1.1. Standards for getting everyone involved

We want all council residents to have the opportunity to take part and will take steps to encourage involvement from groups which to date are underrepresented such as young families.

We want to remove any barriers that limit or prevent the participation of young people, young families, members of black minority ethnic and faith communities, people with disabilities or caring responsibilities.

Most reasonable travel and out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed on production of a receipt, for example, a bus ticket. We will organise road shows and attend events in the community, carry out door knocking campaigns and continue to develop digital access to our services.

The Housing Service will undertake equality impact assessments for all housing policies, functions and procedures. These will identify any adverse impact on minority groups and make sure that all our services are accessible.

To ensure this, we will monitor who is accessing our services and their satisfaction with the services they have received. We want our developing experience in implementing resident involvement to contribute to this.

1.2. Reaching out to everyone

These include:

- carrying out tenancy visits by housing staff
- using only accessible venues
- providing people with information in a format which meets their needs on request and if practical
- accessing people in their groups and communities
- reimbursing reasonable travel and out of pocket expenses on production of a receipt, in line with the expenses policy
- offering relevant training, including the commitment to involve everyone as one of our core standards for residents' groups
- offering meeting times when people can attend (meetings have traditionally been between Monday - Friday 9 - 5pm). For example, holding evening meetings or digital options.

We will promote a positive 'can-do' message. We will ask people what they need, to help them to become involved and assure them that we will do all we can to provide it.

1.3. Improving accessibility

To ensure equality in involvement we will

- set targets for involvement of under-represented groups
- monitor levels of involvement and representation by all groups to aim for no group being significantly under-represented
- develop procedures to make sure that all resident groups are encouraged, able to participate, and are inclusive
- develop training options for residents, staff and others to raise awareness of equal opportunity issues in housing
- seek to open communication channels with different community groups, to encourage their active involvement.

1.4. Standards for information

We will make sure we give our customers good quality, easy to understand information. This information may take many forms such as magazines, web pages, social media, personal discussion and explanation. The standards are explained in more detail below. Our standards for information on involvement will be adopted by all individuals or groups producing information for our customers. These include the tenant participation team, front line staff, other sections of the Housing Service and those resident groups which have an active role in providing information to residents.

1.5. Our standards in detail

Accessibility - information should be openly available and actively promoted.

Print size and clarity – Where practical all document text will be laid out no smaller than a 12 point type.

Documents may be available in alternative formats on request and where practical. Expressed clearly - information will be written in plain English, avoiding jargon, racist, sexist or other inappropriate language that enables the reader to understand the message the first time they read it.

Appropriateness - information will be accurate, relevant and timely. Tailored to our customers' needs.

1.6. Examples of the type of information provided to residents

All council residents can receive information on the council's:

- Housing strategies, policies and priorities
- Housing investment options and plans
- Arrangements for developing and implementing best value, including monitoring and reviewing performance and setting service standards and targets
- Equality and racial harassment policies

1.7. Standards for providing information to active residents

Active residents will naturally receive more information relating to the subjects or areas in which they are involved.

These residents may be encouraged to share this information, where appropriate, with other residents across the district. The Housing Service will assist resident groups in providing information to their members. This may include copies of information, design support or guidance and encouraging participation in training where appropriate.

1.8. Standards for residents' groups

Each year the tenant participation team will contact all groups to assess their progress and interests, to update and remind them about opportunities for involvement, and to explain the financial and other support available for groups.

At this point, their compliance with the standards for groups will be assessed. Only groups which comply with the standards for formally recognised resident groups will be eligible for annual support grant funding from the Housing Service.

The minimum standards are included below.

1.9. Recognition of Tenants' and Residents' Associations – minimum standards required

- approved written constitution
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Annual elections to committee roles
- open financial records, to account for all money received from the Housing Revenue Account and any other public resources
- Regular meetings (minimum: one Annual General Meeting (AGM), one public and four committee meetings)
- publicised activities
- Membership clearly open to all living in the area they cover

- A demonstration that a group is meeting its aims and objectives (e.g. a copy of an end of year report, or publications, minutes of meetings and surveys etc.)
- Invitation to the tenant participation team to any AGM or public meeting.

1.10. Assessing efficiency and value for money

In both planning involvement activities and in monitoring the budget, the tenant participation team will regularly question the cost and value of activities.

We will ask such questions as

- How could this have been done differently?
- could the same result have been achieved with fewer resources?
- could we do this better by using an external provider?
- How could we have increased the reach and impact of this activity?
- has it made a difference to the service we provide?
- How can we improve the effectiveness of this activity?

We aim to develop a better understanding of the costs and benefits when weighing up different types of involvement activity. This will help to identify what resources are needed to support resident involvement.

The Government lays down clear rules about how councils can and cannot spend their rent income.

Increasingly, estates are populated by a mix of tenures and both residents and leaseholders are now being consulted on issues beyond housing.

It is important to consider who supports the costs for involvement. Where it is a housing- related matter and for the benefit of residents, it should be funded from the HRA (Housing revenue Account).

For consultation on non-housing issues, other council budgets may be more appropriate. This is increasingly important as the council develops wider consultation and participation initiatives in relation to best value and community planning.

1.11. Resources which encourage involvement

For some considerable time, we have provided start up and support grants for resident groups, paid for training, networking, visits, conferences, and independent advice.

We aim to target spending carefully to remove some of the barriers and the reluctance some people may feel about taking part.

We can help by:

- Promptly reimbursing residents' reasonable travel and out of pocket expenses incurred in attending agreed activities
- making sure that disabled or vulnerable residents have a safe journey to and from events
- providing information in different formats when requested and where practicable.

1.12. Standards for effective meetings

Effective involvement requires clear communication and good feedback. We do all we can to ensure all meetings (whether of a residents' group, or between staff and residents) are as good for all participants as they can be.

We have established the following set of guidelines.

Those meetings which are part of the involvement structure will always follow them. We also encourage others to adopt them.

1.13. Effective involvement meetings should have

- Clear objectives
- A clear mandate, it needs to be clear what level of influence or decision making the meeting has
- Friendly meetings with good conduct and be free from harassment
- Meetings should be business-like and courteous
- A clear action plan to deal with matters arising
- Arrangements for good quality and timely feedback to all those who took part.

Some examples of behaviour that may constitute harassment are (but not limited to):

- Violence or threats of violence towards any person
- Abusive, intimidating or insulting words or behaviour
- discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, transgender status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious belief or health, including HIV/aids status
- unreasonable persistent insistence on the individual's own viewpoint at times when the group and/or chair have responded/decided and are clearly ready to move on with the agenda/meeting
- Behaviour which unreasonably undermines the views of/or information provided by other attendees at a meeting or serves to belittle or try to belittle any attendee.

1.14. Involvement meetings should be

- publicised effectively - using appropriate methods which can reach everyone
- publicised in good time
- held at suitable times
- held in accessible places
- Properly chaired
- conducted in a fair and democratic way
- open to all residents.

1.15. Standards for resolving disputes and disagreements

Comments, compliments and complaints about the Housing Service are a welcome and productive part of our involvement arrangements.

Disputes and disagreements are costly and unproductive, and we will work to avoid them wherever possible.

This section describes the approach we will follow should disputes and disagreements occur.

Any shortcomings in the performance and delivery of this agreement will be dealt with at the earliest stage.

We want people to feel encouraged to comment or complain if they feel the spirit of this agreement is not being adhered to.

1.16. Regular monitoring

We receive feedback on involvement activities. This will consider

- Different approaches to resident participation
- What other housing organisations and residents are doing and achieving
- How our approach and performance compares
- How we can change our approach to make sure it remains effective and efficient
- ensure resident representatives and groups are playing an effective role and all parts of our structure achieving this
- appraising equality of opportunity and levels of involvement by all groups, including ethnic minorities
- ensure we are reaching everyone – and that our message is effective
- The impact of involvement activity at every level.

1.17. Annual Monitoring

Groups will provide an update on their impact and future plans.

Key information will be reported to all residents within the annual report.

1.18. Monitoring the views and impact on all residents

Every year we will conduct the standard resident satisfaction survey. In addition, we will conduct our own monitoring on satisfaction assessment after each activity to enable us to continue to improve.

1.19. The views and experience of officers

Many involvement activities consist of officers working alongside volunteers. Resident involvement is a partnership between volunteers, officers and

Councillors. All ideas for improvements and enhancements will be considered by the relevant body.

Appendix 2 - Support Information

2.1. Conditions of involvement in meetings and other involvement activities and enforcement

For meetings, and other activities, any actions undertaken under the following conditions will be transparent throughout the process, where confidentiality is not at risk.

Prior to, during and following the meeting or activity, a volunteer must avoid:

(i) Discrimination

There will be no discrimination. People who attend meetings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, faith, or any other matter which causes people to be treated with injustice, nor will any discriminatory language be tolerated in discussions.

(ii) Conflicts of interest

Individual volunteers must disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent, if they think it may affect or influence their approach to matters under discussion.

(iii) Relationship with other volunteers

Individual volunteers must:

- treat other volunteers with dignity and respect
- promote a friendly and harassment free environment for all.

(iv) Relationships with officers and contractor representatives

Individual volunteers must:

- treat all Council staff and contractor representatives with dignity and respect
- use the normal procedures for reporting repairs, complaints etc.
- Not expect to receive more or less favourable treatment by staff because of their involvement with the Housing Service.
- Not bring the authority or service into disrepute.

See section 4.5.1 for examples of harassment

(v) Confidentiality

Volunteers should respect the confidentiality of all individuals, whether present or not, and refrain from mentioning specific individual cases which may cause embarrassment or identification of an individual.

Resident volunteers, on occasion, may be provided with confidential information, for example, about the housing service and partner organisations. In such cases, they will be asked to sign confidentiality undertakings.

Any such information, provided to allow project/focus group to take place, must not be disclosed to anyone else.

(vi) Political affiliation

Individual volunteers may be affiliated to, or be members of, a political party but they cannot represent a political party in their role as a resident volunteer.

(vii) Capacity to participate

Volunteers cannot take part in any activities if they are under the influence of prescribed or other drugs, or alcohol, which may impair their capacity or endanger their own, or other people's safety.

(viii) Code of Conduct

Volunteers must agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for meetings and activities, failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct will follow the process detailed at 5.2.

(ix) Safeguarding and criminal offences

Consideration will be given to the level of involvement available to volunteers in relation to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children.

As administrators, the Council reserves the right to close a meeting/activity.

2.2. Code of Conduct for all involvement meetings and enforcement

A Code of Conduct is a set of ground rules which help ensure a meeting is run in an orderly and fair fashion.

All meetings and involvement activities, have agreed to adopt the Code of Conduct, which is available from the Tenant Participation team.

If the conditions for involvement are not met, and/or a complaint is received, the process shown at flowchart 1 will be followed.

A complaint can be made both verbally or written to a member of the Tenant Participation team.

Examples of penalties that may be imposed for breaking the Code of Conduct are as follows (this list is not exhaustive): -

- No action
- Verbal warning
- written warning
- Final warning
- Suspension for length of time
- Permanent exclusion
- Referral to another agency.

If a volunteer does not follow the code of conduct, the Chair of the group concerned will issue a verbal warning. If there is a second breach, the Chair will give a written warning. If breaches continue, the Chair will suspend the meeting and the Chair and Vice Chair will decide whether to ask the volunteer to leave or terminate the meeting.

If a volunteer is expelled from a meeting or the meeting terminated due to their conduct, the Chair and Vice Chair will decide the next course of action.

This may be either no action required or to follow the complaint process as identified within the code of conduct.

If a volunteer breaks the code of conduct at an activity or outside of a meeting, the supporting Housing Officer will issue warnings in line with the Code of Conduct and if necessary terminate the activity. Following the activity, the issue will be escalated to the Tenants & Communities Manager (or delegated officer).

Minor

Banter

Mischief (light-hearted causing disruption)

Constant Interruptions during meetings

Unnecessary gestures (visible irritation)

Unwelcomed over familiarity

Poor personal hygiene

Taking without permission i.e. milk cartons etc.

Behaviour aimed to disruption (not moving on)

Not sticking to the agenda (after repeated reminders).

Major

Abusive

Discriminatory behaviour

Harassment e.g. face to face, electronic etc.

Bad language

Assault

Threatening behaviour

Victimisation

Hazardous actions

Breaching confidentiality/data protection (when confidentiality agreed previously) Slander

Unwelcomed physical contact

Hijacking agenda for personal gain

If the Chair does not follow the Code of Conduct, the Chair will be given an opportunity to explain the reasons for their conduct. If there is a second breach the Vice Chair will give a formal warning. If breaches continue, the Vice Chair will suspend the meeting and will decide whether to ask the Chair to leave or terminate the meeting.

If the Chair is expelled from a meeting or the meeting terminated due to their conduct, the Vice Chair and the Tenant Participation Assistant will decide the next course of action.

This may be either no action required or to follow the complaint process as identified within the Code of Conduct.

If the Chair is expelled, appropriate measures will be taken to fill any vacancies for that meeting only.

For minor breaches, the Tenants and Communities Manager will agree a suitable resolution with all relevant parties.

For major breaches, the Landlord Services Manager will deal with officer or any other party complaints against volunteer/s. They will authorise any sanctions following the investigation.

For examples of major/minor breaches please see list below (this list is not exhaustive). Once a complaint has concluded the process and the complainant/accused may progress.

Upon conclusion of the appeals process, there will be no further right of appeal.

The complainant will not be informed of the details of any sanctions imposed where this would breach the data protection rights of the volunteer against whom the complaint was made.

The following timeframes are suggested for the process

Aim

1. Complaint received
2. Tenants & Communities Manager (or delegated officer) to assess suitability of the process to deal with the complaint
3. Start of complaints process or refer to another agency
4. An independent investigatory panel established

How this is monitored/measured

Within five working days

Aim

5. Notification of complaint to be made to both accused and complainant
6. Desktop exercise undertaken by panel members, to establish minor or major breach

How this is monitored/measured

Within five working days

Aim

7. Invite all parties involved to investigatory interviews.
8. Investigatory interviews held
9. Statement of investigatory interview to be circulated to all interviewees for amendments/signing as an accurate record five working days following the interview

10. Statements to be returned for final decision five working days from receipt
11. Final decision to be made to uphold/dismiss complaint within 15 working days of investigatory interview and letter sent to complainant and accused with decision made. Offer of appeal to be made which must reach the Tenants & Communities Manager (or delegated officer) within ten working days of receipt of the outcome letter
12. Appeal letter received

How this is monitored/measured

DTCP to determine and advise timeframe based on nature of complaint

Aim

13. Letter of acknowledgement sent to both parties
14. A specific Appeal Panel (consisting of three independent members of the volunteer database) will be established. These must be accepted by both parties and must not consist of initial investigatory panel members
15. Appeal panel to consider if suitable grounds to proceed with appeal

How this is monitored/measured

Within five working days

16. If appeal is dismissed, No further action

Aim

17. Appeal accepted / appeal panel to undertake assessment of complaints process previously followed (desktop exercise)
18. Hearing of the appeal held interviewing both parties and the investigatory panel
19. Conclusion of the appeal to uphold/dismiss to be confirmed by letter

How this is monitored/measured

Panel to determine and advise timeframe

20. If appeal upheld, investigatory panel to reconsider decision

2.3. The Housing Service's minimum standards for constitutions

For a residents' group or association to become recognised by the Housing service, its constitution must contain a number of key features. It will:

- guarantee the rights of members to voice their views and vote on issues which affect them
- protect the interests of members if the organisation runs into difficulties
- provide assurance that the group is open, democratic and responsible for the actions of its members.
- set out a commitment to equal opportunities
- detail how funding will be raised, how the funding can be used and its accountability.

The Housing Service can offer further advice and support to groups wishing to develop a constitution.

2.4. Training opportunities, new initiatives and the current programme

The Housing Service is committed to assessing training needs and providing training for members of groups, residents associations and individuals.

Training is also offered on issues relating to housing services, business planning and the strategic development of the Housing Service. Training provision is both in-house and via external providers, where appropriate. The training offered aims to provide residents and residents with the knowledge and skills to enable them to develop their involvement.

The cost of training will be met by the Housing Service, provided funds are available. Joint training with council officers and elected members will be provided where possible and appropriate.

Mandatory Training

All members will follow the East Devon Council policies and have completed the mandatory resident training programme once every 2 years, consisting of the following:

- Data Protection
- Equalities & Diversity
- Effective Meetings
- Safeguarding

Failure to attend any of the above courses will result in the resident leaving the group/panel until the training has been undertaken.

In addition to the above opportunities, individuals or groups can request specific training from the housing service at any time during the year. This can be done by contacting the Tenant Participation on 01395 517453 or email

tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk

Training is open to individual residents and resident groups. An annual training budget is allocated from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

2.5. Course availability

The Tenant Participation Assistant will evaluate and prioritise training in line with the budget available and on how many residents request training for that subject.

Availability of courses is always subject to resources.

The tenant participation team will keep groups informed of training opportunities. This information will also be provided through articles in the magazine sent out annually in April, August and December.

Previous courses have included:

- Equalities awareness - a course for all resident groups committee members and involved residents
- chairing a meeting - basic skills on how to run effective meetings
- minute taking - basic skills on how to write minutes of meetings
- General Data Protection Regulations learning how to look after personal information
- Safeguarding
- Complaints Workshop
- First Aid and Food Hygiene

2.6. Resources for resident involvement 2019 – 2022

2.6.1. Budgets and other resources

The budgets that support resident involvement can be found in the Housing Revenue

Account (the budget which accounts for all spending paid for by residents' rents).

The highest spending at present is the cost of salaries for the staff who support resident involvement followed by the Housing Matters magazine.

As the Housing Service has adopted a culture of resident involvement, all housing staff have an important role in making resident involvement work.

2.6.2. Resident expenses

If you are attending a prearranged meeting by the Housing Service, payment will be made to cover out of pocket expenses for mileage at the current rates are 45 pence per mile plus

5 pence per mile per passenger. All claims should be made at the end of each month, or if this is not possible the claims must be made within 3 months of the first event.

A lunch allowance is available in the amount of £6 per person, if a resident is attending a full day meeting and where a free lunch is not provided.

All claim forms must be completed and signed. Electronic signatures are acceptable. We cannot accept details over the phone. Mileage claims are verified by using the AA route planner online website.

Housing Review Board members have their expenses paid through the Council's payroll system.

For more information contact the tenant participation team on 01395 517453 or email tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk

The resident expenses policy is reviewed annually by the Tenants and Communities Manager.

2.6.3. Funding levels for recognised resident groups

Recognised tenant and resident associations are entitled to apply for the following grants:

- One-off start up grants (£100)
- Annual funding grants (£100 to £250) **
- Additional support grants using the Community Initiative Fund application form.

**Copy of association annual bank accounts are required.

Application forms for grant funding are available from the tenant participation team.