

Resident Engagement Strategy

2022 - 2026



Foreward

Arun District Council is committed to delivering a high-quality service and to do that that we need to work in partnership with our residents and communities who are best placed to tell what is working well and how we can improve the services they receive.

We want to ensure the voice of our residents is heard throughout the organisation and that residents can influence and hold us accountable for our performance.

This strategy sets out five key aims on how we will deliver resident engagement and will ensure that there is a wide range of opportunities for residents to become involved.

Resident engagement will be an integral part of our culture and will mean residents are at the heart of everything we do, ensuring that we drive forward improvements with our residents.

I would like to thank everyone who helped contribute to this strategy and I look forward to starting work to bring about real change in the way we work with our residents.

Moh Hussein
Interim Head of Housing

I have been involved with the Council for the last 10 years and I am now Chair of the residents group Your Voice a platform to have your say on how the council are performing and communicating, with their tenants and Leaseholders.

Resident engagement is necessary within all councils, as it is somewhere we can have our views heard, question staff, and hold the council to account for their performance.

I feel it is important, to have that relationship with your landlord, to have your voice heard, to point out what you think is right, or wrong, and what is working, or not working, this allows us to have better communication with the council.

This strategy is also a chance to get involved with other residents, and to see first-hand, what work goes on in the community and what you can also get involved in.

I personally feel that it is important to know what is happening in the areas we live, and to be part of growing communities. The platform which is being created is a have improved communication and a better understanding of how services are run and the improvements that are being made.

If you have any spare time, pop in to one of our virtual meetings, and have your voice heard, read the magazine Arun at Home, there just maybe something, that affects you, and the area that you live in, that you want to get involved in.

Michele
Chair of Your Voice

Introduction

Welcome to our latest Resident Engagement Strategy which presents a real opportunity to ensure that residents can directly impact and influence services and strategy at Arun District Council. This strategy will cover the period 2022-2026.

For the purpose of this strategy the term 'resident' refers to anyone living in Arun District Council owned properties or accessing the council's housing service. This includes tenants, leaseholders and shared owners.

Since our last strategy the housing and political landscape has changed a great deal. Following the publication of The Social Housing Green Paper in 2018, which set out proposals to rebalance the relationship between residents and landlords, the Government has now published The White Paper a new Charter for Social Housing Residents and introduced the Social Housing Regulation Bill into parliament.

The White Paper sets out a new seven-point charter which every social housing resident should be able to expect from their landlord and it sets out proposals of what the government will do to ensure that landlords live up to the new charter. The proposals in the White Paper mark the start of a major reform of social housing in England and how it is regulated. The paper sets out the aim of the Regulator to strengthen the formal standards landlords must adhere to. It proposes greater transparency between a landlord and its residents, to ensure they can hold their landlord to account when they are not performing well.

"If tenants are to be able to hold their landlords to account, they need information on how their landlord is performing, what decisions it is making and who is responsible." – quote from Social Housing White Paper

The government expects landlords to be transparent about their performance and decision making, put things right when they go wrong, and listen to their residents through effective engagement.

This strategy sets out our commitment to resident engagement and will ensure that it meets the engagement standards set out by the government. We will ensure our residents are able to express their views in a way that suits them and that those views are heard throughout the council and directly impact on services and strategy.

Further, COVID-19 has thrust digital engagement into the spotlight and has led to new ways of working across the sector. Many have had to adapt the way they engage with their residents and develop new and innovative ways of ensuring residents are still involved. We will continue to develop our use of technology to engage and ensure residents have the right information and opportunities to share their views in whichever way suits them and that there are resources in place to enable this.

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Strategic priorities

In 'Our vision: A better future 2022-2026' we set out four key aims for the council.

- Improve the wellbeing of Arun residents
- Delivering the right homes in the right places
- Supporting our environment to support us
- Fulfilling Arun's economic potential

The Resident Engagement Strategy will support Arun District Council to achieve its vision.

The strategy is also very closely aligned and linked to the following organisational strategies and documents

- Council Vision
- Customer Services Strategy
- Digital Strategy

The strategy will also align to the following regulatory documents

- Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code

The following pages set out our vision for resident engagement and what we expect to achieve over the next four years.

Our priorities...



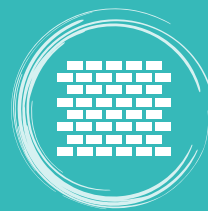
Improving the wellbeing of Arun



Delivering the right homes in the right places



Supporting our environment to support us



Fulfilling Arun's economic potential

Our vision for resident engagement

Our vision is that by 2026 our residents will have every opportunity to engage with us in the ways that suit them, delivering meaningful and outcome-focused resident involvement where they can influence and shape our current and future services.

Residents are at the heart of everything we do, and we want to make sure that we involve, communicate with, and listen to them effectively. We want to know and understand our residents and what they think about our services and their neighbourhood.

It is important that we ensure our residents voice is heard by involving them and capturing the valuable feedback they have so we can use these insights to improve and develop future services.

We will ensure we provide the right opportunities, in the right way and at the right time, and we will regularly review the way we involve residents to ensure it is effective and representative.

“Engagement can take many forms, but the crucial factor is that it is tailored appropriately. There will be tenants who want to proactively engage with the policies of their landlord, and others who simply want to know that their landlord is thinking of them in the way it implements change and is keeping them informed.” – quote from white paper

We will work to ensure that resident engagement is embedded across the whole council and ensure our involvement work is aligned with our governance and business improvement activities

To help us achieve this vision we have set five key aims, to:



Engagement can take many forms, but the crucial factor is that it is tailored appropriately.

Make engagement easier

We recognise the value of residents engaging with us in different ways and that one size does not fit all when it comes to communicating. With our residents, we want to develop a wide range of opportunities to ensure their views are heard and that they can influence and help shape our services.

We will do this by:

- 1** Co-designing a new resident engagement framework which involves our residents in a way that is accessible and attractive to the full, diverse resident group and allows them to give their views in the ways that suits them.
- 2** Providing training and support that has been developed with, and tailored to our residents to help further develop their skills and capacity to be involved.
- 3** Working with our residents to develop the ways we capture and record customer insights to ensure they are effective and representative, and lead to continuous learning and development. Customer Insights help us to know and understand our residents and we currently get this through a variety of sources.

By 2026:

Our engagement framework will be closely linked to the governance of our organisation, allowing our residents to hold us to account. It will ensure meaningful and outcome-based involvement that delivers improvements across our service.

Residents will be able to engage with and influence the key groups and individuals who govern and manage Arun District Council, including our management team and the Housing and Wellbeing Committee.

We will have examples of new or existing services that have been developed with our residents.

An increase in satisfaction levels for listening to residents views and acting upon them.



Be accountable

It is important that our residents know how we are performing and what decisions we are making, so that they can challenge us and hold us accountable when things are not working as they should.

We are committed to working with residents to give them greater opportunity to influence, and to ensure they have the information they need to hold us to account for our performance.

We will do this by:

- 1** Having a resident-led process that has oversight of our compliance with the consumer standards and that can influence strategy, policy, standards, approaches, and performance measures.
- 2** Working with our residents to understand what performance measures are important to them and being open and transparent in information about our services.
- 3** Publishing information on the complaints we have received, the lessons learned, any trends and how these complaints have been used to improve our services. This will be done through a variety of channels to ensure all residents receive this information.
- 4** Annually reviewing, with residents, our performance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- 5** Using our data and insights to tailor how we develop and deliver our services, so that they offer value for money and deliver a great customer experience.

By 2026:

Co-regulation will be embedded across our service, ensuring our residents can hold us to account and have clear routes into the governance of our organisation.

We will be able to give examples of residents providing recommendations that have directly led to helping us achieve our objectives of improving services.

We will have a set of performance measures that have been agreed with our residents, that are published on our website.



Engage digitally

We want to maximise our use of digital technologies to improve our customer experience. Making it as easy as possible for residents to connect with us and share their views to shape and improve the services they receive.

We will do this by:

- 1** Utilising and developing our digital platforms including our website, resident portal and social media to provide effective two-way communication with our residents.
- 2** Working with residents to help them access technology and offer support to improve their digital skills.

By 2026:

There will be an increase in the number of customers engaging with us using digital platforms.



Improve communication

Communication is critical, and it is important that we know who our residents are, how they want to be involved, informed, and contacted. As part of this strategy, we want to review and develop how we keep our residents informed and ensure we make it easy for them to tell us when things are not going well.

We will do this by:

- 1** Using data and insights to understand the ways residents want us to communicate with them.
- 2** Implementing a 'you said, we did' approach to feedback and sharing this regularly on our website and in our newsletter.
- 3** Informing residents how they can raise a complaint, what they can expect and what support is available to them throughout the process.
- 4** Involving residents in the creation and development of our publications to ensure they are clear, easy to understand and meet the needs of our residents/or customers.
- 5** Regularly sharing the difference that resident engagement makes through our website, newsletter, social media, and Annual Report.

By 2026:

We will have an effective and flexible range of tools for communicating with and informing our residents.

There will be an increase in satisfaction levels with keeping residents informed about things that matter to them.

We will have a clear method for measuring and demonstrating the impact of our engagement activities, enabling us to share the value of involvement and provide examples of what improvements have been made.

We will have a clearly stated plan, co-designed with residents for engaging them in building safety and compliance.



Work with our communities

We believe we have a key role to play in working with our residents, stakeholders, and other partners to create thriving and sustainable communities. Each community has a unique set of skills and strengths, and we want to work with them to make a positive contribution to the areas they live and help facilitate their capacity to address local issues.

We will do this by:

- 1** Promoting and facilitating engagement in the communities we serve, making sure that there are a range of ways for people with an interest in their local community to link with us and have their views heard.
- 2** Getting to know our communities better by regularly seeking their feedback about their neighbourhoods and local areas and using that information to help shape future priorities.
- 3** Establishing strong and sustainable links with our partners and local voluntary groups to deliver projects to the benefit of our residents and the wider community.

By 2026:

There will be an increase in satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

We will have examples of improvements made to our neighbourhoods and local areas as a result of the feedback and input received from our communities.

We will have a range of community initiatives in place, developed with our residents and partners, that enhance our communities and are clearly linked to our business and resident priorities.



Each community has a unique set of skills and strengths, and we want to work with them to make a positive contribution to the areas they live...by 2026 there will be an increase in satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live.



Resources and monitoring

Over the life of this strategy we will:

- Monitor and continue to develop our strategic action plan and provide the support and resources required to deliver our aims. An annual update against the plan will be provided to the Housing and Wellbeing Committee and publicised in our annual report
- Assess the impact of our engagement activities and review the methods for engagement on an annual basis, ensuring we are offering effective ways for residents to engage with us. This includes developing new opportunities to replace those which do not work
- Increase the number of residents we connect with and the diversity of the voices we hear through informal engagement and insight
- Ensure our residents are informed of, and can take part in, national conversations

To make sure that support and resources are available for effective engagement, we will:

- Ensure our residents have the right tools and information to effectively be involved
- Develop our training offer for residents
- Provide guidance and support to staff so they can involve residents in their work
- Work with residents to develop an induction programme for all new staff to raise the profile of resident involvement so that everyone is aware of the benefits that it brings
- Develop a clear expenses, incentives and rewards policy for engagement



Involvement for all

We will ensure that we continue to be inclusive and representative of all and will provide the support needed to enable this.

Our approach to resident engagement is committed to equal opportunities for all and to respect the needs of our diverse communities. This is in line with the councils Equality and Diversity Policy and the expectations set out by the Regulator of Social Housing and within the White Paper.

We will monitor who is involved and work towards engagement which ensures we hear from the full, diverse range of our residents, and that these views are directly and positively impacting on the services we provide.

Conclusion

This is fantastic opportunity for us to transform how we engage and work with our residents to create and deliver the best services we can.

How we will deliver this strategy is set out in our action plan and during the life of the strategy we expect to reconsider resident engagement to implement new regulatory requirements and best practice within the sector.

We're proud of the way residents and staff have shaped this strategy. It creates an exciting way forward for resident engagement at Arun District Council.



