



working for a better future

Tenant Involvement Agreement

Welcome to our **Tenant Involvement Agreement**. This Agreement sets out the way in which we will work with you, our tenants, to ensure you are involved in decisions on housing services that affect you and your local area. We will support and encourage your involvement at a pace and level which you can decide. The purpose of the agreement is:

- To show our **commitment** to involving tenants in the decision-making process and receiving feedback about their contributions.
- To **increase** tenants' **knowledge** of housing issues
- To have a range of ways in which all tenants can **get involved** at a level that suits them.
- To explain the ways we will **involve tenants**

Equality and Diversity

We believe that everyone should have an equal chance to get involved. This includes elderly people, young people, single parents, and people in ethnic minority groups, people of all faiths and religion and people with disabilities. This agreement is intended to encourage people to get involved at a level that suits them.

We expect that any involved tenants will also share this commitment. It is important that everyone's contribution is valued and their involvement is welcomed. Whilst recognizing that representation from all members of the community is often difficult to achieve, effort should be made to encourage the input of residents so that the interest of the community are well represented.

We are aware that not all tenants will want information to be provided in the same format and therefore we will look to provide information to meet the needs of our tenants in alternative formats including larger print, Braille and other languages.

How you can become involved

There are different ways in which you can become involved. The level of involvement is for you to decide and will depend on how much time you have to give.

We have developed a 'Menu' (see page 4) so that you can choose how you might get more involved. To help you decide we have put 😊 next to each menu item. The more 😊 the more of your time will be needed, the fewer 😊 the less time you will need to give.

How we will monitor Involvement

We are going to monitor the effectiveness of this agreement, the menu of involvement and the Tenant Involvement Action Plan through the **Tenant Involvement Group**. This group will be made up from volunteer tenants who will meet at quarterly intervals with members of the **Tenant Panel**, the **Councillor Spokesperson** for Housing, the Housing Management Team Leader and Head of Service. This group will review the methods used to ensure tenants have been informed, consulted and involved as detailed in the Tenant Involvement Agreement.

How we will monitor the Housing Service

We are going to monitor the effectiveness of the Housing Service through three systems of monitoring. The systems are:

- Analysis of the 'Five Ticks' Feedback from tenants in accordance with the Housing Service Standards. Quarterly monitoring will take place at service level and reported through the Theme Business Plans. Quarterly Monitoring meetings will be held between the **Tenants Panel** and relevant officers of the Council who oversee the service areas being monitored.
- The **Service Monitoring Group**. This group will be made up volunteer tenants who will meet at quarterly intervals with the **Tenant Panel**, the **Councillor Spokesperson** for Housing, the Housing Management Team Leader and the Head of Service.
- Benchmarking specific housing services through a benchmarking group.

How we will Review and develop Housing Services to meet Tenants needs and Regulatory Requirements

We will work with the Tenant Panel using a variety of methods in order that we can continually review and improve the Housing Service. Those methods include:

- Working with the Tenant Panel to review existing services to tenants and develop where necessary services to meet the changing needs and requirements of our tenants and the Regulatory requirements of the Tenant Services Framework.
- Working with the Tenant Panel to review existing contractual arrangements with contractors and when necessary seek to appoint new contractors
- Working with the Tenant Panel to monitor the National Standards as prescribed by the Tenant Services Authority, identifying any areas where attention is needed in order to meet the National Standards
- Reviewing the information provided to Tenants through the council's web site to ensure the information is provided in a way which is easy to access and understand.
- Monitoring our work across the Housing service.
- Working with members of the Tenant Panel to help in the development of the 'local offers' to tenants as part of the Tenant Services Framework.

How we will help you understand more

We will work with tenants to support and provide training in order to help them fulfil their roles as chosen from the tenant involvement menu. Training will be tailored to meet the needs of tenants.

How Housing Staff will help support Tenant Involvement

The Housing Management Team Leader will play an important support role to tenant groups in helping arrange meetings, venues, financial reimbursements as well as assisting with minutes until such time as a Secretary can be identified/voted on the various tenant groups.

Estate Managers, Allocation Managers, Tenancy Relations Officers and Housing Repair and Maintenance Staff will all contribute to Tenant Involvement through the relevant involvement thread ie estate walkabouts, job shadowing. All staff will be responsible for feeding back to individual tenant queries as well as issues raised through the various tenant group meetings. Staff will be required to attend Tenant Panel, Monitoring and Involvement Group meetings if and when appropriate.

The Head of Housing Management Services will work with the team leader and tenant groups to develop tenant involvement across the district of Richmondshire.

How will Councillors be involved?

Elected Members will help support tenant involvement by:

- Including the Tenant Panel at Scrutiny One meetings in a non-voting capacity.
- Including information on tenant involvement activities in all relevant committee papers.
- Participating with the Tenant Panel and Tenant Monitoring Group on a quarterly basis (Cllr spokesperson for Housing).

How will Leaseholders be involved?

We will invite leaseholders to join a Leaseholder Panel. This group would meet twice a year and will give leaseholders the opportunity to raise housing issues that are of concern to them such as service charges and works to communal areas.

How we will help you with costs

Your involvement is crucial to the development of the housing services and monitoring of housing standards. For this reason the council will reimburse reasonable costs incurred in attending meetings and training events. Costs covered are:

- Transport (car mileage/bus/train fare)
- Car parking charge
- Child care fee

Receipts will be required for expenses to be paid.

An annual budget to help with the delivery of the agreement will be agreed yearly.

How we will communicate with you

We will communicate with tenants using a variety of ways. They are:

- Minutes of meetings held
- Individual letters
- Leaflets and posters
- The Grapevine newsletter (twice yearly)
- Leaseholders News (twice yearly)
- Information on the Council Website
- Annual tenants Newsletter
- Ad-hoc meetings/focus groups as required
- Surveys and consultations
- Enquiries to housing staff

- Information on the Councils Web site
- Appropriate use of the Media
- Individual visits

How we will support the development of Recognised Estate Forums

In order to be recognised by the Council and to become eligible for grants, Estate Forums must:

- Be open to all tenants in an area
- Have a constitution agreed by the Council
- Have a commitment to and operate in a manner which promotes equal opportunities
- Maintain financial records which are open to the Council and which are audited annually
- Hold at least four meetings a year
- Hold an Annual General Meeting, and send minutes to the Council
- Operate in a fair and democratic manner.

As a formally constituted body the Tenants Panel would be expected to also meet this criterion.

We will help provide financial support for new and existing Estate Forums at rates of:

- £200 for new groups
- £50 per annum for established groups who continue to meet the recognition criteria.

Annual grants are subject to groups continuing to meet the recognition criteria and providing the council with audited accounts.

Annual grants are expected to cover:

- Room hire
- Refreshments
- Travel costs for tenants to Estate Forum meetings
- Care and childcare costs for tenants to Estate Forum meetings.

How you can complain if you are not happy

If you feel that something has not been dealt with in accordance with this agreement you can raise your concerns. You can raise your concerns with the Housing Management Team Leader who will try to address your concerns. If you are still not happy you can write to the Head of Housing Management Services with your concerns. If you believe your concern is still not addressed appropriately you can make a formal complaint using the Council's Feedback Policy. Details can be found in all of the Council's Community Offices and on the Council's Web site, www.richmondshire.gov.uk

How can you be involved – Menu of Involvement

Type of Involvement	What is this	Amount of involvement
Tenant Surveys & questionnaires	Complete and return housing surveys	😊
Sounding Board	Complete and return questionnaires relating to housing guides and service standards	😊
Tenant Suggestion Scheme	Make suggestions to improve the housing service using the standard form available at all community offices or to download from www.richmondshire.gov.uk	😊
Editorial group	Meets to discuss content and layout of tenant newsletter	😊😊
Tenant Involvement Group	Meet four times a year to monitor the ways in which tenants have been consulted/involved in housing services	😊😊😊
Tenant Service Monitoring Group	Meet four times a year to monitor the performance of the housing service	😊😊😊
Tenant Panel	Meets monthly to review and develop service plans and regulatory requirements. Attends Scrutiny Committee 1 meetings and feeds in tenant reports	😊😊😊😊
Estate Walkabouts	Meets several times a year with the Estate Managers to walk the estate	😊😊😊
Village Voice/Area Interest Groups	Raises issue of concern through the Tenant Panel. Used where there are insufficient numbers in specific area to allow for area interest group to form. Contact via telephone/letter	😊

**This Tenant Involvement is signed
on behalf of**

**Richmondshire District Council
and
Richmondshire Tenants Panel**

this _____ day of _____ 2010

Signed on behalf of Richmondshire District Council:

**Signed Richmondshire District
Council**

**Signed Councillor Spokesperson
for Housing**

Signed on behalf of Richmondshire Tenants Panel:

**Signed Richmondshire Tenants
Panel Chair Person**