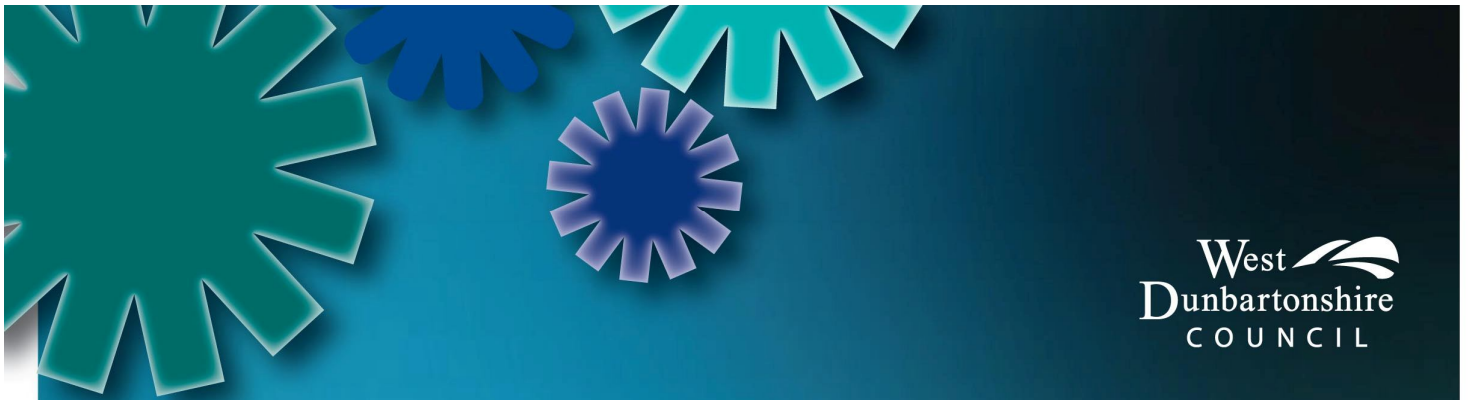




Tenant Communication Strategy

October 2014



Introduction

Welcome to a series of regular briefings prepared by the Housing Strategy and Development team on the big issues concerning housing. These briefings will be shared with staff, tenants and elected members and keep everyone up to date with regards the ever changing policy context that we are operating within.

The Housing Strategy and Development section is responsible for:-

- Providing the statutory strategic housing authority role within the local authority area
- Supporting the development of a culture of continuous improvement in Housing services and to facilitate opportunities to excel;
- Developing and implementing effective strategies for Housing and Community Safety Services within West Dunbartonshire;
- Developing the Council's housing strategy to ensure that it supports the delivery of our strategic priorities;
- Performance management within Housing and Community Safety services; and
- Promoting effective management and the involvement of tenants across all aspects of Housing Services.

For further information on Housing Strategy and Development please telephone 01389 737889 or e-mail: housing.strategy@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Background

We revised our Communication Strategy as part of the action plan in the Council's Tenant Participation Strategy 'Involving You 2013-16'. It sets out the ways in which the Council will communicate and feedback to its tenant and tenant organisations and includes the information requirements in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

The Communication Strategy identifies the standard and methods we will use to provide information, the types of information we will provide and how we will provide feedback.

Key principles

The Tenants' Communication Strategy adopts key principles endorsed by the Council and the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisations (WDTRO) including

- **Trust, respect and partnership**
- **Sharing information, ideas and power**
- **Setting the agenda together**
- **Allowing time to consider issues properly**
- **Openness and Accountability in Decision Making**
- **Recognition for tenants' organisations**
- **Good working relationships**
- **Providing resources for tenants and residents groups**
- **Including people**

To ensure that we do communicate effectively these key principles need to be integral to all our communications with tenants. The timing of communication is also critical to ensure that issues can be considered properly and for good working relationships to thrive.

Standards

Our Communication Strategy sets out standards on the information that our tenant and tenant organisations can expect from us. Our standard refers to all written and electronic communication. It will ensure that when we communicate, it can be easily understood by the widest audience possible. All our communications must comply with the Council's guidelines 'Communicating Effectively' and our publications will meet the Housing and Community safety Publication Standard ensuring accessibility and Plain English.

What it means for Tenants and West Dunbartonshire Council?

Good communication and feedback is the responsibility of all staff and everyone must meet the standards set out in the strategy.

The Council needs to be able to demonstrate where tenants and other service users have influenced or shaped housing services. Therefore, all our communication must meet the principles and standards set out in the strategy.

Ways of communicating with and provide information to tenants and tenant organisations

There are a number of methods used to communicate with and to provide information to our tenants and these are outlined in detail within the Tenant Communication Strategy.

Consultations

Consultations are an important part of working relationship between tenants and the Council and for improving services and policies. Tenants and Residents Associations are independent organisations that represent the views of people living in a particular area. Groups that meet the registration criteria set out by the Scottish Government are eligible to become Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) and have a recognised role within the tenant participation process.

The Council also has a statutory duty to consult with individual tenants as well as tenant organisations. Consultations will always be open to all tenants but we also have set up an 'interested tenant register' for tenants who wish to receive information or be involved in consultations.

The Council will produce a calendar for planned consultations each year and will include consultations on rents and any proposed policy changes.

The full version of the Consultation Strategy includes a section on Good Practice in consultation and critically on feeding back the outcome of consultations and demonstrating how tenants' views were taken into account.

Staff, tenants, RTO's and Councillors are all urged to read the full Communication Strategy to ensure our communication is positive and effective.

A copy of the Tenant Communication Strategy is attached with this briefing note and is also available on request, on our website and in other formats.

<http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies,-plans-and-policies/housing/tenant-communication-strategy/>

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