



WEAR
VALLEY
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

**DRAFT COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
STRATEGY**

HOUSING SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Wear Valley District Council has long valued the views of its customers and has continually developed ways in which customers can be involved in the decision making process.

In addition to the Wear Valley Customers Compact which was developed in 2003 and which has received recognition by the ODPM as an example of Good Practice, the Community Involvement Team and Housing Staff work regularly with both the resident's associations, the Wear Valley Customer Panel and individual customers to develop and improve the services they offer, most recently consulting widely on the Stock Options Appraisal and the development of new Service Standards.

This Strategy has been designed to be flexible and to provide appropriate levels of engagement that suits our wide range of customers. This Strategy also includes an Action Plan to achieve our aims and objectives.

This Strategy has been developed alongside the principles of Best Value, which aim to provide cost efficient and high quality services, responsive to local peoples needs and aspirations.

For this reason the Council: -

- ◆ Ensures that customers have a real say in decisions that have an effect on the community, housing and area in which they live.
- ◆ Has implemented a framework that allows customers to be involved in decisions that affect their housing and local area at a level they are comfortable with.
- ◆ Delivers quality services that reflect the needs and priorities of local people.
- ◆ Upholds the principles of the Wear Valley Customers Compact that demonstrates a commitment to working in partnership towards improving housing services, people's homes and their neighbourhoods.

WEAR VALLEY IN CONTEXT

Wear Valley is one of the seven local authorities that form County Durham. The District spans 30 miles from east to west, with almost half lying in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Wear Valley is a mixture of both urban and rural areas with the majority of the population living in the more urban parts of the district, these areas include the towns of Bishop Auckland and Crook.

The Housing Services Department currently owns and manages 5172 homes and provides a wide range of housing and other general services to their customers. The key strategic objectives of the Housing Services Department are:

Service:

- Achieving an optimum balance and choice of housing

Environment:

- Delivering ever improving Community Safety and reducing fear of crime
- Delivering ever improving greener, cleaner and healthier environment

People and Community:

- Developing people and communities who can work together, able to say what is needed and make it happen

Overall the Housing Services Department aims to ensure the adequate provision and management of well maintained and affordable housing that meets the needs and aspirations of all the community.

VISION

Wear Valley District Council have developed a Council Plan which sets out six corporate objectives to enable the Council to achieve its vision which is to become:

'The best district council in England'

The objectives are in relation to:

- Population - help create a balanced vibrant and growing population.
- Environment - to improve the built and natural environment.
- Economy - enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.
- Community Safety - design services to increase community safety and crime prevention and work closely with key partners.
- Health - use services to help improve the health and well being of customers and to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Lifelong Learning - encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.

The Council's vision and corporate objectives do not stand alone and are supported by the Housing Services Department's own vision and objectives.

The vision for the Housing Services Department is:

'Leading the way to the very best housing of choice for everyone that contributes to sustainable communities which learn and grow'.