

East Suffolk Council Tenant Engagement Strategy **2024- 2027**



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1. Overview and Vision

Our Tenant Engagement Strategy 2024 - 2027 embodies East Suffolk Council's commitment to fostering vibrant, inclusive communities. At the heart of our strategy lies a dedication to meaningful interactions, transparency, and collaborative decision-making with our tenants. We aim to bridge gaps, understand diverse perspectives, and empower every voice within our community.

Guided by 'Our Direction 2028' ESC's strategic plan and its overarching priority focused on tackling inequalities, creating thriving economies and developing sustainable housing and communities. Our tenant engagement strategy will aim to create an environment where strong resilient communities can emerge and work in partnership with ESC to address some of the key challenges over the next five years. These include rapid population growth, ageing population, increased service demands, persistent high levels of deprivation, and rapidly declining local government resources.

This strategy seeks to create an environment where every tenant feels valued, heard, and involved in shaping the future. By fostering open dialogue, leveraging technology, and implementing innovative approaches, we aspire to build stronger connections and enhance community well-being.

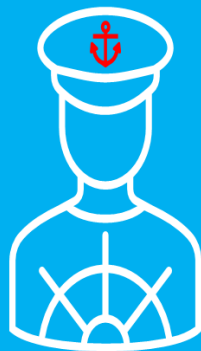
Through targeted initiatives, partnerships, and inclusive events, we understand the important role the community can play in:

- Empowering tenants by developing comprehensive training, skills and techniques to significantly influence the shaping and delivery of services.
- Becoming an equal partner with our communities through ESC governance, tenant scrutiny, equal partnerships and regular communication processes to shape policies and services that directly impact their lives.
- Creating a culture where tenants work with ESC through co-design to measure performance, hold us accountable so we can better respond to challenges faced by our communities.
- Cultivate a sense of belonging and ownership among tenants where ESC Listen, measure and implement the right metrics that improve the lives of our tenants.

To help turn our vision into a reality, we have drawn up four priority outcomes that will shape our approach to achieve what has been set out above.

Outcome 1

Communities have **the power, training and governance mechanisms** to influence issues that impact their lives



Outcome 2

Establish open **communication** by engaging in **dialogue**, **responding to concerns**, and **sharing information** promptly.



Outcome 3

Communities are at the helm of co-creation, co design of solutions, initiatives and resources to address identified community needs



Outcome 4

Creating a culture where residents support ESC to measure performance using data to understand the diverse make up of our communities



2. What does tenant engagement mean?

The definition of 'Tenant engagement' varies, encompassing diverse approaches based on intended outcomes. At ESC we define tenant engagement as the process for working collaboratively with our tenants to foster their active involvement in community decision-making. Engaging with our tenants to respond to their needs through social activities and providing opportunities to develop trusted relationships. We will provide a cohesive approach to delivering effective and transparent two-way dialogue, with those impacted by change to their locality.

3. Why is tenant engagement important at ESC?

Tenant engagement is a crucial element at ESC, fostering trust and transparency between ESC and its tenants. This dynamic interaction ensures that a diverse range of voices contribute to the decision-making processes. It's this engagement that tailors services to address specific community needs, empowering tenants to actively participate or scrutinize decisions that directly impact their lives. As a result of this collaboration, both ESC and the tenants gain valuable insights, leading to innovative problem-solving and effective solutions for community issues.

Our commitment extends beyond engagement; it aims to address inequalities, promote thriving economies, and ensure sustainable housing. To achieve these goals, we will co-design strategies, capture diverse perspectives, understand our communities, and create pathways towards a shared vision.

This tenant engagement strategy will develop a consistent engagement narrative and concise answers to the questions below.

- What issue or service requires tenant/ communities' views
- When is their participation needed?
- Specifically, how can they submit their views?
- What is the anticipated time commitment?
- What outcomes can they expect because of their involvement?

This structured approach ensures that tenants understand the purpose, process, and potential impact of their engagement, creating a more inclusive and effective decision-making environment.

4. Defining our community

In East Suffolk, communities are typically characterised by shared characteristics, falling into two main categories: 'communities of place', based on geographical location (like street, ward, borough, or region), and 'communities of interest', united by common traits such as ethnicity, age, occupation, shared interests, faith, or other bonds, like student or business communities.

East Suffolk has a range of diverse communities, hosting a wide array of groups with distinct characteristics. There is a large population of over 250k, with nearly 16% aged under 19 and almost 30% aged over 65. We are in the midst of experiencing a rapid population growth, projected to outpace other regions in England and Wales over the next decade.

East Suffolk is the landlord of almost 4,500 homes and wants to ensure that all tenants feel engaged, valued and have the opportunity to genuinely collaborate in the decision making of the housing service.

The area thrives with a vibrant voluntary and community sector, encompassing over 1400 groups and organizations, including faith-based groups. These entities provide valuable support and services to tenants, especially through numerous smaller neighborhood organisations focusing on specific areas such as employment support and youth activities.

East Suffolk acknowledges that individuals are part of various 'communities', and certain groups might encounter greater challenges in making their voices heard. This might be due to belonging to marginalised groups or exclusion from inclusive engagement. As a council, the aim is to proactively engage all tenants in a purposeful and inclusive manner, ensuring representation and involvement across diverse segments of the population.

5. How we will engage our tenants

Engaging communities lies at the heart of our commitment to inclusive decision-making and fostering a vibrant, participatory environment. Our approach to tenant engagement is multifaceted, guided by the principles of inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower. Each of these stages represents a spectrum of engagement, allowing us to tailor our strategies to meet the diverse needs and preferences of the communities we serve.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Engagement goal	We provide clear and informative information using transparent diverse methods and communication channels.	ESC ask you for your opinions and perspective on policies and services and your feedback contributes to shaping and bettering our delivery	Provide opportunities to influence decisions, access training and be meaningfully involved with a variety of mechanisms to share your views and opinions	ESC and the communities work in collaboration through a trusted partnership, where you feel included in decisions that affect and impact you	Your voice is heard, you see the impact of your feedback and you are confident in your abilities influence change at the highest levels of the decision-making process in ESC
Engagement tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital engagement Surveys Flyers Website Newsletters Social media Helpline services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder mapping Focus groups Workshops Drop in sessions 1-2-1 interviews Pop up events Public meetings Public exhibitions Vox box chats Walk & talk tours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community meetings Public exhibition events and pop-ups Work shops and training session Events / fundays Resident associations /partnership boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Charrettes Focus groups on specific areas of interest Digital storytelling Community projects Public art projects Use of Community space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory decision-making tools Co-create programs Community projects Community forums Asset management

6. Embedding tenant engagement at the heart of ESC's Landlord Service

This Tenant Engagement Strategy is aligned with Our Direction 2028 corporate plan and other key strategies, policies and procedures which include:

- Enabling communities
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

7. ESC Approach to delivering tenant engagement

Our approach to tenant engagement is detailed below via a set of guiding principles that set out how ESC will create a more inclusive, fair and accessible service for tenants – this extends to the activities of our contractors, suppliers, partners and volunteers.

It will also ensure our services, policies and procedures do not disadvantage our tenants, on the basis of the characteristics defined in the Equality Act.

Outcome 1:

Tenants possess the capacity, educational resources, and structured governance systems to exert influence on matters that significantly affect their daily existence.

Overview

Empowering tenants involves recognising their inherent strength, equipping them with necessary skills, training and space to develop and establish effective governance structures. This approach amplifies their ability to shape decisions that directly affect their lives. We aim to enable tenants to leverage their power, and establish robust governance mechanisms. This will allow our tenants to become more involved in the services they access, living spaces and environments they frequent and use. This way of working will present a method that distributes power equally among ESC professionals / staff, tenants, their families, and wider communities, allowing them to collectively design and implement public services.

What we will do

Objective	What we will do	Outcome
Empower our tenants and communities.	<p>Transform the way tenants groups are perceived at ESC so that they are seen not as bystanders to programs but as equal partners in designing and delivering them</p> <p>Champion tenant engagement at the most senior officer and member levels acknowledging the tenant governance mechanisms as significant players in</p>	<p>Tenant governance structures are recognised across ESC and valued as experts and an integral part of deciding priorities for services</p> <p>Senior politicians and Officers work in tandem to collectively decide of issues in the locality At the point of tenant groups being established, they will form an integral part of ESC governance and decision making structures having the ability to influence and change decision making</p>

	decision making	
Provide training to our tenants	Reach into our communities and include nontraditional voices - Providing the necessary resources, skills, knowledge exchange, and training programs to equip tenant representatives with the tools to address challenges, participate in decision-making processes, and enhance their overall well-being.	Improvement in the quality of life and navigation of challenges in the community Tenants use their transferrable skills to meet their personal goals and aspirations and achieve their full potential.
Create flexible tenant focused governance structures.	ESC will the facilitate the setup of a variety of tenant governance mechanisms to ensure all voices especially those marginalised have a voice	ESC will co-design and implement a variety of tenant governance mechanisms. We will ensure tenants voices are heard, especially those marginalised, and will consist of Steering groups, tenant associations, partnership boards and scrutiny panels. We will use both formal and informal structures around the locality to ensure people are heard

Outcome 2:

Establish open communication by engaging in two-way dialogue, responding to concerns, and sharing information promptly.

Overview

Open communication stands as the cornerstone of our commitment to engaging with tenants. We recognise the significance of transparent dialogue, actively listening, and promptly addressing concerns raised by tenants. Our

approach is rooted in an environment where individuals feel heard, respected, and valued. We strive to establish accessible channels through which concerns can be voiced and responded to promptly, ensuring that each query or issue is acknowledged and addressed with diligence and care.

Moreover, our pledge extends beyond addressing concerns; we proactively share information relevant to community matters. By disseminating updates, project developments, and decision-making processes, we empower tenants with the knowledge necessary to participate actively in community affairs. We prioritise clarity in our communications, ensuring that information is easily accessible and comprehensible to all, fostering a more informed and engaged community.

Our dedication to open communication, coupled with responsive engagement, aims to build trust and cultivate collaborative relationships with our tenants. We believe that by fostering transparent communication channels and promptly addressing concerns, we not only uphold accountability but also create a foundation for mutual respect and shared responsibility in shaping the collective future of our community.

Objective	What we will do	Outcome
Facilitate regular Two-Way Dialogue (Digitally / online and in person)	Ensure that there are multiple communications channels (digital and in-person) where tenants and stakeholders can express their thoughts, ideas, and concerns, fostering meaningful two-way dialogues.	ESC is recognised by tenants as a landlord that is accessible and listens to concerns
Prompt Response to Concerns:	Ensure a responsive system to address and acknowledge concerns raised by tenants, demonstrating a commitment to resolving issues first time and maintaining	Reduction in stage one escalated stage two complaints

	trust with them.	
Timely Information Sharing:	Implement a strategy for the prompt and transparent sharing of relevant information, ensuring tenants are well-informed about community matters, initiatives, and decisions	The tenant survey reflects over 75% of Tenants feel well-informed about community developments, initiatives, and decisions. Resulting in a firm understanding of local matters, which empowers tenants to make informed decisions and participate more effectively in community affairs.

Outcome 3:

Tenants are at the helm of co-creation, co design of solutions, initiatives and resources to address identified community needs.

Overview

In our tenant engagement strategy, we champion the vital role of communities as architects of their own well-being. Tenants take the lead in co-creating and co-designing solutions, initiatives, and resource allocation to address their specific needs. Through inclusive workshops, tenant surveys, and collaborative decision-making processes, we empower individuals to contribute to the enhancement of their community. This approach not only fosters a sense of ownership but also ensures that solutions are tailor-made, reflecting the diverse perspectives within the community. By placing communities at the forefront of these endeavors, we aim to strengthen bonds, encourage active participation, and create sustainable positive impacts that resonate with the unique identity and aspirations of each neighbourhood. Together, we coalesce around shared goals, forming a collaborative force that propels our community toward greater

resilience, unity, and prosperity.

Objective	What we will do	Outcome
Communities are at the helm of co-creation	Establish iterative co-design processes that allow for ongoing refinement based on tenants input.	Ensuring the final co-design structures / processes truly reflect the collective vision and needs of ESC's tenants. In relation to cultural activations / community events and programmes.
	Create platforms for idea exchange and feedback loops, ensuring continuous communication and collaboration among community members during co-creation process.	
	As part of procuring new contracts for tenants facing work, ensure that tenants are involved in designing the specification, providing insight into selection, and have an enduring voice across the lifetime of the contract	Higher degrees of satisfaction of, and loyalty from, tenants and service users. Increased levels of support and enthusiasm for innovation and change in ESC.
	Involving tenants in existing processes such as recruitment, procurement and building/safety programmes.	Tenants more confident and trust relationships between ESC and the service they receive.

Outcome 4:

Creating a culture where tenants support ESC to measure performance using data to understand the diverse make up of our housing communities.

Overview

Our tenant engagement strategy revolves around cultivating a culture where tenants actively support the council's efforts to measure performance using data. By harnessing the power of data analysis, we aspire to gain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse makeup of our housing communities. Tenants are pivotal partners in this endeavor, providing crucial insights that inform performance metrics and shape council services. This collaborative approach ensures that our initiatives and resources are finely tuned to meet the unique needs of each neighbourhood. Emphasizing transparency and inclusivity, we empower tenants to actively contribute to local governance, fostering a resilient and united community. Through data-driven decision-making, we not only enhance the effectiveness of council services but also build a collective sense of ownership and pride, reflecting the rich tapestry of our diverse and vibrant communities.

Objective	What we will do	Outcome
Understanding our tenants	Implement a data-driven tenant engagement approach using surveys, demographic analysis, and technology to understand our communities. Regularly gather tenant insights through feedback loops and stakeholder interactions. Leverage data to map community assets, analyse external factors, and inform iterative strategy refinement,	ESC agreed approach to 6 monthly tenant surveys, and other data driven insights. Creation of bespoke programmes / events to address community needs
Foster a Data-Driven Informed Culture to strengthen	Conduct awareness campaigns to educate tenants about the importance of data in shaping community initiatives and encourage their active participation in data-sharing processes.	Tenants recognise the importance of data, engaging proactively in local initiatives, showcasing heightened

decision making.	Building capacity to interpreting and utilising data, fostering a shared understanding of how data can inform strategic decisions for the benefit of the community.	awareness of how data shapes and influences the development of their neighborhood
Enhance Data Collection Mechanisms	Implement user-friendly data collection tools and methods, such as surveys and digital platforms, to streamline tenant input and ensure a comprehensive understanding of community dynamics.	Improved data collection tools resulting in higher tenant engagement, more accurate insights, providing a comprehensive understanding of tenant dynamics and needs.
Strengthen Data-Driven Decision-Making	Provide training sessions for council members and tenants on interpreting and utilising data, fostering a shared understanding of how data can inform strategic decisions for the benefit of the community	ESC housing services are more responsive and customised, directly addressing the diverse needs identified through data analysis, thereby enhancing the overall quality and effectiveness delivery and services
Tailor Services to Community Diversity	Analyse collected data to identify specific needs and preferences within each community segment, enabling the customisation of council services to better align with the diverse makeup of neighborhoods.	

8. What does success look like and how will we measure it?

We are committed to measuring tenant engagement performance across our three-year strategy. Delivering this in tandem with a purpose facilitated tenant Strategy Group to build, shape and assess the measures.

Successful tenant engagement at ESC will demonstrate;

- Empowered Tenants: Tenants possess enhanced skills and knowledge, actively influencing service development. They engage in shaping and delivering services, contributing to a community where individuals are empowered to actively participate in decision-making.
- Equal Partnerships with Tenants: ESC establishes equitable partnerships with tenants through governance structures, scrutiny processes, and regular communication. Policies and services are collaboratively shaped, directly impacting tenants' lives and fostering a sense of shared responsibility.
- Co-Design, communication and Performance Measurement: A culture is cultivated where tenants collaborate with ESC through co-design and trusted two way dialogue particularly to measure performance. This ensures accountability, responsiveness to challenges faced by communities, and continuous improvement based on shared insights and feedback.
- Sense of Belonging and Ownership: Tenants experience a deep sense of belonging and ownership. ESC actively listens, measures, and implements metrics that genuinely improve tenants' lives, creating a community where individuals feel connected, valued, and integral to the betterment of their collective well-being.

Throughout this strategy we have maintained tenant feedback guides improvements. Through collaboration with stakeholders, we will actively involve more tenants in engagement activities, enhancing satisfaction levels. Annual updates will showcase successes and lessons learned. Our focus is exceeding Tenant Satisfaction Measures, ensuring

tenants feel heard, informed, and satisfied with our responsive actions.

KPI Themes	Potential KPI's
Engagement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The levels of participation opportunities offered • Consultation, decision-making, discussions, or surveys • People involved in the design process • The variety of engagement methods and tools used • The number of channels used for outreach • Response rate: the number of people reached vs the number of respondents. • The depth of engagement: the number of people who landed on the webpage vs completed the survey • Engagement satisfaction
Tenant and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety in age groups • Gender balance • Geographic reach • Variety in income classes • Variety in education and working status • Diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds
Overall satisfaction Perception questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<p>contribution to neighbourhoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TP12 Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal KPI's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of groups / tenant governance mechanisms started. • Number of tenants trained. • Scores on confidence and trust in the ESC

9. What's next?

