



Report of: Councillor Nick Neilson
Cabinet Member for Communities

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	10 May 2018
Subject:	South Kesteven District Council's Tenant Involvement Framework (Housing 133)

Decision Proposal:	Key Decision
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nick Neilson Cabinet Member for Communities
Report author:	Rod Stair Team Leader Housing. R.Stair@southkesteven.gov.uk Tel: 01476 406322 Date: 17 April 2018
Reviewed by:	Harry Rai Assistant Director Housing harry.rai@southkesteven.gov.uk Tel: 01476 406299 Date: 18 April 2018
Signed off by:	Steve Ingram Strategic Director s.ingram@southkesteven.gov.uk Tel: 01476 406007 Date: 19 April 2018
Approved for publication:	Councillor Nick Neilson Cabinet Member for Communities Nicholas.Neilson@southkesteven.gov.uk Tel: 01476 406408 Date: 19 April 2018

SUMMARY

The revised Tenant Involvement Framework document was recommended for consultation by Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2017.

In February 2018 a survey of 2000 Council tenants was carried out. A total of 330 responses were received.

Analysis of the survey results showed that tenants were satisfied with the proposals for involvement contained within the revised Tenant Involvement Framework. The proposed framework emphasises the use of low commitment involvement, using surveys and neighbourhood based involvement allowing a more targeted and focused approach.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the South Kesteven District Council Tenant Involvement Framework.

1. BACKGROUND TO REPORT

- 1.1 The draft Tenant Involvement Framework (Appendix 1) was considered by the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2017 which endorsed the document to be circulated to tenants for consultation.
- 1.2 At their meeting of 20 March 2018, members of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with the outcomes from that consultation, which are outlined in sections 1.3 and 1.4 and were fully supportive of adopting the Tenant Involvement Framework.
- 1.3 A representative sample of 2000 tenants was selected from our tenant database. Each household selected received an explanatory letter addressed to the tenant, a questionnaire and a self-addressed envelope. The survey was open for two weeks from being posted. The questionnaire consisted of five key questions, each with a number of options which the tenant could choose from. Questionnaire responses could be made anonymously if the tenant so wished.
- 1.4 The feedback reflects a preference for flexible, low level and local engagement opportunities. There is also a preference for involvement to be proactive, with clear outcomes and feedback to show that involvement has been effective and meaningful. The survey results are attached as Appendix 4.
- 1.5 The proposed framework (Appendix 1) emphasises the use of low commitment involvement, using surveys and neighbourhood based involvement allowing a more targeted and focused approach. Task and finish groups will also allow tenants to be involved either on specific issues or on a strategic level without long term commitment.

- 1.6 A Draft Terms of Reference for the Tenants Panel is attached as Appendix 2. Members were asked to provide any comment they may have to ensure their support for an approach that provides meaningful involvement with our tenants and leaseholders.
- 1.7 Subject to Cabinet's decision, this framework will set out the approach the Council will take to engage with tenants and leaseholders so that they feel involved in shaping the services we provide to them and scrutinise the way we deliver and perform against a series of Housing Service Standards they have helped to develop.
- 1.8 Going forward the Council will be exploring a range of ways to improve its Housing Service and the way it is delivered. The Tenants Panel will be a crucial consultative group that the Council will involve as it develops new and innovative solutions.

2. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options considered. Local authority landlords who retain their stock are expected to meet the four 'consumer' standards set out by the Homes and Community Agency to develop and provide their tenants with opportunities to influence, and be involved in, the formulation of housing policies and strategic priorities; the making of decisions such as setting service standards and the scrutiny of performance.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Although some officer time will be required to put in place and maintain the new framework it is anticipated that this will be contained within existing resources.
- 3.2 There will be a requirement to have a small allocation (up to £5,000) of HRA funding to support this initiative to cover areas of training, childcare etc for tenants. This will be met from existing HRA budgets.

4. RISK AND MITIGATION

- 4.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and any specific high risks are included in the table below:

Category Risk	Action / Controls
None	

5. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS (EQUALITY & DIVERSITY)

- 5.1 There are no changes to the Tenant Involvement Framework following consultation, however the Initial Equality Analysis has been reviewed to

ensure that any impacts identified during the initial analysis are still relevant. The revised document is at Appendix 3 of this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

7. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

7.1 There is no specific budget applicable to this service. Financial implications have been identified in section 3.2

8. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

8.1 The Localism Act 2011 (The Act) reformed the way that social housing is regulated. The Act provides social tenants with stronger tools to hold their landlord to account. Landlords such as the Council are expected to support tenant Panels or similar bodies in order to give tenants the opportunity to carefully examine the services being offered. The proposed framework sets out how the Council intends to help tenants do that.

9. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

9.1 None.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Copy of the proposed Tenant Involvement Framework

Appendix 2 –Tenants Panel Terms of Reference

Appendix 3 - Equality Impact – Update to Initial Analysis

Appendix 4 - Feedback on Tenant Involvement Survey

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Communities and Wellbeing OSC of the 7th November 2017](#)

[Communities and Wellbeing OSC of the 20th March 2018](#)



Tenant Involvement Framework

Tier Three

(Formal and planned activities requiring fixed commitment and time to prepare for and attend meetings and complete tasks)

Tenants Panel

Home, Tenancy, Neighbourhoods

Membership of 20 tenants tasked to review and feedback on policies, performance information and ideas, and 'co-production forums' on a task and finish basis

Tier Two

(Formal contact via planned activity to gather and collate information and trends, requires some commitment and time to complete tasks)

Surveys and Feedback

(Surveys and consultations on service satisfaction, performance and issues via postal, telephone and on line methods)

Readers Panel

(On-line Panel of tenants to review information for clarity and understanding as required)

Skyline Editorial Panel

(To help produce individual issues of Skyline by suggesting articles and commenting on drafts using email survey)

Sheltered Housing Panel

(Consultation group for service and task group to assist and direct the allocation of the income generated by community room usage)

Tier One

(Minimal time and commitment based around regular contact on informal basis at local level)

Local Involvement

(Involvement by housing officers at street/community level on specific issues to area using consultations, estate inspections and actions, focus groups and face to face contact, developing and supporting network of 'village voices' and 'area champions' where appropriate to act as 'eyes and ears' of the community)

**SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
TENANTS PANEL
Proposed Terms of Reference**

1 Aim

1.1 The Tenants Panel brings together senior managers and officers of the Council with up to 20 tenants (see also section 5 on membership criteria) of the authority to:

- provide an appropriate forum for the review and provision of detailed feedback on draft policies, performance information, and wider issues that could impact on tenants
- to support the advancement of policy development
- to advise on potential issues and challenges
- to discuss and air issues that matter to tenants

2 Objectives

2.1 To promote continuous improvement in the quality of housing in South Kesteven by sharing expertise, experience and best practice.

2.2 To provide a consultative forum that considers, debates and responds to matters relevant to tenants with a local perspective of implications and impacts.

2.3 To ensure the housing service meets the needs of a diverse tenant population.

2.4 To ensure that there is a continued, customer focused, commitment to service delivery and provision.

2.5 To work for the wider benefit of all tenants and leaseholders.

2.6 To provide direction on a range of issues relating to the management and maintenance of South Kesteven District Council properties.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Supporting the Council in formulating the strategic direction of housing including district housing related strategies, policies and action plans

3.2 Identifying opportunities for joint working, commissioning and project delivery on areas of common interest

3.3 Representing the views of the Panel to external audiences

4 Powers

4.1 The Panel has no decision-making powers beyond those relating to the activities and work programme of the Panel itself and any sub-group that reports directly to it. Any such decisions will be based on the majority view of Panel members.

5 Membership

- 5.1 Membership of the Panel will be open to all tenants (who are not subject to major rent arrears where no agreement is in place to resolve them or undergoing investigation into serious breach of tenancy conditions)
- 5.2 The Panel may invite other agencies to attend meetings
- 5.3 The Panel will review its membership as and when required to ensure appropriate representation to achieve the aims of the Panel
- 5.4 In the event of more than 20 tenants expressing an interest to become a member of the Tenants Panel, a selection process will be adopted
- 5.5 The Tenants Panel membership will seek to reflect the geographical areas that the Council has housing stock to prevent any area having a considerable and disproportionate representation on the panel.

6 Attendance

- 6.1 To ensure continuity, panel members will be expected to attend all scheduled meetings. Any member who fails to attend two consecutive meetings, without prior agreement, will be removed from the panel.

7 Chair and Administrative Support

- 7.1 The Team Leader for Housing will attend and chair each meeting and, if this is not possible, will nominate another officer of senior standing to attend on their behalf.
- 7.2 An officer with responsibility for tenant involvement will provide administrative support.

8 Panel Meetings

- 8.1 The Panel will normally meet as a minimum three times a year: additional meetings can be convened as and when required.
- 8.2 Panel meetings will not necessarily always be held at SKDC offices; they can be held across the district to ensure it reaches as many tenants as possible.
- 8.3 Minutes of the meetings will be recorded and circulated to all Panel members and observers
- 8.4 Minutes will be published on the SKDC website. Any confidential items discussed by the Panel will not be included in the published minutes. Reports of the Panel's work will be featured in the Skyline newsletter.

9 Sub-Groups

- 9.1 The Panel will seek to maintain links with relevant sub-groups established ensuring that they are informed, consulted and where appropriate given strategic direction. This includes, but is not limited to 'task and finish groups'.
- 9.2 A minimum of one member of the Tenants Panel will take part in each task and finish group.

10 Length of service

- 10.1 No tenant member will serve beyond a period of 3 years.
- 10.2 It is expected that tenant members will serve a minimum of 1 year to allow for some consistency.
- 10.3 New members will be recruited through Skyline and/or by email request to tenants who through the new tenants survey have expressed a desire to be involved.
- 10.4 Where there are more applicants than places available on the Panel, applicants names will be drawn at random to determine participation.

11 Review

- 11.1 These terms of reference will be reviewed every three years.





South Kesteven District Council

Equality Impact (Update to Initial Analysis)

Tenant Involvement Framework

Service Area:	Lead officer: Rod Stair	Date of Meeting
Housing	Assessors: Ken Linford	17/04/18
	Neutral Assessor: Carol Drury	

1. **Name and description of policy/service/function/strategy**

Tenant Involvement Framework.

The Tenant Involvement Framework sets out how the Council involves and engages with its tenants. Local housing authorities now work similarly to housing associations, and are governed by nationally agreed 'standards' set out by the Homes and Communities Agency.

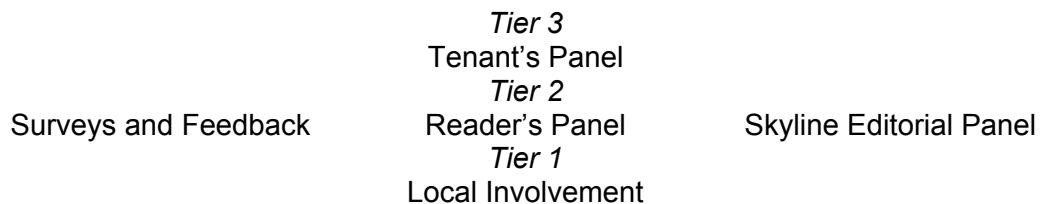
These standards require that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- The formation of their landlord's housing related policies and strategic priorities
- The making of decisions about how housing services are delivered including the setting of service standards and reviewing performance against these, including any local offers

The standard also requires that tenants are provided with support to build their capacity to be effectively involved and are consulted regarding involvement and significant changes in management arrangements.

These standards have to be considered in the context of the geography of South Kesteven and the need to demonstrate value for money.

The proposed framework establishes three tiers of involvement:



The tiers allow for involvement at whatever level suits an individual tenant's circumstances. They also provide for a number of different pathways including the use of different media.

Is this a new or existing policy?

Existing

2. Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc.

Equality Group	<p>Does this policy/service/function/strategy have a positive or negative impact on any of the equality groups?</p> <p>Please state which for each group</p>	<p>Please describe why the impact is positive or negative.</p> <p>If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic please explain why</p>
Age	<p>This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.</p>	<p>The three tiers give different opportunities in the method of involvement. Some of these, particularly those requiring computer access, may be less appropriate to older people but other elements such as local involvement do give opportunities. The use of different media for surveys and feedback also helps older tenants who may be less likely to have internet access.</p> <p>Meeting locations and timings will consider the needs of older people and once meetings are established the involved tenants will decide on such issues.</p> <p>The introduction and promotion of opportunities to participate through digital media may be a positive move in increasing the involvement of young people who have tended not to engage with traditional involvement opportunities such as meetings.</p>
Disability	<p>This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.</p>	<p>Whilst this protected characteristic was not a determinant in the development of this framework it is acknowledged that our tenants with disabilities have an important role in the delivery of its objectives.</p> <p>Participation in whatever method is most appropriate to individuals will be supported. Meetings will take place in accessible venues and documents will be provided in alternative formats if required.</p> <p>The promotion of digital channels may also help provide involvement opportunities for people who have limited mobility.</p>

Race	This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.	While race was not intrinsically a determinant in the development of this framework we do recognise that, for our participating tenants there may be the need to translate documents or to provide translators for some groups. All involvement streams will be monitored to ensure that involved tenants are representative of the wider tenant community.
Gender Reassignment	This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.	Whilst this protected characteristic was not a determinant in the development of the tenant involvement framework, participants from this underrepresented group could provide valuable insight. Every effort will be made to involve individuals from all communities.
Religion or Belief	This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.	Whilst this protected characteristic was not a determinant in the development of this framework, tenants from all backgrounds will be invited to participate in order to gain views from the widest possible representative group of people. In order to attain representation from individuals recognised within this protected characteristic regard must be had to religious festivals, holidays, diet and holy days when arranging meetings and events.
Sex	This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.	This protected characteristic was not a determinant in the development of this framework, however, we recognise that there is almost a 50/50 gender split and participants should reflect this.
Sexual Orientation	This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.	Whilst this protected characteristic is not a determinant in the delivery and development of the Tenant Involvement Framework, we will seek to involve the broadest representation of people. It is acknowledged that we have limited data or information relating to our tenants from the LGBT community. Representative input would therefore be invaluable in the development of our services.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral	This protected characteristic was not a determinant in the development of this framework.

Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	This protected characteristic was not a determinant in the development of this framework.
Carers	This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.	The number and type of opportunities will benefit those carers who find it difficult to attend meetings.
Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past) *(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation)	This is a participatory opportunity and any involvement of tenants has the potential for a positive impact.	Given the geography of South Kesteven the proposed levels and methods of involvement do not over emphasise physical meetings. The different pathways also give opportunity for people to use accessible and low cost media, such as mobile phones.
General comments	<p>The nature of the proposals is that the different involvement pathways use different media. This means that there are alternatives for people who cannot attend meetings, or for people who do not have internet access.</p> <p>For all groups any barriers should be identified and addressed and the opportunities promoted across communities to ensure that involved tenants are representative of the community. Levels of involvement from different groups should also be monitored for all of the involvement levels.</p> <p>Events and meetings will need to consider accessibility for all groups, for example by making provision for childcare and avoiding times affected by school runs etc.</p> <p>It may be that some involved tenants hold stereotypical views of some equality groups. It is important that the Authority portrays all groups positively and that awareness training is available for all involved tenants and that any discriminatory behaviour is challenged positively before it becomes a barrier to involvement.</p>	

3. What equality data/information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy/service/function/strategy? (Note any relevant consultation who took part and key findings)

Data held on our tenants suggests that 91% like contact by letter, 16.2% like email and 20% by text. 32% have internet access. 18% have a learning difficulty or visual impairment which makes reading and writing difficult. 3% either don't speak, or don't read English.

Consultation has been carried out with a representative sample of 2000 tenants on the proposed Framework. This consultation yielded a 17% response rate which was supportive of the Framework and its structure.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

The delivery and impact of tenant involvement will be subject to annual review. One aspect of this review will be an assessment of whether involved tenants are representative of the wider community.

4. Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made): Please check one of the options.

a)	No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option a) you can now send this form to the Lead Officer and your Neutral Assessor for sign off</i>		
b)	Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions b.1 and b.2</i>		
c)	Adverse impact but continue	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option c) you will need to answer questions c.1</i>		
d)	Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful	<input type="checkbox"/>

b.1 In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?

b.2 Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

If you have checked option b) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis

c.1 Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy/function/service/ strategy.

If you have checked option c) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Signed (Lead Officer): **Rod Stair**
(Name and title) Team Leader, Housing Services

Date completed: **17/04/18**

Signed (Neutral Assessor): **Carol Drury**
(Name and title) Community Engagement and Policy Development

Date signed off: **18/04/18**

Feedback on Tenant Involvement Survey

1. Purpose of survey

1.1 To consult with our tenants to gain an understanding of how they would want to be engaged in the monitoring of the housing services provided by South Kesteven District Council.

2. Methodology

2.1 A representative sample of 2000 tenants was selected from our tenant database. Each household selected received an explanatory letter addressed to the tenant, a questionnaire and a self addressed envelope. The survey was open for two weeks from being posted.

2.2 The questionnaire consisted of five key questions, each with a number of options which the tenant could choose from. Responses to the questionnaire could be given anonymously if the tenant so wished.

3. Responses

3.1 A total of 330 questionnaires were received: a return rate of 17%.

3.2 The first four questions resulted in 200 responses picking at least one option from each question and representing an average response rate of 60% for each of these questions. The final question, however, received a response of 138 picking at least one option, a response rate of 42%.

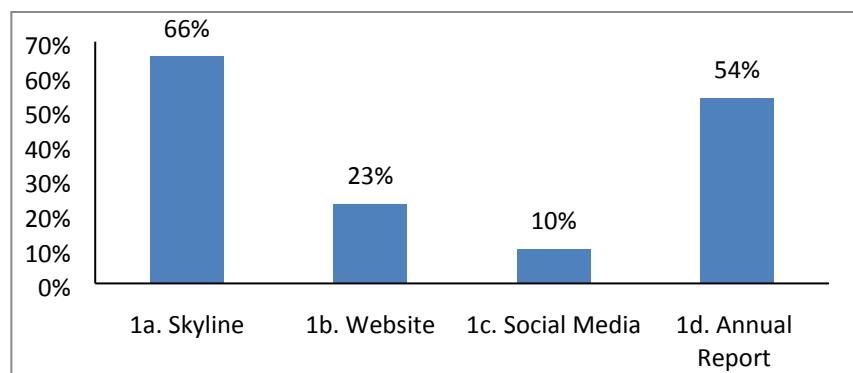
3.3 As each question allowed for more than one option to be ticked, the overall percentage for each question does not equate to 100%.

4. Conclusions

4.1 The feedback reflects a preference for flexible, low level and local involvement opportunities. There is also a preference for involvement to be proactive, with clear outcomes and feedback to show that involvement has been effective and meaningful.

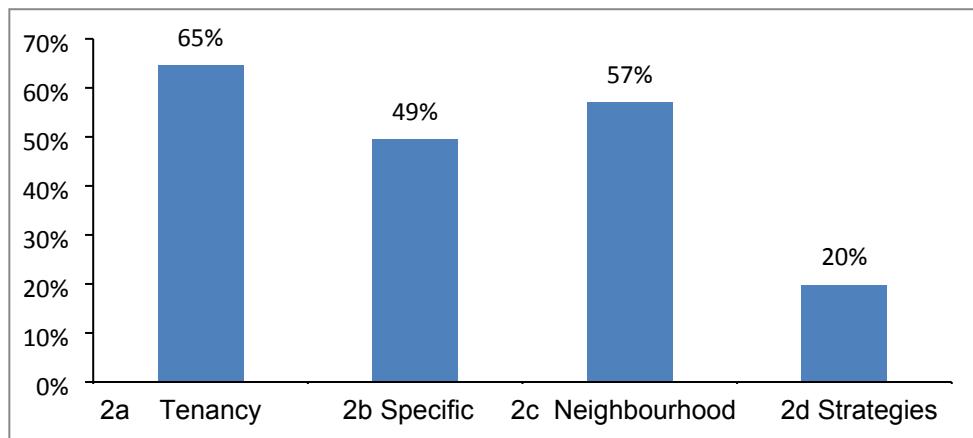
4.2 The proposed framework emphasises the use of low commitment involvement, using surveys and neighbourhood-based involvement allowing a more targeted and focused approach. Task and finish groups will also allow tenants to be involved either on specific issues or on a strategic level without long term commitment.

5. Preferences for being kept informed:



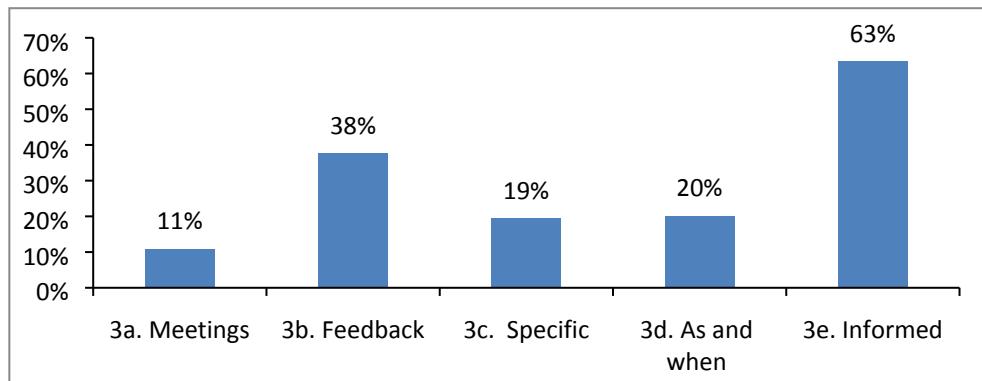
- 5.1 217 responses were received for this question highlighting that a tenants' newsletter is the preferred option. 178 also showed they would value the provision of an annual report.
- 5.2 We currently provide two issues of Skyline per year. The findings suggest we may want to consider incorporating an annual report into one of the issues of Skyline.

6. What did tenants want to be involved in?



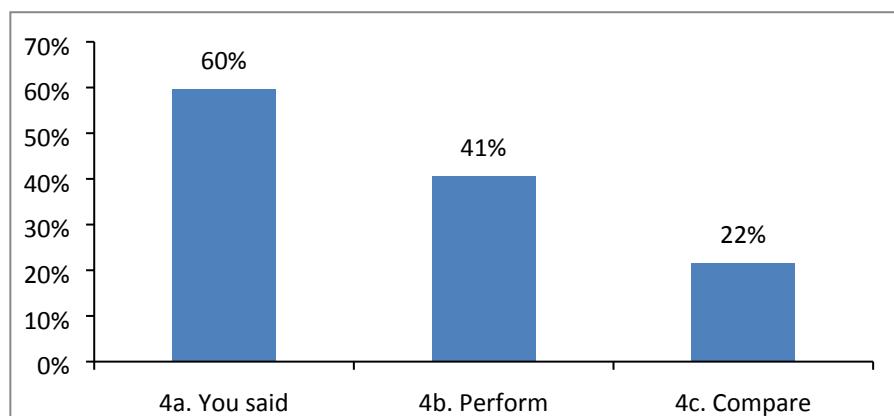
- 6.1 Only 65 tenants preferred to be involved at a strategic level. Most tenants showed a preference to be involved in issues that affect them directly, and especially within their neighbourhood on issues such as parking.

7. How did tenants prefer to be involved?



7.1 The majority of tenants (209) responding to this question preferred to be kept informed of housing related matters, but not to be actively involved. However, 124 were happy to provide feedback via surveys and occasional consultations. In line with results in the previous question, tenants wanted to be involved only when it suited them. Formal meetings were not popular, other than when they were local and addressed a specific issue, as they are seen as requiring a longer term level of commitment.

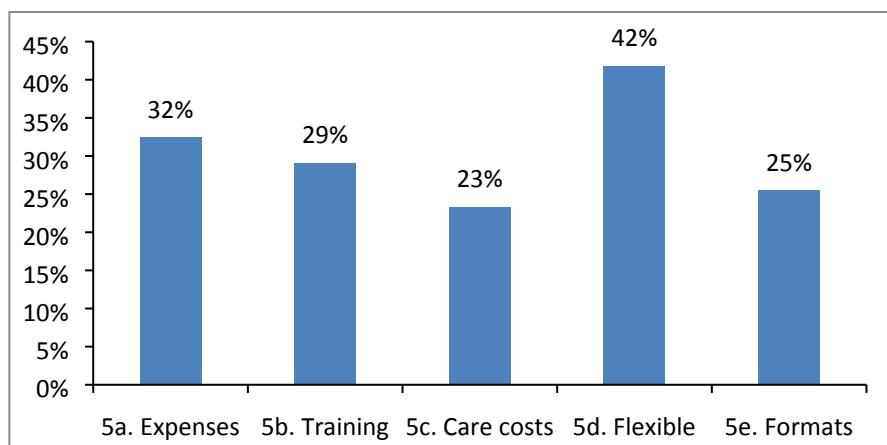
8. Informing tenants where involvement has led to improvement



8.1 This question sought to establish how tenants would like to see the results of their contributions to service improvements.

8.2 The majority (197) wanted to receive feedback through 'you said, we did' articles in Skyline, while 134 were also interested in seeing how the Council performs against set targets and standards. Few tenants were interested in knowing how we compare to similar landlords.

9. Support to become involved



9.1 A key part of facilitating tenant involvement is to support them. Offering a range of opportunities to be involved was important particularly regarding digital options and the venue and timing of locally held meetings. Providing expenses for travel to meetings and activities, ensuring information was available in formats suitable to the individual and offering training/information were also highlighted.