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**Ref No:** EQ347545188

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**Officer Name:** Emma Cook

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**Title of report:** Tenant Engagement Strategy

**Report :** Tenancy Services is committed to improving the way we work and engage with our tenants and leaseholders. We want them to feel able to hold us to account and have opportunities to become actively involved in shaping the housing service. To that end we will be introducing a new Tenant Engagement Strategy. This Strategy will set out the Council's overall approach to tenant engagement and defines the vision and priorities. It aims to set out the direction for tenant engagement and supports our commitment to involving tenants in shaping and scrutinising services.

**What evidence/data is being used to support this equality analysis? Please select all that apply.:** Analysis of service data (e.g I-card), Information from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey

**Service area:** Tenancy Services

**Head of Service or Chief Operating Officer:** Ian Blofield

**Head of Service email:** Ian.Blofield@ipswich.gov.uk

**Links to supporting documents where available:**

**Please upload any supporting documents:**

**What is proposed?:** Implementation of a new Tenant Engagement Strategy

**Why are the changes being introduced?:** There is currently no requirement for Councils in England to have and publish a Tenant Engagement Strategy however, events over recent years, notably the Grenfell Tower fire, have pushed the issue of tenant engagement (alongside tenant empowerment and voice) to the fore. These issues feature prominently in the newly published Social Housing White Paper: 'Charter for Social Housing Residents'.

In addition, the Regulator of Social Housing requires landlords to show how they have sought out and considered ways to improve tenant engagement. A Tenant Engagement Strategy will allow us to define a clear purpose for tenant involvement and engagement and demonstrate that the Council is actively improving the way it engages with tenants to ensure that the tenant voice is heard and plays an important part in shaping the housing service.

**What evidence is being used to support this Equality Impact Assessment, and how is it being used?:** Tenant data from the Housing Management System

Information from our Tenant Satisfaction survey

**How will this change be implemented?:** Following tenant consultation a report will be prepared for Council Executive with a recommendation that Executive approves and adopts the new Tenant Engagement Strategy and authorises the Operations Manager for Tenancy Services to take all necessary steps to implement it. An Action Plan will be developed to underpin the whole Strategy. A Steering Group that includes tenants will oversee delivery of the action plan and progress will be reported regularly to tenants.

**Age:** Positive

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants of all ages will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. A key objective is to increase opportunities for tenant involvement. This includes developing, in conjunction with tenants, a new model of tenant engagement so tenants can get involved in a way that suits them. This will include removing any barriers to participation so all tenants have an opportunity to be represented regardless of age.

**Disability:** Positive

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. The Strategy will include a review of options available for involvement so tenants can get involved in a way that suits them. The Strategy aims to remove any disadvantage or barriers to participation, which includes any that may be as a result of a disability. This will include ensuring any meeting venues are accessible and local, providing a loop system at meetings, providing Information in a range of ways and different formats ie braille, large print, audio and provision of sign language services.

**Marriage & Civil Partnership:** No impact

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. No particular impact has been identified for this group however increasing opportunities for engagement for all tenants will ensure that any tenant who is married or in a civil partnership is able to become involved in way that suits them.

**Race:** Positive

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. The Strategy aims to ensure that all tenants are represented and can become involved. This includes engaging with communities that are currently underrepresented and / or seldom heard from, particularly tenants from different black and minority ethnic communities and making every effort to accommodate cultural and religious needs.

**Pregnancy & Maternity:** Positive

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants and leaseholders will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. The Strategy aims to remove any disadvantage or barriers to participation, which includes any that may be as a result of pregnancy or maternity. This includes ensuring there are sufficient comfort and rest breaks in meetings and providing any additional support wherever possible that may be required to meet a need.

**Religion or Belief:** Positive

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. This includes ensuring that there are no barriers to involvement for tenants with different religions or beliefs. Every effort will be made to accommodate any religious needs or beliefs.

**Gender Reassignment:** Positive

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. The Strategy aims to remove any disadvantage or barriers to participation, which includes any that may be as a result of gender reassignment. This includes providing any additional support required for this group where an individual need is identified.

**Sex:** Positive

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants of both sexes will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. When developing a new model of engagement consideration will be given to what circumstances or situation may limit a persons capacity or willingness to engage. In particular thought will be given to what may prevent men or women from engaging, such as caring or parenting responsibilities and work patterns etc. and how these barriers to participation can be removed.

**Sexual Orientation:** Positive

**Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.:** Engaging with tenants of all sexual orientations will help to shape and improve the Council's Housing Services and decision making. The Strategy aims to remove any disadvantage or barriers to participation, which includes any that may be as a result of sexual orientation. This includes providing any appropriate support that may be required so tenants can become involved.

**I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives:** I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives

**The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s):** The Tenant Engagement Strategy actively seeks to seek feedback and involve all tenants in the delivery of its housing services. All Tenant Engagement activities or events will be accessible to all.

**The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):** Tenants

will be encouraged to become more involved. We will be developing a new model of tenant engagement in conjunction with tenants so that they can become involved in a way that suits them and also be supported to become involved. This includes removing any barriers to participation. There will also be a focus on the communities that are currently under represented and/or seldom heard from.

**The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):**Improving the communication between the Council and it tenants and using what we are told to improve our services

**The new provisions will be reviewed in the following way(s):**A steering group will oversee implementation of the Strategy and associated action plan. Progress will be reported to tenants regularly, through Area Housing Panels, Tenant Get Togethers, Newsletters and the Annual Report.

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