

**Report for: Homes Policy Development Group**

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Date of Meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Subject: **MID DEVON HOUSING UPDATED TENANT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY**

Cabinet Member: Cllr Simon Clist Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property

Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe – Head of Housing and Health

Exempt: None

which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: Annex A – MDH Tenant Involvement Strategy  
Annex B – MDH Tenant Involvement Strategy  
Equality Impact Assessment

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)**

Under the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard Registered Providers (RPs) must take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered.

**Recommendation(s):**

**That the PDG recommends that Cabinet adopt the updated Mid Devon Housing Tenant Involvement Strategy and Equality Impact Assessment contained in Annexes A and B respectively**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Mid Devon Housing (MDH), in its role as a social landlord, is required to deliver compliance with the four Consumer Standards within the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing.
- 1.2 The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard was introduced in April 2024 and requires social landlords to work much more closely with tenants and other residents to take their views into account when decisions are made about how landlord services are delivered.
- 1.3 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regard councillors as responsible for ensuring that providers' businesses are managed effectively and that providers comply with all regulatory requirements.
- 1.4 Since the previous Strategy was agreed in 2021, MDH have introduced a dedicated Tenant Involvement Team whose purpose is to connect with tenants across different platforms and in other ways. This includes hard to reach tenants and those who have previously not engaged with MDH.
- 1.5 The overall aim of the Strategy is to empower our tenants through:
  - Transparency
  - Accountability
  - Influence

To ensure this happens then we must have a clear Strategy that provides a 'golden thread' of engagement. This is supported by our wider commitment to provide access to information and data, undertake clear communication and be open to monitoring and scrutiny through a number of different forums.

### **2 Review of Tenant Involvement Strategy**

- 2.1 Tenant Involvement is the active participation of tenants in the decision making processes and activities that affect their housing and community. It plays an important part of housing management and is vital for building trust. Engaging with tenants ensures voices are heard, needs are met and communities are improved. Our Tenant Involvement Strategy 2025-2030 consists of four principles which feed into an action plan and link to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.
  - Strengthening engagement, participation and empowering tenants
  - Communication and insight - i.e. providing information so tenants can use landlord services, communicating effectively, improve consultations etc.
  - Accountability - scrutiny, monitoring impact of decisions, welcoming feedback
  - Fairness, respect and diversity - delivering fair and equitable outcomes for all tenants, treating all tenants with fairness and respect, increase the

diversity of involved tenants, making sure diverse needs are taken into account.

- 2.2 Tenant Involvement is essential for enhancing the quality of service tenants receive by promoting transparency and community. When tenants get involved, it enables us to tailor our service to better meet the needs of tenants and provide real, positive outcomes for residents, communities and for Mid Devon Housing (MDH).
- 2.3 There should be an opportunity for meaningful engagement at a level that suits all tenants. A full list of involvement opportunities is included within the Strategy.

### **3 Consultation**

- 3.1 Tenants and members of the Homes PDG were invited to comment on the draft Strategy between 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. The consultation was shared on MDDC's engagement hub Let's Talk Mid Devon, the website and shared regularly on social media. A copy was shared with an Estate Representative, however no comments were received.
- 3.2 No queries or concerns were raised during the consultation.
- 3.3 Despite no response to the consultation from tenants, it is important that tenants are fully aware of the updated policy. To this end, should the Strategy be adopted, MDH will proactively signpost the policy on our webpages/Facebook pages and in the next tenant newsletter. Where relevant, particularly in relation to queries, service requests or complaints we will also ensure specific tenants or other stakeholders are also aware of the updated policy as required.

### **4 Equality and diversity**

- 4.1 MDH recognises that there are some circumstances whereby a tenant's disability, language, cultural background or characteristics protected under legislation may make it more difficult for them to engage, understand or exercise their rights as set out in this Strategy and associated regulations. We tailor our service to support such tenants.

### **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendation is made:
  - 1. That the PDG recommends that Cabinet adopt the updated Mid Devon Housing Tenant Involvement Strategy and Equality Impact Assessment contained in Annexes A and B respectively

### **Financial Implications**

All involvement activities delivered will be assessed to ensure they are for the benefit of our tenants and leaseholder population and those accessing the housing service where appropriate.

We will work with our tenants to identify more efficient ways of working, such as moving to digital channels enabling us to maximise the resources available.

The costs associated with tenant involvement activity and the delivery of the Tenant Involvement Strategy will be met within existing financial resources within the Housing Revenue Account.

### **Legal Implications**

As a registered provider (RP) of social housing, the Council is obliged to take account of the standards contained within the revised regulatory framework which is administered by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). This states that RPs must take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered.

### **Risk Assessment**

Without a robust Tenant Involvement Strategy and structure in place, the Council would be open to challenge by the Social Housing Regulator in not meeting the new Consumer Standards.

Failure to engage with tenants effectively can risk a breakdown in relationship between the council and tenant population where transparency, accountability and the ability for the tenant to have influence is diminished.

### **Impact on Climate Change**

There are limited implications and environmental impact arising from this strategy. However, employees will give due regard to potential impacts on the environment when conducting activities that require travel through tenant involvement activity. The introduction of digital engagement methods will reduce travel, production of mail and other publications, however this must be balanced with the requirement to meet different needs and engage with harder to reach tenants and where best, meet with tenants in their homes, estates and community venues away from our main office.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Mid Devon Housing collects data on the diversity of tenants and endeavours to tailor services to meet the needs of all tenants. Our housing estates must be accessible to those with disabilities and we have in place a regular schedule of inspections to ensure that all safety issues are identified and rectified as soon as possible. Information provided by MDH is available in alternative formats, upon request, in order to ensure that all those living on our estates understand the rights and responsibilities of the Council as a landlord, and tenants and other residents, individually.

The Equalities Impact Assessment is attached to this report in Annex B.

### **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

Homes and social housing are a clear priority within the Corporate Plan. We will work closely with our tenants to ensure they feel safe, secure and happy in their homes.

We will monitor and continue to improve overall tenant satisfaction and work with our tenants through engagement events and the broader Tenant Involvement Strategy.

This will ensure they are informed and have clear opportunities to comment on and shape the housing service they receive.

### **Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks**

**Statutory Officer:** Andrew Jarrett  
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer  
**Date:** 6 March 2025

**Statutory Officer:** Maria de Leiburne  
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer  
**Date:** 6 March 2025

**Chief Officer:** Stephen Walford  
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director  
**Date:** 6 March 2025

**Performance and risk:** Steve Carr  
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager  
**Date:** 04 March 2025

**Cabinet member notified:** Yes

### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Sophie Richards, Customer Engagement Coordinator or Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health  
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**Background papers:**

[Tenant Involvement Strategy \(middevon.gov.uk\)](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/tenant-involvement-strategy)