

Ashford Borough Council Tenant Compact



Spring 2008

Welcome

This is the 2007/8 edition of the agreement between the Council and its tenants and leaseholders on how it will involve you and other residents in the planning and delivery of housing services in the Borough.

Inside this folder

Review of 2005 edition	2
The New Plan	2
The DVD	3
Ways you can get involved	4
Useful contacts	4

What is a Tenant Compact?

The Compact is a list of commitments that the Council will abide by over the next two years. We have been using this form of agreement since year 2000 to continually link services to residents priorities and this is the latest version.

The commitments have been negotiated on your behalf by Ashford Borough Tenants Forum. The Forum is the elected body of representatives from around the Borough, chosen by tenants and leaseholders.

During the summer and autumn last year they spent many hours working through what residents had told them were their priorities for improving the housing

service. The result is shown in the New Plan shown on Page 2 and 3

The Compact is an important document.. In part it determines how and where your rent is spent and how the Council invests in your homes and neighbourhoods. We would welcome your thoughts and ideas on the issues raised and we have provided a list of contacts on the back page for you to get in touch with.



The Tenants Forum DVD

Inside this folder you will find a short film highlighting the different ways you can get involved and influence the Council in the way it delivers housing services.

The film is called "What's in it for me?". It highlights successful neighbourhood and borough-wide initiatives

that have been driven by residents. The film was produced by Ashford Borough Tenants Forum, with financial assistance from Ashford Borough Council. We hope you like it and hope that it inspires you to add your voice to the growing numbers getting involved.



Teri Witcher, Chair of ABTF during filming

Review of the 2005 Compact

We met over 90% of the targets we set in 2005. Key achievements included:

Resident led consultation on the Stock Option Appraisal i.e. whether or not to transfer the stock

Tenant led investment in the Stanhope Estate via the Government's Private Finance Initiative

The start of an extended Area Plan Strategy e.g. Bybrook Road Improvements

Review of service standards on lettings, repairs, services for the

elderly, business planning and communications

Involvement in the Diversity Forum and the development of the Diversity Pack to improve community understanding.

We know that there is still a long way to go and in the new Compact we include a section on keeping the momentum going.

Nevertheless our recent joint working has been a success.



Forum Members take a break for a photograph

The Action Plan provides the detail to the objectives; How we will do what we say, by when and by whom

The New Action Plan Key Objectives

A number of key objectives have been agreed for the new Compact and the Action Plan that is set out below and on the facing page. These objectives provide the backbone of the agreement and will enable the Council and residents to:

Continue to grow the partnership between residents, councilors and council officers

Cement tenant choice and influence at the heart of our services

Explore ways of involving as many people as possible in shaping services

Identify the resources and means to grow skills and enable informed debate

Plan ahead and think about our local neighbourhoods, environmental concerns and future lifestyles

Work jointly to do the right things at the right times

Focus on outcomes that provide better homes for the diverse urban and rural communities of Ashford Borough

How the Action Plan works

The Plan is made up of a series of headings:

Keeping the momentum going

Communications

Growing skills

Maintaining estates

Going the extra mile

Alongside each heading is a list of actions that either the Council or the Forum have committed to. The list states who will be responsible for making it happen, how much it is likely to cost and when the deadline for completion is. You can see examples from the list on Page 3.

Examples of the 2008 Targets

Here are some of the targets for 2008 to 2009:

To continue the work on developing new service standards.

To ensure that residents continue to influence Senior Managers and the Council's Executive by attending meetings where decisions are taken

To extend the Forum's input to Parish Councils, the County Council and other similar bodies

To review the Bybrook Road and Appledore Area Plan

pilots and pass this learning onto other Area Plans

To improve residents' levels of satisfaction with their opportunities to get involved and be listened to

To explore more diversionary programmes to reduce youth based low level crime on estates

To further develop Block and Estate Agreements to reduce anti-social behaviour on estates

To improve the system for quality and control monitoring on estates e.g. extending es-

tate walkabouts and introducing tenant inspectors

Raise awareness among residents on how they can influence the Environmental Agenda

Investigating a series of stretch targets in preparation for the 2009 review

If you would like a full list of the new targets, they are available from Philippa Dale on 01233 330365



Why should tenants and leaseholders get involved?

This Compact is about improving housing services and securing an even more responsive service to residents needs and preferences.

As a landlord the Council regularly records high levels of satisfaction from residents in the way it delivers services. But there is always room for improvement.

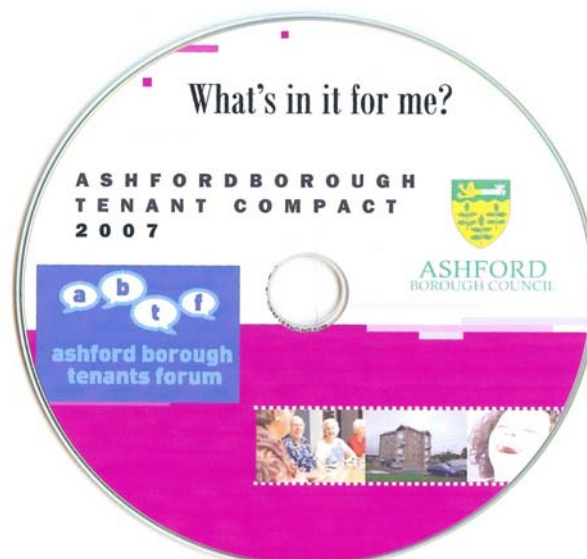
Teri Witcher, Chair of Ashford Borough Tenants Forum echoes these views

"This is bigger than the Forum having access to senior managers and senior councilors. This is about involving as many people as possible in shaping services and setting quality benchmarks for future performance".

The DVD below provides examples of the successful and different ways residents can and have influenced their homes, their neighbourhoods and the key investment decisions that the Council regularly makes. We invite you to take a few minutes to watch the film and we hope that it encourages you to have your voice heard.

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DVD folder insert



How can I be involved?

Ashford Borough
Council Tenant
Compact



Contacts:

Philippa Dale

01233 330365

Teri Witcher

01580 763892

There are lots of ways you can do this....

Simply talk to someone from the Council or from the Forum

Take part in surveys by post, phone, text or email

Join or set up a local focus group or residents group

Use our complaints and compliments procedure

Join in estate walkabouts

Apply to become a Tenant Inspector

Apply to be elected onto the Forum

Join one of the service review groups

Complete "Ashford Back Chat" in your newsletter or on-line at www.ashford.gov.uk

To find out more, please contact Philippa Dale, the Council's Tenant Participation Officer, or Teri Witcher, Chair of Ashford Borough Tenants Forum

Other Useful Contact Numbers

South Willesborough & Newtown Community Group

Elaine Nichalls, 43 Curtis Rd. Ashford 01233 639566

Oaklands Residents Association

Jerry Newson, Baptist Church, Brookfield Rd. Ashford

01233 646007

Wye Tenants Forum

Veronica Cackett, 33 Luckley House, Wye 01233 812665

Bybrook & Bockhanger Community Group

Pauline Colvin, 36 Copperfield Close, Ashford

East Stour Community Group

Gill Clarke, 19 Essella Park, Ashford 01233 637126

Milne Road Community Group

Martin Denny, 21 Milne Rd. Ashford 01233633134

Priory Way Community Group

Fred Fairbrace, 3 Priory Way, Tenterden

01580 763411

The Dene Community Group

Linda Stevens, 1 The Dene, Bethersden, Ashford

01233 820429

Ashford Integration Project, a facility for the Chinese Community, Nepalese Community, Kurdish Community, Ashford Asian Society & the Zimbabwean Community. Contact Jennifer Fothergill 07970 590476