

TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2016-2019

STIRLING COUNCIL



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Welcome to our Tenant Participation Strategy 2016-2019

“Tenant Participation is integral to the success of the business and I believe in tenants and landlords working together to build even better communities in the future.

I welcome the Tenant Participation Strategy 2016-2019 and look forward to working in partnership with tenants to improve services and create a Stirling that makes a difference to the lives of its citizens and communities.”

Robert Steenson

Director of Housing and Environment

2) Consultation of Tenant Participation Strategy 2016-2019:

This strategy has been based on the findings of the Tenant Participation Strategy focus group, comprising tenants, staff and the Stirling Tenants Project. A short survey was designed and circulated to all tenants who had an email address, all Tenant Voices, Registered Tenant Organisations and Tenant Inspectors. Staff were also asked to encourage tenants to complete the survey relating to the strategy. The response rates were low, however the surveys received were detailed in their response. Tenants' ideas on Tenant Participation varied significantly, but what was clear from tenants and the focus group was that the revised strategy should be a concise document, where Stirling Council's Housing Service would state its long term plan and goals relating to tenant participation and that an action plan would support the strategy, outlining in detail how these aims and objectives would be met.

The Housing Service has a long standing tradition of tenant involvement and participation. The Housing Service will continue to commit to providing its tenants with an Independent Tenant Participation Officer (Stirling Tenant Project) who will continue to work with Council tenants, staff and third parties to identify gaps in provision, ensuring value for money and continuing service improvement.

3) What is Tenant Participation?

Tenant Participation is a legal requirement which was introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. It is an evolving two-way process of communication between tenants and their landlord. Tenants get involved with their landlord via a variety of methods, giving their opinions and influencing decisions that will affect the current housing service. Tenant involvement will result in new ideas, processes and procedures which will improve service delivery.

4) Tenants have a right to be consulted on the following:

1) Tenant Participation Strategy

2) Any changes to rents and service charges

3) Changes to policies and service standards that relate to housing management, repairs and maintenance.

4) Changes to priorities within the allocation policy and all Landlords must publish a report on their consultation. Changes to priorities within allocation policy, consultation on changes to allocation.

5) Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter with effect from the 1st of April 2012. The Charter has 16 outcomes. Social Landlords' performance is measured against these outcomes in the format of an Annual Charter Return, which is reported annually to tenants in October of each year. The Charter encourages tenants to get involved and scrutinise their landlord's performance.

6) Scrutiny and Tenant Inspections

In Stirling Council a small scrutiny group has been set up, which meets with council officers to discuss what targets the service should work towards. The group also scrutinizes performance and challenges the service on any areas of concern. The other way that council tenants currently scrutinise performance is by carrying out Tenant Led Inspections. The tenants decide what part of the service they want to look into in greater detail, establishing if there are any gaps in the service and ensuring that value for money is being provided. These inspections are very thorough and result in the inspectors making recommendations to the specific part of the service that will improve service delivery and value for money.

Tenant Inspectors will:

- demonstrate partnership working between tenants and the housing service and its officers
- allow tenants to investigate and analyse the Housing Service's performance and establish if value for money is being achieved
- identify any gaps in the Housing Service
- be carried out annually (as long as there is sufficient interest from tenants)
- be fully supported by the Stirling Tenants Project and the Housing Service



6) Tenant Participation Outcomes:

The Housing Service in conjunction with tenants have agreed to the following outcomes:

The Service will:

- provide information in a variety of formats
- communicate in a timely and easy to understand manner, publish organisational objectives and priorities to be based on tenant needs
- offer a variety of methods of involvement to tenants ensuring the widest range of tenants views are taken into account

The Service would like tenants to:

- be empowered and have opportunities to build and develop skills
- be confident and have the relevant skills to participate in a range of activities and know they have access to resources and support to enable them to get involved
- be able to review the Tenant Participation Strategy on an annual basis to ensure that tenant participation is having a positive impact on the service provided
- be involved in the decision making process, identifying gaps in the service, performance monitoring and ensuring that we provide value for money

7) Support for Tenant Participation:

The Housing Service is committed to encouraging tenant involvement and will:

- provide a budget for tenant participation – this will cover all venue hire costs, postage, tenant training costs, catering for tenant meetings, provision of marketing materials, funding for our Registered Tenants Organisations, provision of travel expenses and childcare .
- employ a dedicated Independent Tenant Participation Officer
- ensure tenant participation remains a key issue for all staff employed within the Housing Service
- ensure that meetings are held in accessible venues across Stirling
- provide a training programme available to all new and existing tenants who want to get involved or are involved

Contact details for tenants groups are contained in Appendix 2

8) Keeping tenants informed:

The Housing Service will:

- publish and distribute Open Door, three times annually (Spring, Autumn and Winter)
- carry out a detailed rent consultation with all of our tenants in late November annually
- publish a 'you said we did' section every year in Open Door, based on comments raised in our 3-year satisfaction survey
- have a housing-specific Facebook page which will be kept up-to-date on relevant housing and community issues that will affect you and your community

- consult with tenants on matters relating to housing management, housing repairs or maintenance , using a variety of methods, including drop in sessions, ad hoc working groups, postal surveys, on line surveys: such as Survey Monkey, drop-in sessions and telephone surveys.
- hold tenant conferences, fun days and tenant open days if the service faces significant changes to housing management, repairs or maintenance.
- hold meetings of the Housing Advisory Group at regular intervals throughout the year(see below in section 8a for more details)
- We will use plain English and ‘youth proof’ all the literature that we create

9) Housing Advisory Group (HAG):

The Housing Advisory Group provides one route for tenants to be consulted and make their views known. This group comprises tenant representatives, council officers and Elected Members.

The Housing Advisory Group make a substantial contribution to decision making for Housing Service. Providing challenge to the service, monitoring performance, reviewing service plans, service reviews, developments and improvements. Ensuring value for money and efficiency by focusing on plans for the business, proposed rent increases and priorities for investment, meeting standards and legislation. The tenant’s representatives on the group also help the service to publicise and communicate information and performance to tenants. The Group was established in 2007 and amendments to increase tenant membership to 15 were approved in 2012. It is an interactive group, where tenants and staff are asked to set future agendas, based on current tenant issues and queries. Tenant representatives will be contacted in advance of each meeting, and advised of the forthcoming agenda, so that they can establish their local tenants’ views on issues relating to agenda items. Each tenant representative will be given the opportunity at HAG to feedback views and opinions from their community’ on each agenda item. Travel expenses will be paid.



10) Ways to get involved

We understand that not everyone wants to get involved in the same way, and that meetings are not everyone's preference, so we have a wide range of activities available so that all tenants can get involved if they wish. The table below highlights the existing activities, split into low, medium and high levels of commitment.

LOW LEVEL INVOLVEMENT

- Postal and online surveys
- Rent consultation survey
- Repairs quality call back
- Tenant panel member
- E newsletter member
- read the Open Door
- Face book
- Attend housing drop-ins
- Estate Walkabouts

MEDIUM LEVEL INVOLVEMENT

- Armchair critic
- Open Door editorial panel
- Ad hoc focus groups
- Tenants Voice
- E Forum
- attend the repairs meeting
- attend RTO meetings

HIGH LEVEL INVOLVEMENT

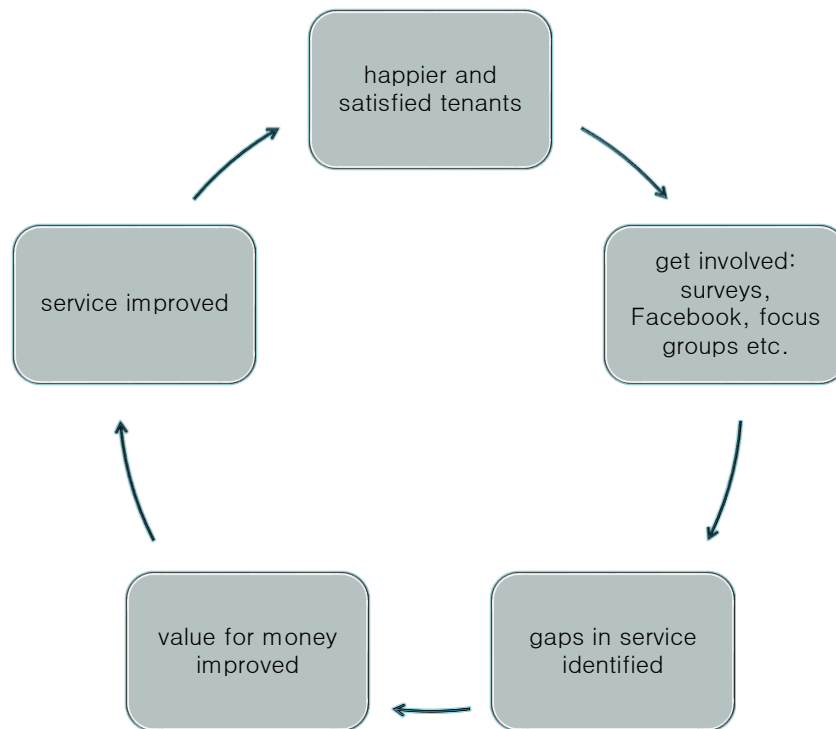
- Registered Tenant Organisation member
- Tenant Inspector
- Housing Advisory Group representative

11) Monitoring Tenant Participation:

The Action Plan (appendix 1b) will highlight how each outcome will be measured, ensuring that tenant participation is effective.

Effective tenant participation should mean happier customers and higher satisfaction rates.

The Tenant Participation Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the Stirling Tenants Project and will be reviewed annually by a dedicated Tenant Participation review group.



THE CIRCLE OF TENANT PARTICIPATION

Review Date: January 2019

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Outcome	Action	Measured by	Target
We will provide information in a variety of formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording on Northgate if tenants need large print, Braille or in alternative languages The STP will create a variety of marketing information ; posters, leaflets, e newsletters, surveys, postcards and other literature Ensure that marketing literature format differs dependent of age range of customers(e.g. funkier formats for younger tenants and a higher use of social media to communicate issues) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in tenant participation charter indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase charter indicator rates on an annual basis.
We will communicate in a timely and easy to understand manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all literature is in plain English and youth proofed Ensure that any proposed changes to policies/procedures are communicated to our tenants panel for consultation as soon as reasonably possible We will increase our use of survey monkey and social media to obtain out tenants views and opinions We will publish 3 editions of open door at approximately same time every year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in tenant participation charter indicators Increased engagement of tenants via social media(such as facebook) , increased likes on facebook page etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase charter indicator rates on an annual basis. To increase responses to surveys created on survey monkey
We would like our tenants to be empowered and have opportunities to build and develop skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will ensure that training opportunities are made available to tenants who are involved or want to become involved(STP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies of participating tenants evidencing benefits of training provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of tenants who attend training courses

	<p>program of training, community team training opportunities and other relevant free training courses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The STP will carry out a Personal Development Plan with all tenants who are involved to ensure that their training needs are met and that any gap in skills are addressed) • Housing to provide accredited housing training to tenants • Fully utilize free training sessions or courses advertised through Eventbrite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training records • Course evaluations • Group Action Plans • Minutes and notes from sub group meetings 	
<p>We would like our tenants who get involved to be confident and possess the skills to participate in a range of activities and know they have access to resources and support to enable them to get involved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a wide range of involvement activities, including social interactions such as lunch clubs etc • Identify and provide relevant training as per PDP's • Advertise the various involvement opportunities in the Open Door and other council publications, such as community newsletters • Have a dedicated Tenant Participation Page in every edition of the Open Door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in tenants taking part in any involvement activity • Case studies • Evaluation of involvement activity (such as a fun day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase over all tenant participation

<p>We would like our organizational objectives and priorities to be based on tenant needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base the Service improvement plan on the findings of our 3 year customer satisfaction survey • Ensure the action plan is reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with any issues raised by comments mentioned by rent consultation responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each department will have developed their own action plan and will monitor progress regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in tenant satisfaction, improvement in service delivery and value for money
<p>We would like our tenants to be able to review the Tenant Participation Strategy on an annual basis to ensure that tenant participation is having a positive impact on the service provided</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a dedicated TP strategy review team who can review the strategy, the rent consultation results any other satisfaction surveys that have been carried out on the last 12 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in tenant satisfaction rates, via repair follow up calls, rent consultation results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in tenant satisfaction, improvement in service delivery and value for money
<p>We would like to offer variety of methods of involvement to our tenants, ensuring the widest range of tenants views are taken into account</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the service offers an array of involvement opportunities • Ensure that these methods evolve in line with our customer base, e.g. increased use of social media, such as face book • Ensure that 4 estate walkabouts are carried out annually • STP to continue to support local tenant and community projects, such as Kelly Court Breakfast Club, Housing Drop Ins, Joint youth services drop in at the Information Station, mobile library joint working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of tenants actively engaging on line • Regularly review social media use and interaction levels • Increase the number of tenants that take part in estate walkabouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in tenant satisfaction, improvement in service delivery and value for money

We would like our tenants to be involved in the decision making process, identifying gaps in the service, performance monitoring and ensuring that we provide value for money

- Provide support for Tenant Inspections, including prompt payment of travel expenses
- Allow wide tenant representation at each Housing Advisory group
- Ensure that HAG representatives communicate housing issues and changes to their local communities
- HAG representatives to feedback local community issues to HAG, in order that decisions are effectively influenced by tenants
- Scrutiny group to meet with service annually to analyse performance ensuring any failures in performance are fully explained to the group

- An increase in tenant satisfaction rates

- An increase in tenant satisfaction, improvement in service delivery and value for money

Appendix 2 – Registered Tenants Organisations

Tenant Organisation	Contact Person	Position	Address	Postcode	Telephone	Email
Cornton Action Planning Partnership (CAPP)	Walter Robertson	Chair Person	Johnston Avenue	FK9 5BW		w.robertson@live.co.uk
Cultenhove Opportunities Partnership (COP)	Gerry McLaughlin	Chair	Hillview Community Centre, Cultenhove			cop1@btconnect.com
Stirling Tenants Assembly	Philomena McClung	Secretary	5 Muirend Road, Braehead	FK7 7PW	01786 473205	philomena49@hotmail.co.uk
Strathfillan Housing Group	Moira Robertson	Secretary	3 Glenfalloch Road, Crianlarich	FK20 8RJ	01383 300296	moirarob@btinternet.com