

Getting Involved with the Housing Service

We are keen for our tenants and leaseholders to be involved, at all levels, in decisions regarding the management of the housing service. There are a number of ways you can become involved and these are outlined below. If you would like to register your interest in any of the areas shown please complete the Tenant Involvement form at the end of this leaflet.

Attend an Area Forum or come to our Annual Residents' Conference

We hold annual meetings for all tenants and leaseholders in various locations across the district where residents can come to ask questions about the services provided. At least four meetings will happen each year, in different venues throughout the district. All tenants will be invited to attend one of these meetings. Also, once a year the Tenant and Leaseholder Customer Panel aim to organise a Residents' Conference, open to all tenants and leaseholders.



Delegates at a workshop at the 2007 Residents Conference

Join a tenant/resident association or start an association yourself

Through associations tenants come together to take up issues of common concern relating to their housing, community and general environment. As a tenant you will automatically qualify for membership.

The associations enable tenants to have a say on housing and estate matters and to:

- help towards building a friendly, caring community
- exercise choice in how services are delivered, and
- to find out more about how we work.

Some of the projects tackled by associations include landscaping of communal areas, securing a community meeting place, improving shared lighting, and fundraising for children's play area.

We currently have associations in the following areas:

- Lymebourne and Arcot Park, Sidmouth
- Trumps Court, York Street and Mill Street, Sidmouth
- Littleham, Exmouth
- Dray and Morgan Court, Exmouth

Add your name and contact details to the 'Key Players' register

We have a register of 'interested' tenants who are prepared to be consulted on various topics. This may involve:

- reading and commenting on various documents,
- filling out questionnaires,
- taking part in focus group discussions, or
- telephone conferences or surveys.

The range of topics which may be considered include repairs and maintenance, community development, younger/older tenants or black and minority ethnic tenants.

Within the register we have several different groups. You can add your name to just one or as many as you wish. Our current groups include:

- **‘e-consultation’** – if you are happy to be contacted by email
- **Reading Panel** – if you are prepared to read through and comment on documents before we send them out to the wider tenant body
- **Telephone survey group** – if you are prepared to be contacted at home to answer over the phone surveys
- **Postal survey group** – if you would be happy to answer brief surveys sent to you at home

You may also be interested in joining one of our **‘working groups’** looking at different parts of our service. These groups are made up of both tenants and staff and we currently have two groups, one focusing on our Repairs Service and one on the Sheltered Housing Service.

Become a member of the Tenant and Leaseholder Customer Panel

The Panel considers issues affecting tenants across the district. The Tenant and Leaseholder Customer Panel was set up in December 1995 to encourage tenants to become more actively involved with decision making in the Council. In April 2006 the Panel altered its constitution to include two leaseholder members. We are always keen to hear from new tenants or leaseholders who would like to be involved.

Find out about the work of the Housing Review Board

The Board was set up in 2006 following the Stock Options Appraisal. It consists of 5 Council members, 5 tenant and leaseholder representatives and 2 independent community representatives. Normally Board members will serve for a maximum of five years, subject to annual reappointment by the Council, with the objective that every three years one third of the committee will stand down.

The role of the Housing Review Board is to:

- consider matters relating to the Council's landlord and housing management functions,
- advise the Council's Executive Board on housing policy and operational practice, where this affects the Council's tenants and leaseholders,
- keep under review the housing stock options appraisal and monitor the conditions which will influence the future arrangements for the ownership and management of the Council's housing stock, and
- promote good practice and monitor service delivery

Take part in our Garden Competition

Each year we organise a garden competition, open to council tenants. There are usually about six different categories (for example best overall garden, and containers and hanging baskets) with a one off 'special' prize for the best or most original feature. The competition is advertised in the spring edition of the Housing Standard newsletter. Judging usually takes place in July with a prize-giving ceremony in September.



Apply for a Community Initiative Grant

If you have a project or an idea that benefits the tenants of East Devon District Council you can apply for a grant from the Community Initiative Fund. You don't need to be part of a recognised group to apply, but the funding has to go to a project which will benefit a number of tenants.

Listed below are some examples of the grants that were awarded in 2006/07:

- Broadview View and Wiltshire Close Social Club, Broadclyst, for new curtains for the community centre
- LARF (Littleham's Associations Residents and Friends) for their May Fun Day
- Morgan and Dray Court Social Club for a new bench, and new carpet for the community centre
- Dunning Court Community Centre, Honiton for a garden shed
- St Paul's Project, Honiton, for a camera, printer and other equipment
- Trumps Court, Sidmouth, for some folding garden chairs

The fund is managed by the Tenant and Leaseholder Customer Panel and they are able to award grants of up to £1000 to community projects.



Mrs Greenland in the newly carpeted community centre at Morgan Court'

Request a copy of our Tenant Partnership Agreement.

We have drawn up an agreement (currently known as the Tenant Compact), with our tenants setting out our commitment to tenant involvement with the housing service. If you would like to see a copy of this please contact Tenant Participation. The Compact is currently being redrafted and will be available in its revised format shortly.

Levels of Involvement

	Once a year	Every 3 months	Every 2 months	Every 4-6 weeks	About once a month
Attend an Area Forum meeting					
Enter the Garden Competition					
Join a Residents Association		about 2 hours			
Join the e-consultation group			about 1/2 hour		
Join the Reading Panel			about 2 hours		
Take part in telephone surveys			about 1/2 hour		
Take part in a postal surveys			about 1/2 hour		
Join the Tenant & Leaseholder Customer Panel				about 3 hours *	
Consider standing for the Housing Review Board					at least 3 hours *

* Also requires preparation (reading etc) prior to meetings

You can contact us by:

Writing to: Tenant Participation,
Housing & Social Inclusion Service
East Devon District Council,
Knowle, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 8HL

Telephoning: 01395 517453

Email: tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk

Tenant Involvement Form

Please complete this form to let us know the involvement areas you are interested in.

Name

Your Address

Postcode

Telephone No.

Email Address

I am interested in joining, or taking part in:

	Yes	No
A Residents Association in my area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Tenant & Leaseholder Customer Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The 'e-consultation' group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Reading Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postal surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(PTO)



You can be involved in as much or as little as you wish. We have listed below some of the different areas where we have tenant involvement. If you are particularly interested in any of these please tick the box. If you are happy to be consulted on a variety of topics then you do not need to tick any particular areas.

I am interested in the following areas:

- Issues affecting young people
 - Issues affecting older people
 - Issues affecting disabled tenants
 - Issues affecting black and ethnic minority tenants
 - Issues affecting the community and environment
 - Issues to do with customer service
 - Issues to do with repairs and maintenance
 - Other (please give details):
-



Please send your completed form to:

The Tenant Participation Officers
Housing & Social Inclusion Service
East Devon District Council
Knowle
Sidmouth
Devon
EX10 8HL