

Appendix 3

**Tenants’ charter communications plan**

Go live date	5 September 2023	Plan sign-off	Richard Smith
Comms leads	Tom Slingsby	Directorate contact	Richard Smith
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**1. Background**

Cherwell District Council’s own tenants will soon benefit from a Tenants’ Charter and during 2023 has been calling on government to move forward with the Renters Reform Bill. On 17 July 2023 the Council adopted a motion which agrees to strengthen the charter by reiterating the basic rights of tenants across Cherwell, and the responsibilities of all landlords. The motion commits the Council to running a public awareness campaign encouraging tenants to be aware of their rights and of where local sources of advice and support can be found.

This document gives a high level overview of the strategy that we will use for delivering this campaign and how it will be delivered.

**2. Objectives**

- To promote best practice among private sector and social landlords in the district
- To support higher standards of accommodation for people who rent their homes
- To increase tenants’ awareness of their rights
- To increase landlords’ awareness of their responsibilities
- To promote the commitments in the charter and use this as a benchmark
- To strengthen the relationship between the council as landlord and its tenants

### **3. Strategy**

Cherwell District Council has a large base of social media followers which can be leveraged to promote behaviour changes and raise awareness, with 15,000 on Facebook and 9,000 on Twitter. We also have excellent traction with local newspapers.

During the course of this campaign we will use all of the council's public-facing communications channels to raise awareness of the commitments in the Tenants' Charter, of landlords responsibilities and of tenants' rights.

To keep the content of the campaign interesting and varied we will develop a series of weekly messages based around

- different issues tenants face
- different aspects of the housing team's duties
- what Cherwell does that is different (our USPs)
- where tenants can get advice

We will present messages in a friendly plain English tone, and generate content that is relatable and interesting. As a means of promoting the Tenants' Charter, the three promises within the Tenants' Charter document will be woven through this campaign as key messages.

Where practicable we will give residents an insight into the duties of some of our key officers through case studies and insightful facts and figures.

We know that due to the lower temperatures, housing issues are most keenly felt during autumn and winter. Therefore, we will focus the bulk of this activity over autumn and early winter. However, the messages which we will develop for the campaign have an ongoing relevance and can be reiterated into the new year.

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## **Business plan priorities**

This campaign supports the following business plan priorities:

### Housing that meets your needs

- Ensure minimum standards in rented housing.
- Work with partners supporting new ways to prevent homelessness.
- Support our most vulnerable residents.

## **4. Implementation**

The campaign is broken down into weekly messages, each focussed on a different topic. The following key messages will be woven through the campaign, drawn from the Tenants' Charter document:

- Safe and secure in a quality home
- Support when you need it
- Building stronger communities
- Effective communication
- Hold us/your landlord to account

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Here is a sample of the type of topics and methods of communication that will be used to illustrate the new charter as well as highlight our usual service delivery

**Activity plan**

Date	Message content/Activity	Channels
w/c 5 September	Announcement that executive has adopted tenants charter	Press release, social media
w/c 5 September	Copy of approved Charter to be sent to all CDC tenants	Hard copy leaflet posted
w/c 11 September	Where to get advice and support with your tenancy	social media
w/c 11 September	Event at Castle Quay to launch Charter	Face to face roadshow event
w/c 11 September	Promotion to other Registered providers in the District	Hard copy and letter posted
w/c 18 September	Landlords should service your boiler every year	social media
w/c 25 September	What to do if your landlord is not maintaining the property	social media, residents email newsletter
w/c 2 October	What the best landlords do – proactive work by CDC	social media
w/c 9 October	Spotlight on tenancy relations officer	Press release, social media
w/c 16 October	Damp and mould – what to do if you are affected	social media
w/c 23 October	Enforcement – actions taken to tackle sub-par landlords 25 <sup>th</sup> October	social media Housing staff at Grimsbury Play Day
w/c 30 October	Fire safety	social media
w/c 6 November	Help if you can't pay your rent	social media; debt pop up Castle Quay with partners



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w/c 13 November	Promoting the council funded CAB advice service	Press release, residents email newsletter
w/c 20 November	Spotlight on housing standards officers – examples of recent investigations and action taken	social media
w/c 27 November	Support if you are struggling to pay your rent	social media; hard copy information made available through Warm Spaces