



Tenant Engagement Review

2022-2023



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Tenant Engagement Review Report - November 2022 - December 2023

Introduction

This Review details the various Tenant Engagement activities between November 2022 and December 2023. In November 2023 we launched our Tenant Engagement Strategy; the Strategy sets out how Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's will develop tenant engagement opportunities and how we embed tenant engagement into all elements of our Housing services.

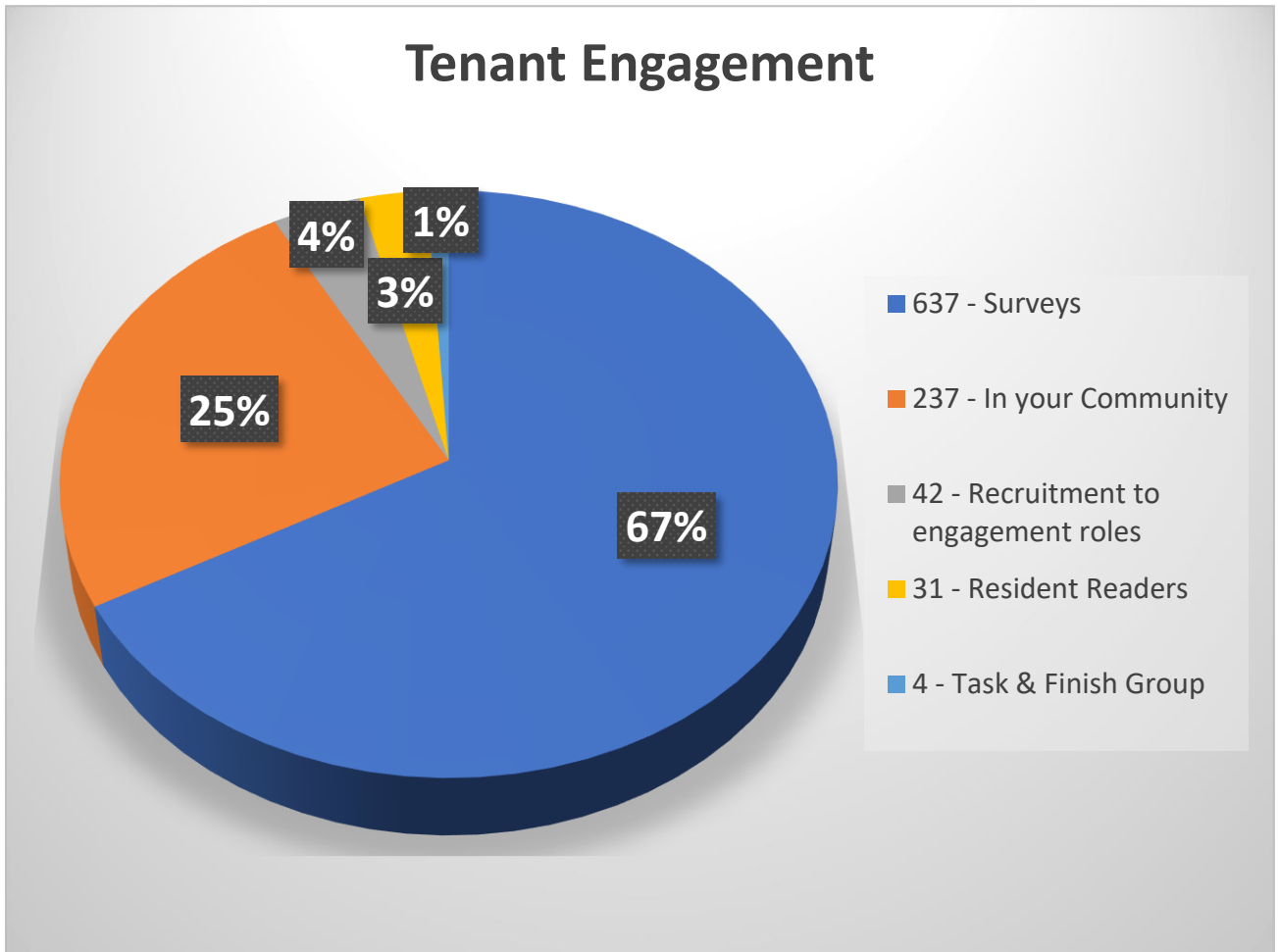
The strategy was written following extensive consultation with tenants via a survey with over 1,000 responses.

Our focus over the past year has been:

- **Recruit to the Tenant Board and specifically strengthening it with a broader demographic.**
- **Develop our process for planning Community Action Days and hold 6 CADs across both Districts.**
- **Acknowledge two key areas which would benefit from Greater Places funding, consult with the tenants and get the process started.**
- **Embed the priorities of the Tenant Engagement Strategy and work towards fulfilling and further developing the Tenant Engagement Action Plan.**
- **Work more closely with colleagues both inside and outside of the Housing Team to embed Tenant Engagement into working practices across the organisation.**

Engaging with Tenants and Residents

From November 2022, the Tenant Engagement Team engaged with **951** of the tenants and residents who live in our communities in the following ways.



My Home Bulletin



My Home Bulletin is an online Newsletter that is sent to every Tenant that we have an address for. We sent out 19 My Home Bulletins to 4,663 Tenants between November 2022 and December 2023.

The topics that Tenants engaged with the most:

- **Cost of living advice and support**
- **Neighbourhood Expert and Tenant Board recruitment**
- **Keeping safe (fire safety information)**
- **Updates on new repairs contractors**
- **Tenant Dashboard launch**

Next Steps

This year we would like to focus on engaging with residents more on complaints and on ways we can improve their neighbourhoods. We will therefore be recruiting to both Neighbourhood Expert and Complaints Expert voluntary roles for tenants.

We will also be using the information tenants tell us through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and Complaints to help identify where services can improve and where we can engage with residents to help shape these improvements.

One main issue that we will also be working with our tenants on in 2024 is service charges, firstly in Sheltered Schemes and then in General Needs properties.

We will also be working with tenants about how we should communicate rent increases, and what information they want to see in the letters all tenants receive.

We also want to use our My Home Bulletin to tenants for more targeted communications such as explaining our challenges and what are plans are to address these, working with Corporate Managers in Housing to develop the messages that they want to share.

Tenant Board

The Tenant Board has gained 4 new members since November 2022 and in total we have 8 Board Members. We have held 9 Board meetings between November 2022 and December 2023. The Board now have monthly meetings which are online and held in the evening to make allowances for members who work and will run 11 times a year with no meeting in December.

The Tenant Board have been focussing on the following topics/ tasks:

- Consumer Standards Consultation response
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures scores
- Rent increases
- Performance Dashboards
- Overseeing Greater Places projects
- Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy consultation
- Complaints statistics
- Tenant Engagement Strategy review
- Tenant Board Terms of Reference
- Engagement Activities Code of Conduct

Board activities in 2024

This year our Tenant Board will complete at least 2 in depth scrutiny projects on subjects they will chose. They recently had a training session from TPAS (Tenant Participation advisory Services) on the subject of Scrutiny.

Alongside this we are also expecting the Tenant Board to have a greater involvement in the setting of the Tenant Influence Budget in September.

The Board will be heavily involved in the creation of the Annual Report to Tenants and will be making decisions on the content and the design of the document. A review of Tenant Engagement activities and outline of future opportunities will also now be included in this.

In 2024 The Tenant Board will continue to work with us to monitor the performance data from the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, Performance Dashboards and complaints Statistics. The Board will also help BMSDC complete the annual self-assessment against the Regulatory Standards.

Community Action Days

In 2023 we held 8 Community Action Days (CADs) – four in each District. CADs are used to tackle a particular problem in one of our communities. 7 of the 8 CAD's were spent clearing up the communal areas, working with the Public Realm team to improve the appearance of the communal areas and remove bulky waste and fly-tipping. One of the days focused on the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the area and included partnership working with Sudbury Police.

We letter-drop the tenants and residents beforehand to notify them of our plans and encourage them to speak to us on the day or via email to try to understand what we can do to improve their area. From this work we have been able to identify multiple Greater Places projects.

Any staff member can volunteer on our CADs and they have been growing in popularity. We have found that it is both a great induction activity for new starters and also a good team-building activity.

We completed 8 Community Action Days between November 2022 and October 2023 in the following areas:

Area	Actions	Outcomes
The Twinnings Stowmarket	Bulky waste clearance Fly tipping clearance Overgrown vegetation cleared from over garages and across parking. Assisted vulnerable tenant to clear communal stairwell	Area remains clear and tidy. Stairwells remain clear and no longer a fire hazard. Tenants were very grateful for the assistance.
Cavendish and Minden, Sudbury	Fly tipping and general waste clearance Overgrown vegetation partly cleared from communal area and garages.	Day curtailed as it snowed heavily and we had to stop.
Cavendish and Minden, Sudbury (ASB)	Engaged with residents about any Anti-Social Behaviour in the area. Raised Awareness of Police Presence in the area.	Tenants made aware of how to report ASB to the police and to BMSDC. After visiting the area, we understood that ASB was at a minimal level after previous actions from BMSDC and the

	<p>Worked with Citizens Advice Bureau to raise awareness of their services. Understand what Improvements residents would like to see in the area</p>	<p>police. Understood that residents would like their area to be tidier and have a bin store in place.</p>
<p>Gainsborough Road, Stowmarket</p>	<p>Liaised with Grounds to all visit on same day. Arrived with large group of volunteers from staff and members plus Grounds staff and equipment. Cleared communal garden; overgrown vegetation, cut grass, cleared verges, removed fly-tipping. Cleared other areas; car park area, cleared access to rear of properties, removed overhanging vegetation and cleared pathways. Removed fly tipping.</p>	<p>Area was assessed as a good candidate for Greater Places. Subsequently held a tenant consultation day regarding the communal garden. Now have a plan via a Surveyor and liaison with Waste Services and carrying out a site visit w/c 20th January with Project Manager.</p>
<p>Blackfriars, Sudbury</p>	<p>Grounds clearance of communal areas including walkways, car park and drying areas. Bulky waste Collection for all residents. Residents were asked to speak to us on the day about how we could improve their area.</p>	<p>Was made a contender for Greater Places fund in which we found 11 improvements we could complete. We also collected 13 bins worth of green waste.</p> <p>Held a consultation day after the CAD 3 months later to talk to tenants further about their views on the proposed changes to site.</p>
<p>John Swain Close, Needham Market</p>	<p>Attended with team of volunteers and Grounds Maintenance colleagues. Limited bulky waste clearance, some fly tipping clearance.</p>	<p>Area remains clear and on visiting on several occasions the parking space we cleared is in constant use by the resident meaning the grass area is now clear and recovering.</p>

	<p>Cleared overgrown vegetation in many areas including clearing a parking space for a pregnant tenant who had been parking on grass.</p>	
<p>First and Second Avenue, Sudbury</p>	<p>Bulky Waste Clearance and Fly Tipping Clearance. Meet residents on the estate to understand what improvements can be made to the area.</p>	<p>Collected 6 Tonnes of waste. No fly tipping in this area in September- December. Public Realm conducted a full estate clean after the CAD in October after residents said that they were dissatisfied with the ground maintenance.</p>
<p>Upper Rose Lane, Palgrave</p>	<p>Limited bulky waste clearance, fly tipping clearance. Tenants on the street involved in directing work. Cleared vegetation overhanging road into parking area to make it safer by improving visibility. With assistance of tenant helped another vulnerable tenant to clear a great deal of horded waste.</p>	<p>Area remains clear and hoarding tenant is keeping his garden clear of items. Tenants very grateful for the work.</p>

Community Action Days 2024

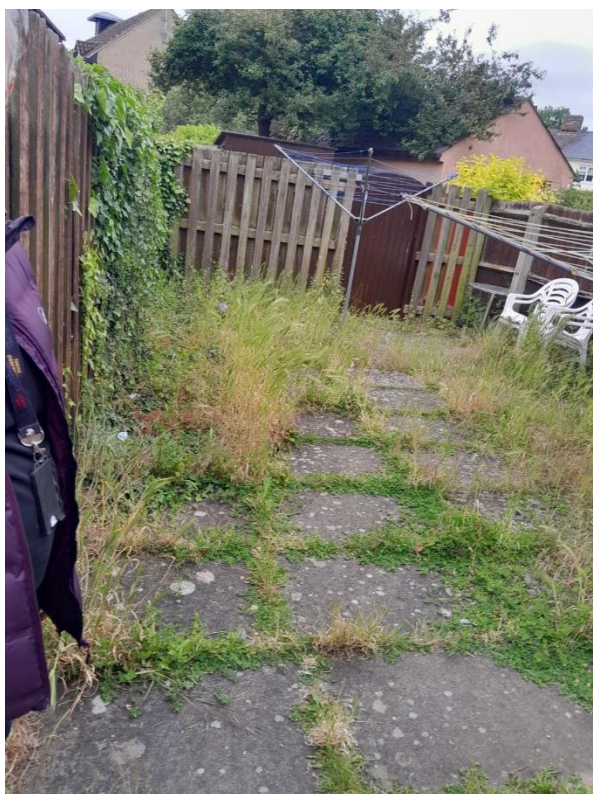
Between February and October 2024, we will hold our Community Action Days at the following places:

Babergh

- Toppesfield Gardens, Hadleigh
- St Andrews Drive, Chelmondiston
- Elm Estate, East Bergholt
- Shawlands Avenue Estate, Great Cornard (Area still to be confirmed)
- Meadow Close, Lavenham

Mid Suffolk

- St Peters Close/ Station Road, Claydon
- Hill Rise area in Coombs Ford, Stowmarket
- Maple Way, Pine and Elizabeth Court, Eye
- Denny Close and Eve Balfour Way, Haughley



Before



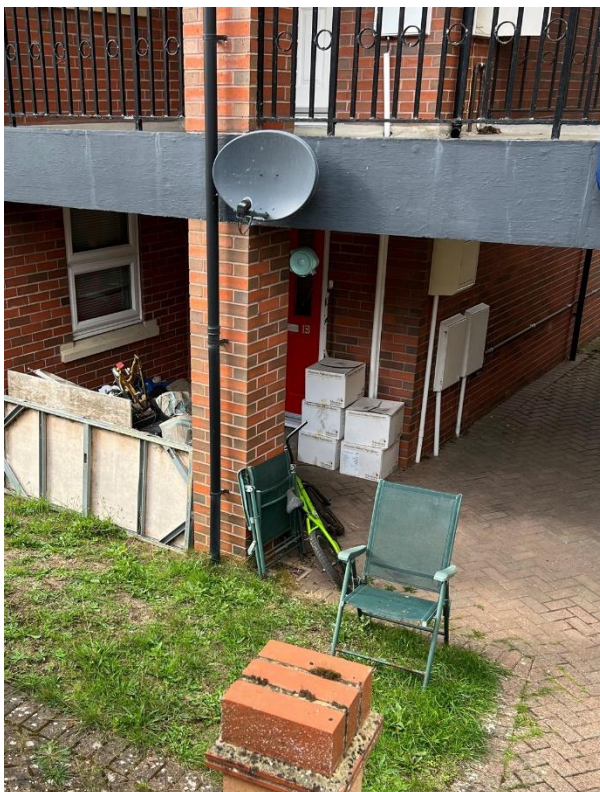
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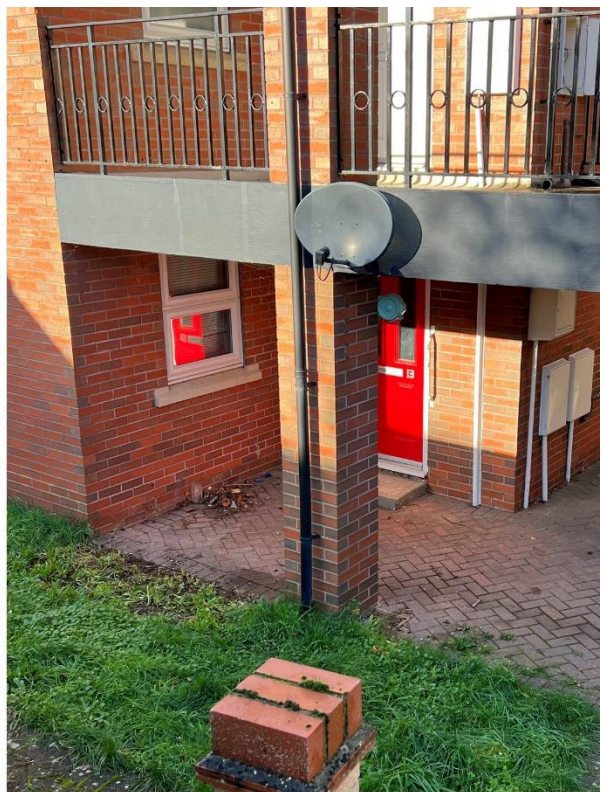
Before



After



Before



After



Greater Places is the name for our capital environmental improvements budget that funds any improvement works to any asset owned by the Housing Revenue Account including any cost associated with the capital projects.

We have identified 48 Improvements across 11 Sites.

Our first three sites we are prioritising in 2024 are:

Area	Projects
<p>Gainsborough Road, Stowmarket</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation of communal garden. • Changing layout to have 'utility' areas at either end with rotary lines, improved bin stores and bike racks. • Replacing uneven pathways. • Re-landscaping central garden to include more trees and benches and replacing fencing around it. • Add a dog foul bin. • Move bin store at top as is currently outside tenant's kitchen window.
<p>Blackfriars, Sudbury</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacing rotary lines • Removal of shin height posts on green space • Road signs to Blackfriars and clearer signs for all current signage • Dog foul bins • Potential garden upgrades for block • 2 bin stores • Removal of fence and damaged rotary line next to 74 • Lockable bike racks in communal area

<p style="text-align: center;">Sandringham Court, Sudbury</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning and repainting of the walkway barriers• Cleaning of all windows, doors and frames.• General clearing of weeds and replanting with low maintenance shrubs to be maintained by public realm moving forward.• Cleaning and possible repainting of the stair wells• Remove graffiti from around the site• Replace/ renew the rotary washing lines• Replace/ renew the benches• Block paving in some of the common areas
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Tenant Engagement Culture

How our team have promoted and embedded Tenant Engagement in within BMSDC:

Housing Improvement Days	2 Improvement days in 2023 with 2 planned for 2024.
Housing Managers Meeting	Attended to present on Tenant Engagement and advised when and how to use the Tenant Engagement resource. Also advised that TE will be a measure on annual review documentation.
Complaints Taskforce	Attend to assist with planning and minuting the meeting. Also provide group with how we can use Tenant Engagement to get more details about complaints satisfaction. Tenant Board member is on Taskforce.
In Touch In Tune	Compose and supply articles throughout the year to promote Tenant Engagement and its procedures. Used to recruit volunteers for CADs.
Public Realm	Liaison throughout the year to ensure our work is aligned. Also, to plan Community Action Days and Play Park consultations.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Bus Tour	<p>Planning, organisation and running of day to take the members to visit various housing schemes across both Districts and give them an idea of scale in terms of need for investment in housing improvements.</p> <p>The tour was very well received, and the Governance team are considering running it for both Cabinet and SLT.</p>
Income Team Meeting	Promote how Tenant Engagement would be useful to understanding how we can improve communication with tenants via a rent letter review. Have run a survey with tenants to get feedback and rent letters being revised.

We have collaborated with the following teams to embed Tenant Engagement into our practices:

Team	Purpose
Resident Engagement Team	<p>Liaising to ensure all engagement is aligned across the council and attending quarterly Resident Engagement meetings with other teams who have a stake in Resident Engagement.</p> <p>This will now include the use of Citizen Lab which is a tool designed for Local Authorities to engage with their residents.</p>
Building Services and Compliance Team	<p>Working alongside to deliver Stigma training at Toolbox Talks.</p> <p>Working with Health and Safety Compliance Team on survey to improve reporting for Tenants.</p>
Digital Transformation Team	<p>Worked alongside to carry out pilots of Digital Skills training in Sheltered Schemes across the Districts.</p>
Communications Team	<p>To ensure we are communicating about Tenant Engagement in and out of the organisation.</p>
Tenancy Services	<p>Carried out a survey and Task and Finish group on incentivising downsizing.</p> <p>Housing Officers also are involved in Community Action Days and Consultation days for Greater Spaces initiative.</p>
Neighbourhoods Team	<p>Continuous liaison regarding CAD planning and execution.</p> <p>Now planning to liaise on Estate Inspections to include our Tenant Neighbourhood Experts.</p>
Communities Team	<p>Worked alongside on family fun days and they also now have started to attend our Community Action Days.</p>

Working with outside organisations

Organisation	Purpose
Suffolk Police	Community Action Day in Cavendish and Minden to demonstrate police presence in the area and to share our joint goal in reducing ASB with residents.
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service	Community Action Day in First and Second Avenue and posted flyers to raise awareness of the work they do.
Citizens Advice Bureau	Community Action Day in Cavendish and Minden to increase awareness of the work CAB do.
Sudbury Town Council	Community Action Day First and Second Avenue to help us understand how we can improve our Community Action Days
Stowmarket Town Council	Attended Climate Change Workshops run by Stowmarket Council to raise awareness of Cosy Homes Initiative in Mid Suffolk
Ipswich Borough Council and East Suffolk Council	Working with local authorities to understand how we can work together and share learning in terms of Tenant Engagement. Will be working with IBC in 2024 for the "Meet the Ombudsman" Session