

# Tenant Participation Strategy 2025 - 2029



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# South Dublin - A Profile

South Dublin lies at the foot of the Dublin mountains and is bordered to the north by Dublin City, Fingal and Meath and to the south by Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Kildare and Wicklow. It covers an area of approximately 223 square kilometres.

As the council for South Dublin, we strive to be a citizen first, proactive organisation that serves all our communities today and for the future.



# Our Corporate Plan 2025-2029

## Our vision

To be a place that meets the needs and ambitions of everyone in South Dublin.

## Mission Statement

We will harness the talents of our skilled workforce to deliver inclusive and sustainable solutions.

By actively listening to our diverse communities, embracing technology and thinking innovatively we will create a resilient county that meets the needs of today and prepares us for the future.

## Our Equality and Human Rights Duty

As a public body, the council has an obligation under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (Section 42) to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and of treatment, and protect human rights for service users, staff, elected members and policy beneficiaries, in the implementation of all our functions. We have given effect to this Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty by undertaking an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment on the final draft of this Tenant Participation Strategy, and will continue to address the equality and human rights issues identified as relevant to the strategy (See appendix One) as part of its ongoing implementation

In this, we are concerned to enable and include the diversity of our tenants across the identified group for the Duty: groups covered by the nine protected grounds under equality legislation: gender (including gender identity); civil status; family status (including lone parents and carers); age; disability; sexual orientation; race (encompassing race, colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins); religion; and membership of the Traveller community; groups covered by the ground of socio- economic status, who are at risk of or experiencing poverty and social exclusion; and individual rights holders under relevant human rights instruments.

Our Corporate Plan 2025 – 2029, sets out three overarching corporate objectives and the Tenant Participation Strategy is linked to the following corporate objectives:

- Promote residents' health and wellbeing.
- Enable appropriate housing development.
- Prioritise community safety and empowerment.

The plan also has a number of high-level goals. These goals represent our ambitions to improve life in our communities, strengthen our economy and support our environment. Goals that are directly associated with this strategy are:

- Quality Housing
- Connected Communities and Citizens
- Citizen First
- Climate Leadership



# Introduction



Our Tenant Participation Strategy covers the period between 2025 and 2029 and details our commitment to making our county an inclusive safe place to live, work and visit. We manage over 10,500 social homes and our aim is to empower our tenants: by promoting, encouraging and supporting active engagement, to ensure a sense of civic pride, a sense of connection and belonging to their community. We will endeavour to listen to our tenants' voices when it comes to how we can support and improve their quality of life where they live, by creating an inclusive active and safe community for all. We are a citizen centred organisation.

We will ensure that the diversity of our tenants, from all identified groups under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, are fully included and have opportunities to express their views. Tenants needs and aspirations will inform our discussions, planning processes and actions. We believe that tenant participation is the key to improving social housing for all. Getting things done right in a way that serves all our communities, citizens and partners while laying down the foundations for a resilient and bright future for our county.

Engaging residents in the business of housing ensures that policies and practices are aligned to our tenants needs. Both directly and in consultation with representative associations, in housing management and maintenance decision-making, and in housing policy formation and any proposed changes.

There are several levels of tenant participation, ranging from operational to strategic. These are broadly represented as information, consultation, involvement, and partnership. The engagement at each level will depend on the tenant's capacity and availability. It is necessary to stress that all levels of engagement are equally important in the effective delivery of services.

We have a dedicated Estate Management Team made up of Anti-Social Behaviour/Community Safety Officers, Anti-Social Officers, Housing Officers working throughout the county and managing council tenancies. Our Housing Officers will support the setting up of locally based tenant participation working groups within our own estates to ensure tenants are afforded the opportunity to share ideas, information and have input into decisions that improve services within their communities and housing provision. We will promote cross departmental cooperation to further support the development of initiatives like Tidy Towns through community supports, funding and training. We are committed to actively engage and inform our communities on climate action initiatives.

We provide training for our Community Safety Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and Housing Officers on:

- Recognising discrimination and preventing it;
- Understanding diversity and responding to the specific needs that arise from it; and
- Promoting equality and achieving positive outcomes for people from diverse backgrounds.

We ensure that all officers complete this training so they can respond effectively and appropriately to the diverse needs of our tenants.

This strategy is rooted in our equality and human rights values of respect, participation, accessibility, and inclusion and seeks to give practical effect to these values in our commitment to tenant participation. We will continue to actively engage these values in our ongoing implementation of this strategy, and across all the different levels of participation involved.

# Definition

Tenant participation is a two-way process involving our tenants working in partnership with the council to share ideas, information and have input to decisions to improve services.

## What is tenant participation?

- Tenant participation is where the local authority engages with tenants, encouraging a two-way conversation about how our housing services are delivered.
- It creates the opportunity for tenants and the council to establish partnerships, share ideas, raise any concerns, and work together to improve and inform services, processes and decisions relating to housing services.
- Tenant Participation involves the diversity of tenants across the identified groups for the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and is tailored to enable full access and effective participation.

## Who should be Involved?

- Participation will be open to all council tenants within the area (considering that there can be several levels of tenant participation, ranging from operational to strategic). These are broadly represented as information, consultation, involvement, and partnership.



# Purpose

## Our aims

- To set out the council's approach to tenant involvement
- To clarify the reasons why we seek to involve our tenants
- To ensure that tenants, including the diversity of our tenants, are actively, appropriately and meaningfully involved in housing services
- To set out ways in which we will enable and encourage tenants to be involved and demonstrate that tenants are part of a continual improvement process

## Our objectives

- To promote and enhance tenant participation, communication and consultation, in a manner that is accessible to and inclusive of the diversity of our tenants, through the development of new tenant engagement strategy
- To ensure that tenant involvement is central to the operation of the council
- To establish and further strengthen links between tenants, the council and organisations working in their wider community

## Why get involved in tenant participation?

Effective participation gives you as a tenant an opportunity to influence decisions about the housing services you receive and helps us to deliver better services that focus on tenant priorities.

## The benefits of tenant participation

When working well, tenant participation delivers clear benefits for our tenants, staff, elected members, and the wider community.

These include:

- Working together for common goals with respect and understanding and doing so in a manner that is free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.
- Improved service delivery and improved outcomes for tenants which gives value for money
- Informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and estate / community
- Identifying actions for service and performance improvements and working together to implement these recommended improvements

The benefits of tenant participation and the improvements in service delivery will evolve overtime as communication and participation structures strengthen.

Tenant participation can only be effective where we as a council are committed to creating a culture of involving tenants, in our decision-making process. We are committed to embracing tenant participation, that is accessible and inclusive, at the most senior level, including elected members and members of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee who are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the council.

### **Supporting tenant involvement**

The council is committed to supporting full tenant participation by providing capacity-building and training opportunities for individuals and groups. Tenants will be kept informed of available training and encouraged to take parts. In this, particular attention is given to identifying and responding appropriately to the specific information, resources, and skills needs of our tenants across the identified groups for the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, to enable their full and effective participation.



# Our Commitments

To put tenant's views at the centre of our housing and estate management delivery, to reach this aim we will:

- Use our resources to support tenant participation and do so in a manner that is safe for, accessible to and inclusive of our tenants.
- Invite our tenants and service users to actively review our policies
- Consult, listen and act on what our tenants tell us
- Provide feedback to our tenants, on our response to the views and positions they have put forward throughout various participation processes
- Offer a range of opportunities for tenants to be involved, ensuring these are designed and implemented in a manner that responds to the specific needs of our tenants to ensure accessibility.
- Make our communities a better place to live
- Help build networks between tenants and local communities
- To link in with other council services and relevant state and local agencies
- Provide tenancy training and information at tenancy sign up with three follow up tenancy checks
- Develop Local Tenant Participation Working Groups action plans that will set out key milestones to be delivered meeting the needs and aspirations of our tenants.

## How to build a local tenant participation strategy

### Our Staff

Housing Officers will play an important role in creating local plans. Getting staff involved early helps them feel responsible and interested in making the strategy work.

Their involvement can have various benefits such as:

- Delivering local services and working with tenants directly.
- Help identify target areas of concern and develop a series of interventions to address them
- Ensuring that the local strategy is effective and fit for purpose
- Share experiences and suggestions for changes that could help improve how we deliver our services to tenants

### Local tenant participation working groups

Local tenant participation in working groups to be set up in each area made up of tenants and Housing Officers. The purpose of the working group is to enable staff and residents to work together to improve the services locally.

### **Countywide participation working groups**

The Countywide Participation Working Group consists of members of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee, senior housing and community staff and tenant representatives, including the diversity of tenants. The countywide working group coordinates and links the work of the various local tenant participation working groups and acts as a forum where policy decisions affecting tenants, can be agreed for recommendation.

#### **Steps Involved in building a local tenant participation strategy:**

##### **What's involved?**

- Identify the target area, the local issues and establish key objectives, goals and targets
- Develop and circulate a tenant participation survey
- Identify key local players - formation of the local working group, ensuring diversity in its composition
- Develop a Local Action Plan with achievable actionable goals and timeframes
- Measure outcomes

### **Tenant participation survey**

- A tenant survey is an important tool that the council can use to gather feedback from our tenants. Surveys cover issues relating to maintenance and efficiency, property satisfaction, communication and engagement, interactions with front line staff, and barriers to getting involved.
- A tenant participation survey can be circulated to each home within the agreed location
- The key findings of the tenant engagement survey will be analysed, capturing the specific perspectives of tenants, made available, and will provide the basis to develop the aims and objectives of a local tenant participation strategy. Ensuring steps are taken to support and track the contribution of tenants across the identified groups for the Duty.

### **Tenant participation action plans**

Following analysis of the survey by the working group in consultation with other council departments if required, local action plans will be developed outlining steps and commitments that will be undertaken, ensuring these are inclusive of the needs and aspirations of tenants.

# Who should be involved?

Tenant involvement in the development of your strategy can take several different forms. Firstly, tenants should be invited to become involved at a level that they feel comfortable with. Secondly, steps should be taken to ensure the diversity of tenants in the area are included, giving attention to encouragement and accessibility in achieving this. Focus groups, surveys, and community events and are just some mechanisms that could be used to inform the thinking and provide information to inform the development of the strategy. Once developed and in draft form, tenants should be involved in agreeing to the final plan and content of their local participation strategy.

# How to engage tenants?

## Formation of a tenant participation local working group

- Membership is open to all tenants
- Housing Officers
- Nominations from locally based organisations

## How to be involved?

- Invite to participate via text, letter, in person and remote events at a level that suits you

## Working group meetings:

- Meetings will be independently chaired
- Tenants and housing staff will be in attendance
- Meetings will be conducted in a manner that ensures respect for, participation by and listening to all tenants involved.



# Tenant commitment

Tenant involvement in the development of your strategy can take different forms. Tenants will be invited to become involved at a level that suits them.

<b>Level 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responding to surveys</li> <li>Attending public meetings</li> <li>Providing feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A member of the local tenant participation working group</li> <li>Organise and attend community events</li> <li>Represent the community at council wide workshops and events</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An active member of the local tenant participation working group</li> <li>Develop and analyse a local survey</li> <li>Develop the local action plan</li> <li>Represent community at council wide workshops and events</li> <li>Report back to tenants</li> <li>Attend organised training and seminars</li> </ul>

## What's involved in being a member of your local tenant participation working group?

- Developing a code of conduct, that ensures a respectful, accessible and participative environment and a term of reference for your group
- Setting out the aims and objectives
- Preparing a survey for local circulation
- Analysing survey results
- Developing tenant local area action plans
- Assisting with the production of tenant newsletter and tenant handbook, and in ensuring an effective and accessible dissemination of these and communication of their contents to the diversity of tenants
- Participating in focus groups
- Estate walkabouts with housing staff
- Production of the tenant engagement plan for your estate
- Participating in training on governance structures, financing, effective meeting, diversity and equality, and the role of a chairperson

# Interagency cooperation

We will work closely with our partner agencies to encourage and support active engagement. We want to ensure a sense of civic pride, a sense of connection, and belonging to the community for our tenants.

The agencies involved in this work can include the following:

- An Garda Síochána
- Approved Housing Bodies
- Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Traveller Tenant Liaison Officer
- Housing and Disability Steering Group
- Health Service Executive
- Department of Education and Youth
- Local Drug and Alcohol Task Forces
- Local Community Safety Partnerships
- Local Policing Fora
- Youth Services
- South Dublin County Partnership

Cooperation between agencies will assist in ensuring a coordinated approach to tenant participation, support and encourage active engagement while having regard to the need to avoid duplication of activities by agencies.

We will work closely with those local civil society organisations that are representative of the identified groups for the Duty to inform and enable our commitment to involve the full diversity of tenants in the implementation of this strategy.



# Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure that we deliver on the objectives of this strategy it will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis through: -

- Tenant experiences feedback through surveys and questionnaires, including capturing the specific perspectives of our tenants
- Presentation to Housing Strategic Policy Committee/Local Area Committees

The evaluation will consider the overall effectiveness of the strategy and indicate future requirements having considered strategic and output targets such as:

- Tenant feedback and issues being raised
- The level of tenant participation.
- The number of new groups established within the county
- Profile of participants, including their diversity across the identified groups for the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and underrepresented groups
- The number of community events in the year

Regularly updating the strategy, reviewing and renewing the steps will allow us to establish a successful tenant participation strategy beneficial for all the stakeholders involved.



