

إذا لم تفهم هذه النشرة، نرجو أن تطلب من صديق أو قريب لك يتكلم الإنجليزية أن يتصل نيابة عنك بمكتب الحي المحلي "نيبرهود أوفس" الذي تتبع له أو بفريق الإسكان. ثم سنقوم نحن بالترتيب لمترجم كي نلتقي بك.

আপনি এই প্রচারপত্রটি বুঝতে না পারলে দয়া করে ইংরেজীতে কথা বলতে পারেন আপনার এমন একজন বন্ধু বা আত্মীয়কে আপনার পাশে আপনার স্থানীয় নেবারহুড অফিস কিংবা হাউজিং টিম-এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে বলেন। আমরা তখন আপনার সঙ্গে দেখা করার জন্য একজন ইন্টারপ্রিটারের (দোভাষীর) ব্যবস্থা করব।

如果你看不懂這份資料單張，請找一位會講英語的親戚或朋友代你接觸你當地的鄰舍辦事處或房屋工作隊。然後我們會安排傳譯員一起來見你。

اگر این لیفلت (جزوه اطلاعاتی) را نمی فهمید لطفاً از یک دوست یا خویشاوندتان که به زبان انگلیسی صحبت کرده میتواند خواهش کنید که از طرف شما با "نیبرهود آفس" یا "هوسنگ تیم" ما تماس بگیرد. بعداً ما یک مترجم فراهم میکنیم تا با شما ملاقات کنیم.

ਜੇ તમને આ દસ્તાવેજમાં લખેલી વ્યાખ્યાનો સમજાયા નો કૃપા કરી કોઈ અંગ્રેજી બોલનારા મિત્ર અથવા સહાયકોની તમારા વતિ તમારી સ્થાનિક નેબરહુડ ઓફિસ અથવા હાઉસિંગ ટીમનો સંપર્ક સાધવા વિનંતી કરો. પછી દુભાષિયા સાથે તમને મળવાની અમે વ્યવસ્થા કરીશું.

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਝੰਗਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਗਰੇਜੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਜਾਂ ਰਿਸਤੇਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਕਹੋ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਨੇਬਰਹੁਡ ਆਫਿਸ ਜਾਂ ਹਾਉਸਿੰਗ ਟੀਮ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੇ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੋਵਰਸੀਏ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ।

کہ تاسی پہ دی لیفلٹ نہ پوهیڀی نو مهربانی وکړی دخپل یو ملگری یا خپلوان نه چه په انگریڀی ژبه خبری کولای شی غوښتنه وکړی چی ستاسی دسیسی "نیبرهود آفس" یا "هوسنگ تیم" سره ستاسی له خوا تماس ونیسی. بیا به مونږ یو ترجمان برابر کړو چه تاسی سره لیدنه وکړو.

Hadii aadan fahmin waxa kuqoran boog yarahan (warqadan) fadlan waydiiso qof saaxiibkaa ama qaraabadaada ah oo kuhadla afka ingiriisiga inuu kuu waco xafiiska dariska ee kuu dhaw (neighbourhood ooffice) ama kooxda guryaha asaga oo adiga kumatalaya. Markaa kadib waxaan kuu balaaminaynaa afceliye (turjubaan).

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کا مضمون نہیں سمجھ سکتے تو براہ مہربانی کسی دوست یا رشتہ دار سے، جو انگریزی بول سکتے ہوں، کہیں کہ وہ آپ کی طرف سے آپ کے مقامی نمبر ہڈ آفس یا ہاؤسنگ ٹیم سے رابطہ کریں۔ پھر ہم آپ سے ملاقات کرنے کے لیے ایک ترجمان کا انتظام کریں گے۔

Nếu quý vị không hiểu rõ tờ thông tin này làm ơn nhờ một người bạn hoặc thân nhân, nói tiếng Anh, thay mặt quý vị liên lạc với văn phòng ban láng giềng hoặc đội lo nhà cửa ở địa phương của quý vị. Chúng tôi sẽ thu xếp một thông dịch viên để gặp quý vị.

If you would like this document in Braille, large print or on an audiotape, please call 0121 303 9851.

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Tenant Involvement Agreement
LEADING THE WAY



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1 WHAT IS THE TENANT INVOLVEMENT AGREEMENT?

We are determined to make tenant involvement central to the way that the Council's housing service works. We want to lead the way in terms of good practice and innovation. We have a long-standing tenant involvement movement that we are proud of. We want to build on this and develop our experience, expertise and reputation to set Birmingham at the forefront of British councils.

Tenant involvement includes:

- Birmingham City Council tenants and their families
- Birmingham City Council leaseholders

- Potential tenants, including those people on the housing register
- Owner occupiers who live in and around our estates.

We recognise that as the largest council in the country, we have an opportunity to develop a unique and genuine partnership with our tenants, leaseholders and owner occupiers who live in and around our estates. We will work with them to shape the future of the housing service, our services and their homes. We want to create a way of working together that is based on learning, sharing information and rewarding good

performance. The Tenant Involvement Agreement sets out how we plan to do this over the next few years.

The Tenant Involvement Agreement has been put together by tenants for tenants. Thanks are due to the members of the New Tenant Involvement Compact Steering Group who gave so much time and commitment to this project.



“The Tenant Involvement Agreement is an agreement between Birmingham City Council tenants and the Housing Department that describes the ways you can get involved in improving your housing service”

2 WHAT IS TENANT INVOLVEMENT?

We will use tenant involvement to make sure that our tenants can get involved in making decisions in a range of ways and at a level that suits them, about:

- Our city-wide housing strategy, including how the council intends to achieve the Decent Homes standard and plans to invest in homes through improvement programmes (more about this in the next section).
- Policies, procedures and arrangements for carrying out housing services such as renting new homes, antisocial behaviour, collecting rents and

arrears, estate management, repairs and maintenance and customer care.

- Any changes to the tenancy agreement and tenancy conditions.
- Setting, monitoring and reviewing performance information, standards and targets.
- Equality policies, including age, race equality and racial harassment.
- Arrangements for tenant involvement, including all the issues that are covered in this Tenant Involvement Agreement.

Leaseholders will specifically be involved in making decisions about issues that affect them and any charges they may pay.

Tenants in supported housing, including older persons' accommodation and sheltered housing will specifically be involved in making decisions about issues that affect them and the services they receive.

Owner occupiers or those renting from other landlords will be involved in issues affecting services to their neighbourhood, estate or environment.



“ Tenant involvement is something we do because it makes good sense to listen to our tenants, understand their views and work to improve our services to better suit their requirements ”

3 INVOLVING TENANTS IN CREATING DECENT HOMES AND DECENT COMMUNITIES

“An important element of tenant involvement is to work with other agencies, organisations and groups to improve our communities”

After consulting with tenants in the option appraisal process, Birmingham City Council has made a choice and commitment that it will continue to own and manage its homes. During the option appraisal process, the Council explained how it would raise the money from its own resources to meet the Decent Homes standard.

The Government has introduced the Decent Homes standard as a new standard for all council homes by 2010. A decent home must:

- Meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- Be in a reasonable state of repair
- Have reasonably modern facilities and services
- Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Through this Tenant Involvement Agreement, we give a commitment that we will involve tenants in ensuring the Council stays on track with plans to

reach the Decent Homes standard by 2010.

DECENT COMMUNITIES

We recognise that the Decent Homes standard is a minimum standard and only covers the building our tenants live in. We know from our tenants that the location of their home and the environment matters as much as the inside.

The Council has a range of environmental and external improvement programmes. Tenants can get involved in decisions about spending

money on environmental issues through the local housing liaison boards (HLB). HLBs have a budget that can be spent to solve environmental problems, such as providing security lighting or fencing.

However, a good environment is about more than just the way the place looks. It is much more about how people behave in that environment and it's on these issues that we need to work with other organisations to make improvements.

We need to work in partnership with our tenants and other organisations to tackle the priorities that they tell us are important, like antisocial behaviour, crime and disorder,

streets, transport and leisure facilities.

Through this Tenant Involvement Agreement, we give a commitment to work with a range of partners, at city, constituency and local level, to help create decent communities.

This range of partners will include:

- All tenants and leaseholders
- Schools
- Police
- Churches
- Local businesses
- Connexions
- Constituency Strategic Partnerships
- Community groups
- Councillors

- Local Services
- Voluntary groups
- Sure Start
- Environmental services
- Faith groups
- Transport
- Support officers
- Contractors and sub-contractors
- Neighbourhood wardens.

“Everyone is entitled to live in a home that is ‘wind and water tight, warm and has modern facilities.’ This is our Decent Homes standard which is our fourth option”

THE NINE KEY PRINCIPLES OF TENANT INVOLVEMENT

- 1** The purpose of tenant involvement is to engage tenants in improving our homes, communities and services.
- 2** Tenants will lead all the way, with real influence and in a spirit of genuine and equal partnership with the Council.
- 3** Tenant involvement is about making the best decisions with and for tenants, using the best information, communication and consultation techniques.
- 4** A commitment to talk and listen to all tenants, and take action based on their views, in ways that meet different needs, runs through the organisation.
- 5** Whilst the meaningful involvement of councillors is welcome, tenant involvement will be politically neutral.
- 6** Our tenant involvement movement will grow and change in a flexible way according to the ongoing aspirations of our tenants.
- 7** Tenants will have more choice about how involved they would like to be. It could range from simply being kept informed to managing their estate. They will also be able to decide if they are interested in local, constituency or city issues.
- 8** We want our Tenant Involvement Agreement and ways of working to achieve the excellence standards set out by the Audit Commission (Key Lines of Enquiry) and government guidance.
- 9** We will ensure that this Agreement is reviewed every three years to assess what difference it has made and that work is done to improve it after every review.



“These nine principles will act as a guide in all that we do with regard to tenant involvement”

RESPECTING EVERYONE, VALUING DIFFERENCES

“We will work hard to reach out to individuals and communities that have not previously chosen to get involved and find issues that interest them”

This Tenant Involvement Agreement gives a commitment that all tenants are entitled to and should always receive a respectful, fair and courteous service from all housing staff and contractors. We also expect that in working together in a positive and genuine manner, tenants are respectful, fair and courteous to officers and contractors doing their jobs.

We believe that all tenants have a valid and positive contribution to make to tenant involvement. We encourage and support everyone to get involved and will not discriminate against any person or other organisation on the grounds of race, ethnic

origin, disability, nationality, gender, sexuality, age, class, appearance, religion, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or having AIDS, or any other matter which may cause a person to be treated with injustice.

We understand and are committed to all requirements of equality legislation, including race equality as well as age, disability and gender equality. We recognise that Birmingham has a large and diverse community and that the ethnic background of our tenants is varied, multi-cultural and multi-lingual. We are committed

to using translation and interpreting services to make sure that all tenants can have equal access to tenant involvement.

We recognise that our tenants will have different needs and preferences according to their circumstances and that we need to take account of the following groups, although this list is not exhaustive and does not exclude anyone who does not consider themselves to be included on it:

Young people

Single people

Older people

People with disabilities

People with caring responsibilities

People from black and minority ethnic backgrounds

People living in different types of accommodation in different parts of the city

People who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual or transgender

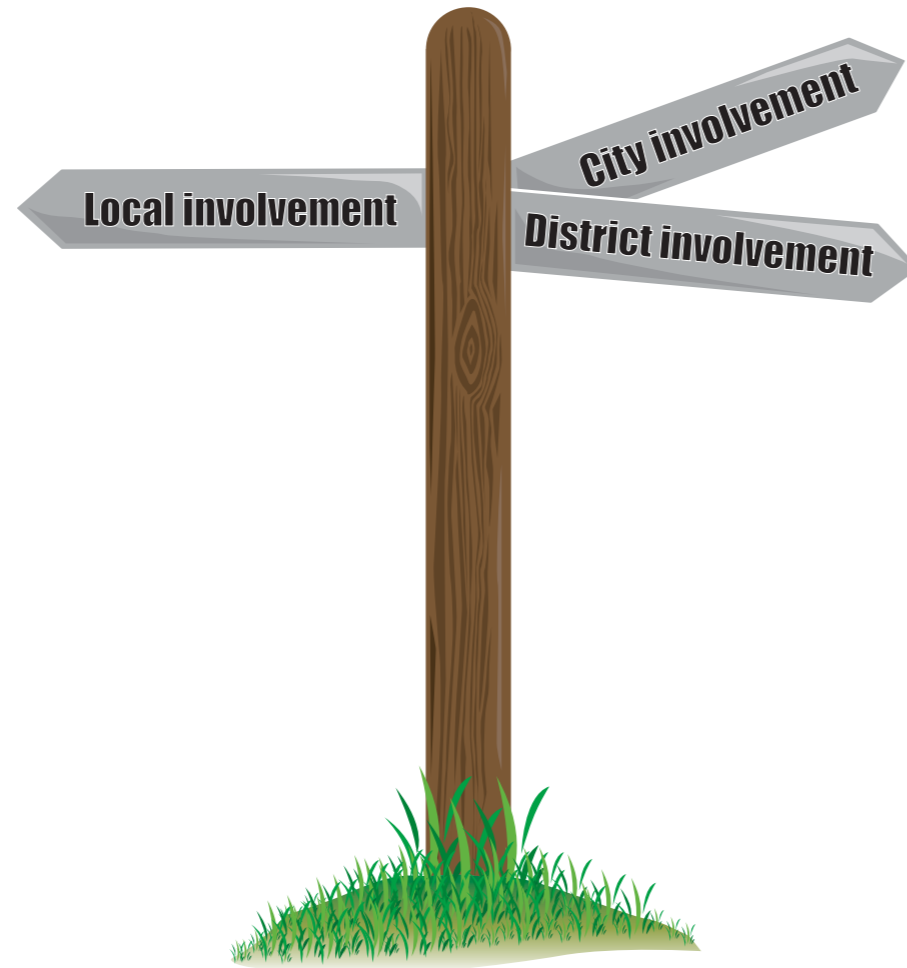
Families

Single parents

“We will work in a positive manner to ensure that we treat individuals fairly. We will respect and value their differences and seek to understand how best to provide services to them”

THE STEPS TO TENANT INVOLVEMENT

There is more than one way that tenants can choose to get involved. It is important that the steps to involvement are flexible, open to all and can be started at any point and lead in any direction. We want the steps to involvement to be a path that each person chooses to best suit themselves.



COMMUNICATING WITH TENANTS

We believe that it's important for all of our tenants to have an opportunity to give us their views on any aspect of the housing service.

We recognise that different people like to give and receive information in different ways. We will always seek to provide information in formats and ways that are accessible, easy to understand and appropriate to the person that is receiving it. This may mean translations into other languages or providing other formats such as Braille and audiotapes.

We expect that each constituency will develop ways to provide information and receive feedback that suits the

tenants in their constituency by carrying out a customer profiling exercise.

The range of communication methods could include all or some of the following:

- Letterbox and other council publications
- Birmingham City Council website www.birmingham.gov.uk
- Surgeries or drop in sessions
- Leaflets and flyers
- Billboards, posters and notice boards
- Local newspapers such as the Birmingham Post or Evening Mail
- Home visits
- Events or fun days
- Area walkabouts and estate visits
- Letters

- Telephone
- Braille
- Audiotape
- Community TV
- DVD or multimedia formats
- Text messages
- Email

INFORMAL INVOLVEMENT METHODS

We recognise that many of our tenants prefer informal methods rather than attending regular meetings. This is an area of involvement that we are keen to expand and build upon. We want to encourage as many tenants as possible to get involved. So we will use some or all of the following informal involvement methods at a constituency and local level.

Estate walkabouts

Customer comments

Drop-in sessions

Street reps

Tenant inspectors

Postal surveys

Open days

Mystery shopping

Internet surveys



FORMAL INVOLVEMENT METHODS

We know that some tenants enjoy taking part in formal activities, such as joining a committee or attending meetings on a regular basis. We recognise and support a range of formal groups, operating at local, constituency and city-wide levels.

TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

Tenants' and residents' associations are set up and run by tenants, leaseholders and residents at a local or estate level to cover a defined geographic area. They can be formed for a range of different reasons but it is usually to tackle a local concern or to

improve some aspect of the neighbourhood. The Council will recognise and support tenants' and residents' associations with a grant and staff time provided that:

- At least half the members are council tenants or leaseholders
- The group adopts a suitable constitution and code of conduct.

You can find out more about tenants' and residents' associations by contacting your customer involvement officer and asking for an information pack.

LOCAL HOUSING LIAISON BOARDS

A housing liaison board (HLB) covers a particular geographic local area and is a partnership between council tenants, other stakeholders (such as repairs contractors or the police), councillors and officers of the council.

The main activities of a HLB are to:

- Identify local improvement projects
- Work in partnership with stakeholders such as schools, ward committees, the police and other agencies to improve the local area
- Liaise with other council departments

- Meet with other tenants, distribute newsletters and other questionnaires to gather feedback on the work of the HLB
- Monitoring and feedback on the Tenant Quality Promise
- Take part in estate walkabouts
- Support other tenants who have had a poor service.

HLBs are supported by the Council with staff time and resources, including budgets for administration and community improvement. They can spend this budget on things like outside lighting or fencing.

It is important that HLBs represent the views of all members of their local community – especially under represented groups. Therefore HLBs must work in a way that encourages people from all communities and age groups to get involved.

You can find out more about HLBs by requesting a copy of the HLB handbook from your customer involvement officer.

CONSTITUENCY TENANT GROUPS

Constituency tenant groups will be set up as a new way of getting involved. They will cover the same constituencies as parliamentary constituencies, so there will be 10 constituency tenant groups across the city.

Each constituency tenant group will be made up of 12 tenants and/or leaseholders with full voting rights, who will elect a competent tenant or leaseholder as the Chair and Vice Chair. Constituency tenant group members will need to go through a recruitment and assessment process. We need to ensure that they have the skills and competencies as set out in the person specification for a constituency tenant group member, to be able to contribute to the group's constituency-wide discussions and decisions.

The role of constituency tenant groups will be developed to get involved with decision making about:





- Improvements to service performance at constituency level
- How resources are prioritised in the constituency
- Monitoring how the council stays on track with its plans to meet the Decent Homes standard.

Also, constituency tenant groups will:

- Take a strategic overview of tenant involvement activity in the constituency
- Monitor and review tenant involvement activity in local neighbourhood wards and HLBs, to share and promote learning and good practice

- Develop their own Constituency Tenant Involvement Agreement, based on a model document containing the principles and standards set out in this agreement
- Report to the Citywide Tenant Group each year about their self-assessment, achievements, successes, learning and good practice

- Have clear links to the Constituency Strategic Partnership and Constituency Committee.

CITYWIDE TENANT GROUP

The Citywide Tenant Group will be made up of one nominated member from each of the ten constituency tenant groups.

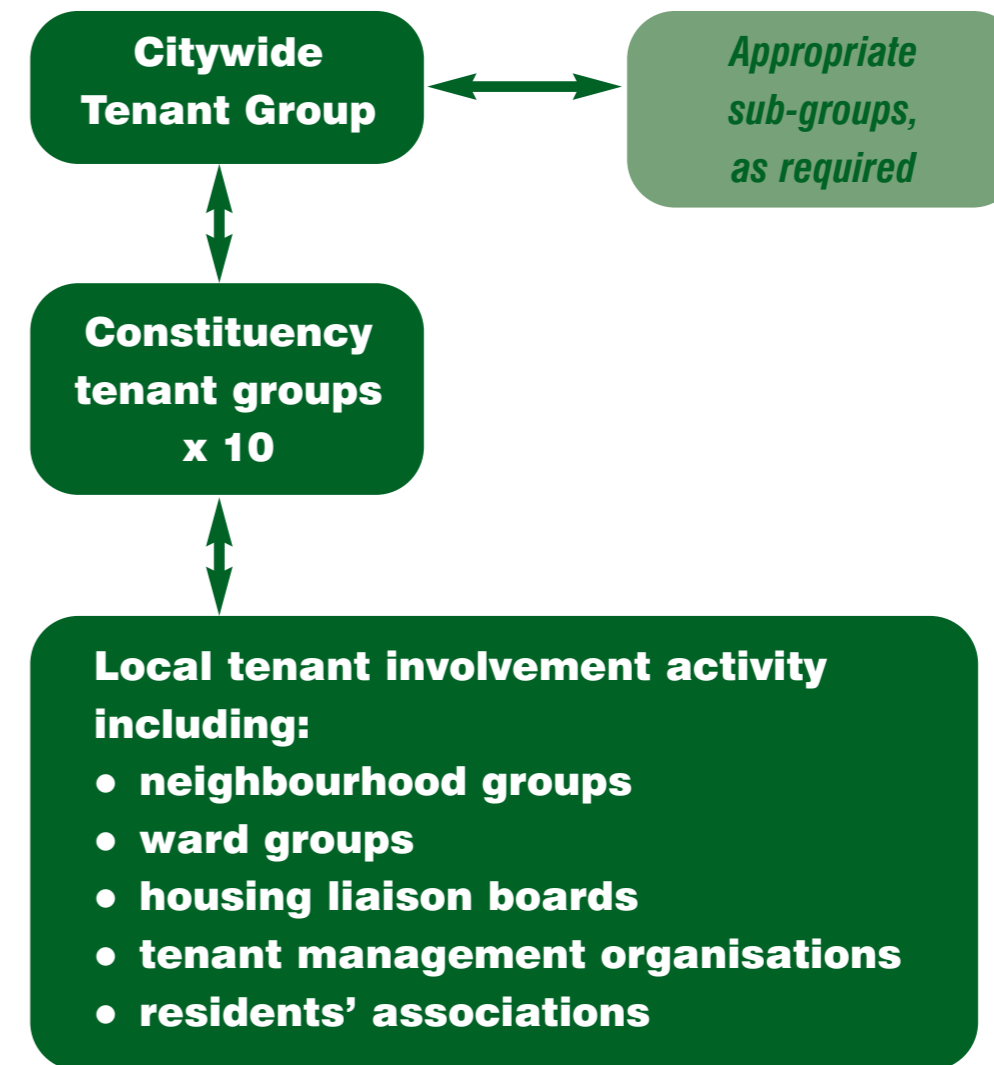
The role of the Citywide Tenant Group will be developed to get involved in decision making about:

- Improvements to service performance across the city
- How resources are prioritised across the city
- Monitoring how the Council stays on track with its' plans to meet the decent homes standard
- A strategic overview of tenant involvement activity across the city.

Also, the Citywide Tenant Group will:

- Monitor and review this Agreement every three years
- Monitor and review the work of the Constituency Tenant Groups and their Tenant Involvement Agreements, to share and promote learning and good practice.

The Citywide Tenant Group will be supported by a range of sub-groups as appropriate, for example, the Sheltered Housing Liaison Board, Leaseholder Housing Liaison Board and the Equalities and Diversity Service Improvement Group.



MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND LEARNING FROM GOOD PRACTICE

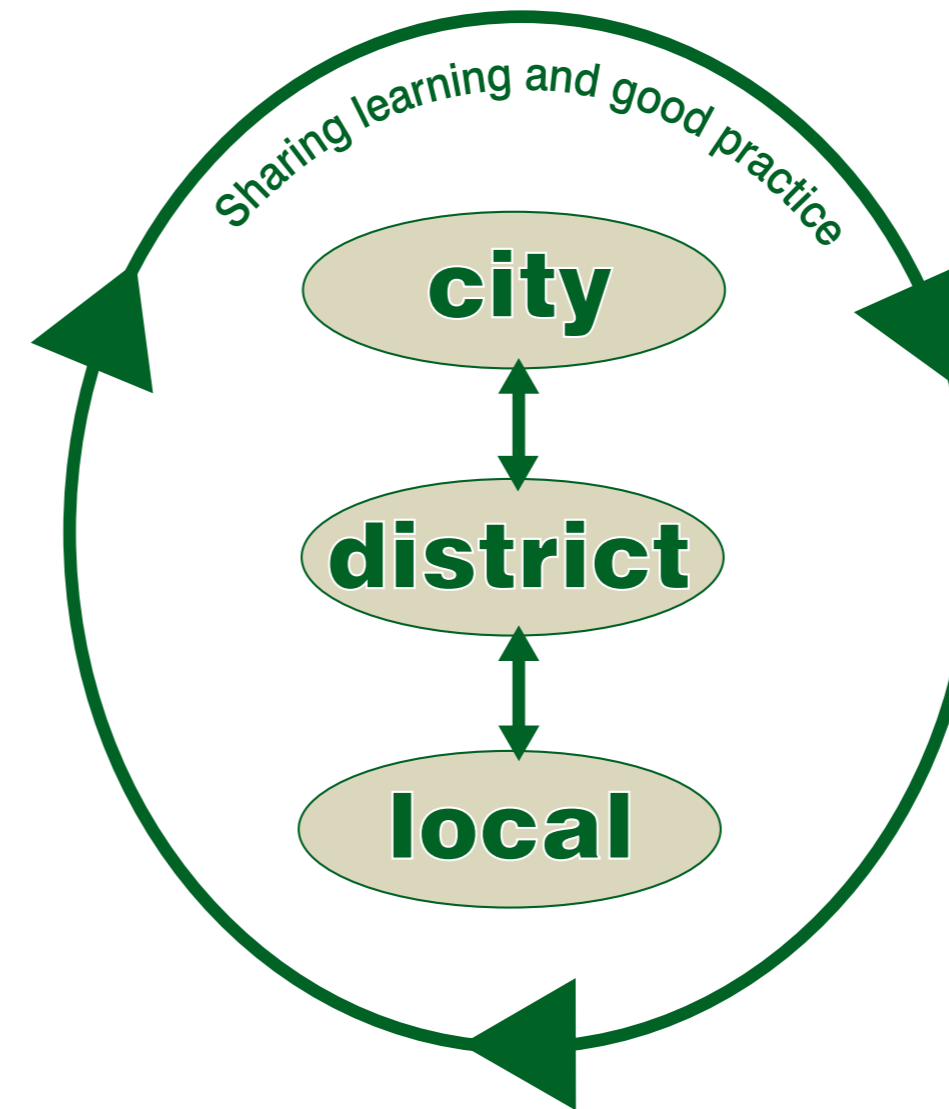
We want our tenant involvement systems to benefit from all the good work that goes on across the city. This means that we need to learn from each other and share our successes and ideas, praise and reward good performance, as well as tackling poor performance to resolve problems.

The starting point for learning from each other and sharing information needs to be within the tenant involvement structures themselves. To achieve this, we expect that all HLBs, constituency tenant groups and the citywide tenant

group will carry out a simple self-assessment each year to monitor their achievements. This means asking questions such as:

- What have you achieved this year?
- What good practice and learning can you share with other groups?
- What could you improve upon for next year?

- What will be your priorities for action for the next year, based on your members' views and feedback?
- What have you done during the year to demonstrate that you have reached out and communicated with tenants in your area?
- What are the skills and competency level of your members and your group overall and what other training or support do you need?



TENANT QUALITY PROMISE
The process by which HLBs are involved in monitoring the performance of the Council's service and repair contractors is set out in the Tenant Quality Promise. A copy of this document is available on request from your customer involvement officer.

We recognise that we won't always get everything right for every customer, but on other occasions we will do an excellent job. That is why we have a comments, complaints and compliments scheme in place to enable us to learn from our customers' experiences and improve as a result. The comments, complaints and compliments scheme runs



across all council departments and services:

Comments – If you're got an idea for improving our services we want to hear from you. Perhaps you can suggest how we can provide better value for money or do things differently in future. Just tell us and we'll look into your suggestion, see how it might work and then let you know what we're planning to do.

Complaints – Unfortunately things do sometimes go wrong. If you're not happy with one of our services or the way we have served you, we want to know. This gives us the opportunity to put things right and, where necessary, change the way we work to improve our services. We always try and resolve

complaints on the spot, but when that's not possible we will investigate further. We will tell you the outcome of our investigations and what we plan to do.

Compliments – It's always nice to get a pat on the back. If you tell us when we do a good job we can ensure that the staff responsible are properly recognised and thanked. It also helps us to identify areas of best practice that other teams within the council can use to help them deliver their services. All compliments are acknowledged and we'll let you know if we've been able to use your compliment to improve service delivery.

You can use the online forms on the Birmingham City Council website www.birmingham.gov.uk to send us your comments, complaints or compliments or pick up a form at any office.



“We must learn from each other, share good practice and praise good performance”

TRAINING, SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

The Council acknowledges that for tenant involvement to be successful, we need to provide training, support and resources to those people who are involved – both as individuals and groups. We appreciate that both informal and formal tenant involvement activities require staff support and money if they are to play a meaningful part in influencing service delivery.

RESOURCES

The resident involvement team in Louisa Ryland House will support the customer involvement officers and constituency and local housing offices, whose role it is to

promote, encourage and work with all forms of tenant involvement at constituency level.

The resident involvement team will also monitor the implementation of the agreements between the council and tenant management organisations.

The constituency housing managers and local housing managers will work with constituency tenants groups and HLBs.

TENANT AND RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Further information about the

support that is available to tenants' and residents' associations can be found in a leaflet that is available from your customer involvement officer.

HOUSING LIAISON BOARDS

Further information about the support that is available to HLBs can be found in the HLB handbook. HLBs will be supported by customer involvement officers and local housing managers in terms of resolving local issues.

CONSTITUENCY TENANT GROUPS

Constituency tenant groups will be supported by the resident involvement team, customer

involvement officers and the district housing manager.

They will have an annual budget to pay for events and activities that are appropriate to their development and priorities, such as customer profiling exercises, communication and consultation methods.

We expect that groups will regularly undertake work to understand and know the customer profile in each constituency. The group should use this information to tailor the way they involve local people. The citywide tenant group will monitor constituency tenant groups to ensure that this happens. They will also monitor whether the constituency tenant groups are:

- Providing value for money
- Making appropriate use of resources
- Ensuring fairness for all groups in terms of ethnicity, age, vulnerability and disability.

Members of constituency tenant groups will work to a specific job role and will be offered a nominal annual allowance, payable in December. The payment will be linked to attendance at meetings and other occasional events such as training. It will be up to individuals to decide whether or not they wish to take up this payment. Any money that is left can be used by the constituency tenant group for

other involvement activities. Members will also be able to claim expenses for travel and childcare or other caring responsibilities.

CITYWIDE TENANT GROUP AND APPROPRIATE SUB-GROUPS

These groups will be supported by the resident involvement team and other appropriate officers from the Council.

TRAINING AT ALL LEVELS

There is an ongoing and continual commitment to providing high quality training at all levels, whether it's for basic or more advanced skills for both tenants and staff at city, constituency and local levels.



Training for city and constituency groups will be co-ordinated by the resident involvement team. It will be designed to provide members with the right skills, information and knowledge to function at the right level.

An annual training plan will be produced to include all the different training at different levels to support individual and group development.

Training will be delivered in a range of ways including:

- Induction programmes
- Taster and sample sessions
- Open information sessions

- Web-based interactive learning
- At venues and places that may encourage involvement.

We want to improve the skills and confidence of the individuals involved. We will also look to provide training which will be designed to attract people who aren't currently involved.

We will regularly review training provision at constituency and city level to check what difference training and support programmes have made in improving services and influencing involvement in a positive manner.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Whenever we are buying services (for example for training, resources or support) or deciding where we should spend money – we promise that our first consideration will be providing value for money.

This means that resources and budgets will reflect the priorities identified in the Tenant Involvement Agreement. We will use the formal involvement structure to check back with tenants, so there is a monitoring process in place to ensure that we achieve value for money.



“We will provide our tenants with the training, support and resources they need to help them get involved in a meaningful way”

9 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This Tenant Involvement Agreement is an overview of how tenant involvement in Birmingham will develop over future years. It deliberately does not go into detail, so that it remains easy to read, interesting and to the point.

However, we recognise that more work is needed to support and develop all the steps to involvement described here. Work to produce a set of documents that will support the Tenant Involvement Agreement will continue across the following themes:

- **Governance**, for example, a model code of conduct for all meetings and groups and an induction pack for all group members.
- **Group performance management**, for example, group member competency assessment and annual training plans.
- **Group planned activities and achievements**, for example, annual self-assessment report template.
- **Agenda management and agenda items**, for example, model agendas and model performance reports.
- **Administration**, for example, payment of allowances and expenses and group member attendance records.



“We will work closely with our tenants to ensure that tenant involvement develops and grows to meet their future needs and expectations”

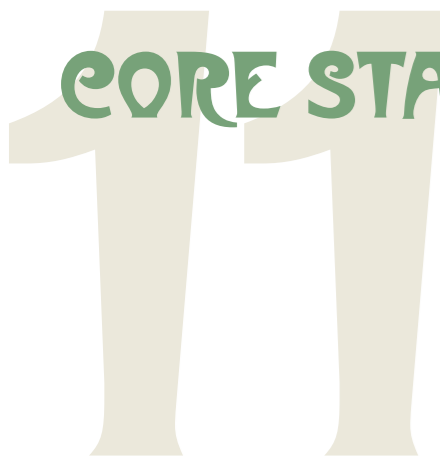
HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

This is one of a series of documents by Birmingham City Council Housing Department on resident involvement. For more information please contact:

The Resident Involvement Team
Level 2, Louisa Ryland House
44 Newhall Street
Birmingham
B3 3PL
Tel 0121 303 9851 or visit
[www.birmingham.gov.uk/
getinvolved](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/getinvolved)



CORE STANDARDS FOR TENANT INVOLVEMENT



STANDARDS FOR INFORMATION

We recognise that providing information to our tenants and leaseholders is a very important part of the services we offer. We expect that these core standards apply not only to the way in which the Council provides information but also to the way in which city, constituency and local groups operate.

We give a commitment that the information we provide will be:

- In a range of formats, appropriate to the situation and the individual. This will

include large print, Braille, audiotape and translations into other languages

- In plain language, avoiding the use of jargon and any racist, sexist, biased or inflammatory phrases or words
- Of a high standard, well presented, easy to read and clear to understand, sent out in good time and clearly identifying the sender
- In accordance with any other standards and requirements the Council has set for in-house documents.

Tenants and leaseholders can access information from a number of sources:

- Birmingham City Council website – which includes a specific section on tenant involvement. Go to www.birmingham.gov.uk/getinvolved
- Tenants' resource room at Louisa Ryland House
- Information leaflets at local offices.

There is also a range of documents that can be requested by contacting your customer involvement officer in your area:

- HLB handbook
- A guide to tenant empowerment
- Administration grants to customer groups
- Constitutions and codes of conduct for residents' associations
- Housing customer representative reimbursement rates
- Organising social activities in a Birmingham City Council sheltered housing scheme
- Childcare and other costs
- Staying alive (fact sheet on fundraising)

- Tenants' handbook
- Repairs handbook.

STANDARDS FOR MEETINGS

The formal involvement structure of housing liaison boards, district tenant groups and the city-wide groups revolve around meetings so it is essential to ensure that there are core standards in place for meetings to make them effective, enjoyable and equitable.

We expect that all meetings at local, district and city level will adhere to a code of conduct that will be developed to work at all levels and to cover all types of meetings.

STANDARDS FOR TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

The Housing Department has given a commitment to support tenants' and residents' associations operating at a local level. We expect that tenants and residents' associations will:

- Operate in an open and inclusive way
- Adopt the model constitution and adhere to the rules
- Be able to demonstrate that they regularly communicate with their members
- Have a committee made up of at least half tenants or leaseholders





- Work constructively with housing staff to resolve local issues

- Carry out a simple check each year to identify:
 - their successes
 - what they would do differently
 - the priorities they will focus on during the coming year based on views and feedback from their members.

STANDARDS FOR HOUSING LIAISON BOARDS

Please ask your customer involvement officer for a copy of the housing liaison board handbook which sets out how the boards operate.

STANDARDS FOR CONSTITUENCY AND CITY-WIDE GROUPS

Please ask your customer involvement officer for a copy of the code of governance for constituency tenant groups, which sets out how the groups operate.

