

## North Tyneside Tenancy Strategy: 2021-2025

### Survey Results

In light of new legislation and significant welfare reform changes, which mean that affordable and secure homes are a greater priority for those households where renting is the only option available to them, it was timely to review and consult on proposed changes to North Tyneside's Tenancy Strategy.

It was agreed that a survey should be undertaken to seek residents' views on the proposed changes, the survey ran between 10 May – 20 June 2021 and was widely promoted including through the Authority's website, including the "Have your Say" pages, and direct email correspondence, with hard copies available on request.

26 responses were received from the following types of respondent:

An Owner occupier	11
A Council tenant	7
A Registered provider	5
A Private landlord	1
A Leaseholder	1

No responses were submitted by registered provider tenants, private rented tenants or leaseholder tenants

Respondents were asked:

#### 1. Is the purpose of the document clear?

22 respondents said it was, but four said it was not. Those who felt the purpose of the document was clear said:

- 'Explained in simple terms'.
- 'It explained what it set out to do'.
- 'Detailed, clear and informed'.
- 'Clear plain language throughout'.
- 'It's straightforward and easy to read and understand'.
- 'Clarity and concise nature helps to understand clear purpose'.
- 'Document well explained'.
- 'It is helpful to have the list of contents, so I know where to look for different information.'
- 'Informative and explains legislation feeding review'.
- 'Easy to understand however you need to explain in layman's terms for residents to understand the changes and strategy. Also to expand to ensure residents i.e. tenants in social housing have secure tenancies for life and a secure home unless area is part of a capital programme'.

- 'Not completely positive because a lot of ground is covered in this document which may be to some , confusing. I could understand it but hopefully each section could be more simplified. Legal jargon is not always easy to understand'.
- 'It seems clear, but I wish good old English is used so that the common person can understand it a lot better'.

While those who felt the document's purpose was not clear said:

- 'I think it would benefit from having an executive summary which details the outcomes of the strategy'.
- 'Too officious, needs to be simplified'.
- 'To someone like myself that has spent 80 years without the need to be involved in any of this type of legislation I don't really fully understand it, but I do feel it has been 100% investigated to arrive at this document. I feel that those involved will in the main understand and the parts not clear to them they will know where to go to solve their problems'.

## **2. Are the aims of the document clear?**

Again, almost all respondents (20 out of 26) felt the document was clear. Their comments included:

- 'Informative and explains legislation feeding review'.
- 'The aims are what is needed in these times'.
- 'NT have always excelled at providing good reports by using excellent graphics'.
- 'There is a good use of data and evidence about how the housing situation is currently being dealt with, plus a plan with support for those at risk of rough sleeping/homelessness'.
- 'I was able to input to the draft and feel NTCs document should be on the whole spot on. All I hope that no doubt when a problem does pop up it isn't kicked into touch but thoroughly investigated'.
- 'Yes, but let's hope this is not just a paper exercise with the council. They will do something if . If not, this is a waste of time'.
- 'Somewhat ... for instance what happens when/if a tenant has partner/family occupying e.g. council house - if a person is guilty of ASB what happens to the family / part not concerned in whatever occurs. Often partner or spouse retains tenancy then person evicted returns to the premises.

While those who disagreed highlighted the following:

- 'Whilst I think the aims are listed under the statement of purpose, this is not clear and should have a heading clearly identifying them, so there can be no misinterpretation'.
- 'Could benefit from sentence similar to that explaining purpose, although aims are there just not so spelled-out'.
- 'Too much emphasis on historical information and not enough detail that outlines clear aims and objectives'.
- 'Complex documentation needs to be simplified'.
- 'Need to explain in layman's terms not in legal jargon'.

### **3. Do you think North Tyneside Council should use the private rented sector as an alternative to social housing?**

14 respondents said the Authority should use the private rented sector as an alternative to social housing, but 7 disagreed; 5 did not know whether the Authority should do this.

Comments from those who agreed with the proposal included:

- 'NTC should explore all options to meet diverse housing needs in a strategic approach with a strong private sector housing team'.
- 'Council can work in partnership with the private sector as a back-up, but not as a complete replacement/alternative'.
- 'As there is a shortage of houses, rents have to be the same as the council charges it's tenants'.
- 'Large pool of stock so long as standards are managed'.
- 'There's a lot of private empty houses about'.
- 'Because there are plenty buildings which can be used. Also empty shops could be turned into flats or houses'.
- 'If the housing stock is already full to capacity, there should be the ability to use the private rented sector as an alternative. If this is NOT done, then these individuals face being homeless/rootless/disenfranchised and an even greater 'burden' (though I don't like to use that word)on the social purse'.
- 'In certain circumstances where adequate provision of social housing has not been made or that on offer fails to meet need'.
- 'It gives for choice and options for customers. It may also provide a better product and a better start than the empty shell RP's provide. Also, the private sector may have more availability of certain house types / property sizes as opposed to wait with social landlords. It can also help to build aspirations and can therefore be better for peoples' wellbeing and prospects, especially if it gets them into a better area for opportunities. More so for areas where there is minimal social housing. Where tenancies are successful and communities

sustain, it could also be a great contribution to tackling stigma of certain customer groups who are seen as 'social tenants'.

- 'This provides greater alternative and can be managed with existing support contracts where applicable'.
- 'The main reason is it will be a great asset to the housing situation'.
- 'Helps get homeless people into housing'.
- 'Likely to see private rented sector stock under-utilised'.

While those who disagreed stated:

- 'Use own resources for social housing or sheltered accommodation'.
- 'No unless they have secure tenancies'.
- 'Private tenancies are costly and insecure for the tenant'.
- 'I believe that the private rented sector contributes towards long-term in-work poverty or dependency on benefits for those members of the community on a low-income. Social housing should play an essential role in addressing this. I also think that the length of tenancies for private rented accommodation contributes to an unstable environment within which family life can struggle to thrive'.
- 'In order to establish themselves in the community, and make a living, people need a stable home, and a significant number cannot afford to buy, including increasing numbers of young folk. The purpose of social housing, is to provide homes for anyone who needs one. The purpose of the private sector is to make a profit. If there are not enough homes, the private sector gets to make more profit, on the basis of supply and demand, but that does not house all who need a home, and thus ends up destabilising not just individual lives, but labour markets, as employees struggle to find and keep a home within reach of work, and communities'.

Those who did not know explained:

- 'Private rented will lean towards maximum rent'.
- 'I'm not sure the council isn't being fleeced by rental charges etc. Also some private rental people object to those sort of people "put here" as they say. Looks ok on paper but difficult in practice'.
- 'Well it depends on how much the private sector would charge the council. Surely that's common sense'.

#### **4. Do you think there is a need for more affordable homes in North Tyneside?**

19 respondents felt there is a need for more affordable homes in North Tyneside, two felt not and five said did not know.

Those who agreed commented:

- 'A lot of people wish to own their own homes especially the young but there is no chance of that if affordable homes aren't there to give them the chance of ownership'.
- 'We have a large number of low income jobs, especially service and leisure jobs, and those who do them will never be able to afford a mortgage. They need to have homes near their work. Younger people also need affordable homes, they need to be able to be near their families, or else there is no chance of developing communities'.
- 'Absolutely YES!!! My own daughter would not be able to live in the town where she was born and educated if the housing market remains out of reach for her and her generation'.
- 'People on low incomes can be getting priced out of the area. Also, where do children move on to when ready to leave home, what options will they be able to afford? I therefore feel from the stats in the strategy that further affordable housing is needed'.
- 'The comments on affordability make a strong case to increase affordable housing stock and it can address special needs also'.
- 'All housing should be available to people whether they can afford to rent or buy'.
- 'Affordable social homes managed by council not affordable homes built by the private sector and turn out unaffordable for the shareholders profits'.
- 'Too many private companies building houses to buy, not enough to rent'.
- 'Need to address imbalance of mix. Ongoing demand for good quality rented properties'.
- 'I think the council and society could charge a smaller rates and smaller deposits till people can get on their feet. Some people are living in poverty'.
- 'To me it always is a yes but to me it's that all our house building is passed as acceptable. It should be big kitchen/triple glazing etc'.

No comments were made by those who disagreed or who selected the don't know option.

#### **5. Do you agree with the information to be collected for the monitoring and review of the strategy?**

18 respondents agreed with the information proposed to be collected for the monitoring and review of the strategy, four did not and three did not know.

Those who disagreed stated:

- 'It should also include monitor areas with social housing and in order to review the impact of policies on those tenants'.

- 'Regeneration I agree with but to demolish for private development of site for affordable homes for sale no. Unless the council build social housing for rent by the council by using the government housing capital scheme for social housing'
- 'Those suggested fine, but could special and diverse unmet needs be monitored also to ensure fine-grain information, along with any changes in government policy?'