



HOUSING MANAGEMENT
TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY
JANUARY 2017
JANUARY 2020

Policy on :	Tenant Participation Strategy
--------------------	--------------------------------------

Compliant with Charter :	1. Equalities 2. Communication 3. Participation
---------------------------------	--

Compliant with New Regulatory Framework:	Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management: Standard 2 and 6.
---	---

Compliant with Tenant Participation Strategy:	Consultation through Newsletter/ website & TPWG
--	--

Compliant with Equal Opportunities :	Yes
---	------------

Compliant with Budget/Business Plan :	1. Customer Service 7. Partnership 9. Participation
--	--

Date of Approval :	30.01.17
Date for review :	January 2020

Responsible Officer :	Housing Manager
------------------------------	------------------------

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Association's Tenant Participation Strategy sets out how we deliver Tenant Participation (TP) for 2017-2020. This strategy was developed in partnership with the Tenant Participation Working Group (TPWG), staff and the Board. The TPWG disbanded in February 2018.

2.0 AIMS

Our aims are to:

- continue to provide opportunities for our tenants to get involved should they want too.
- build relationships with our tenants through events which will encourage engagement.
- develop communication with our tenants to facilitate the sharing of information, ideas and decision making
- meet legislative and regulatory requirements in respect to TP

3.0 LEGAL INFORMATION

3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced a legal framework for Tenant Participation. The 2001 Act placed a requirement on landlords to consult with tenants on major housing issues which will affect them.

3.2 The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The section of the Scottish Housing Charter relevant to TP is:

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

36: Participation

Social landlords manage their business so that:

- Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable.

4.0 THE REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY

4.1 In House Review

The Association:

- Invited tenants to get involved in the review of the strategy through its Newsletter
- Surveyed members of the TPWG, staff and Board on their views on how well participation is working, what doesn't work and identify areas for development and priorities for the strategy going forward.
- Checked that we comply with the legal requirements of the Housing (Scotland) 2001 & the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- Considered evidence taken from its resident satisfaction surveys and from Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plans

- Looked at the resources required to deliver TP and to consider Value for Money in respect to delivering TP

4.2 Findings

There were no responses from individual tenants to participate in the review of the Tenant Participation Strategy.

4.2.1 Survey findings

- Tenant Participation Working Group
 - What works well are events what doesn't is using the newsletter to encourage engagement in reviews and sending out information/questionnaires asking for a response as people can't be bothered responding.
 - What is needed to get more tenants involved is to keep trying different things, promote what works and consider using incentives. The group made comment that people don't really want to get involved and apathy is a barrier to getting more people involved.
 - The group felt that the gaps are knowing what people wanted and felt that building relationships with tenants through increased contact with staff would help. There was also a suggestion that events around issues which affect them such as anti social behaviour would be of interest to tenants.
 - The main priorities were seen as developing the TPWG, getting more people involved by looking at new ways to catch people's interest and hold local events to develop community engagement.
 - Their recommendations were for the Association to continue doing what we currently do well and develop communication to include social media and to give TP higher profile.
- Staff
 - What works well are events and competitions. What doesn't are tenant groups which require those attending to interact and advice only events.
 - Gaps are our engagement with younger tenants both single people and families and working tenants.
 - There was a wide range of suggestions on what is needed to develop TP. The most common being develop relationships with our tenants, hold joint events with partners, widen how we communicate with tenants, have a calendar of events.
 - There were also a wide range of opportunities identified for the Association to develop TP. The most common of these were using the Environmental Survey work to get people involved in their community, expanding current events so include more people, hold events out with office ours and use the information we have and our contact with tenants to identify what opportunities they want if any.
 - The main priority is to find out what tenants want and to make this happen there needs to be identified staff resources and training.

- Board
 - What works well is the Festival Day and events e.g. Panto & the Children's Party. They do not consider letters and the Newsletter to work for TP. It was felt that written consultation should be limited to what is required to meet the requirements of the SHR and that opportunities for participation should focus on events.
 - The barrier to engagement is tenant apathy. The Board felt the Association provides a wide range of opportunities to participate but if people are not interested then this should be respected.
 - What is needed to increase tenant involvement is a good data base that records what people's interests are and hold events that focus on these. Don't call it Tenant Participation and identify staff with the responsibility for Community Engagement.
 - Future priorities for Tenant Participation are to continue doing what we do well, use rebranding to promote TP, develop our communication and build in digital opportunities into TP.

Overall the questionnaires highlighted that although we are doing well there is scope to develop TP over the next 3 year period of the Strategy. The Association has continued to try new things/events and where they have worked has incorporated them into its work. The Association has progressed from tenant participation towards tenant scrutiny by forming a Tenants Scrutiny Panel which is currently undertaking its first review. On completion of this the Association will undertake an evaluation of undertaking a scrutiny review.

4.2.2 Resident Satisfaction Survey

The Association's 3 year's full tenants satisfaction survey was carried out in June 2016. It highlighted a significant increase in tenants' satisfaction relating to Tenant Participation with:

- 91% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities to participate, this compares to 63% in 2014
- 97% of tenants felt that the Association is good at keeping them informed, this compares to 94% in 2014

4.2.3 Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plans

Over the 3 years of the strategy annual Action Plans have been put in place to ensure the delivery of its objectives. An Action Plan for each year of the Strategy is approved by the Board and performance in delivering the Action Plan is reported annually at the end of the year.

4.2.4 Compliance checks

The Association meets compliance requirements through carrying out consultation on all major housing issues which affect tenants. We do this through a range of methods which include individual written consultation to seeking views from tenants attending events. We consider Value for Money in delivering TP and how we consult with tenants about different things is determined by our experience of what has worked in the past and with a view

to getting the best result with the minimum cost. Wherever possible we will seek funding to support TP events.

4.2.5 Training & support

Training and support was one of the last TP Strategy objectives. Specific training undertaken during the last 3 years has included:

- Housing Manager (HM) undertook “stepping up to scrutiny - training the trainer in 2016
- HM carried out tenant scrutiny training for staff and Board 2016
- TPAS training on mystery shopping 2015 & tenant scrutiny in 2016 for tenants
- The Association became a member of TPAS in 2016.
- Board attend TPAS annual conference
- Staff attend TPAS working forum

Training to support the Housing Officers deliver events is identified through the Association’s Appraisal process and general TP awareness for all staff is undertaken as part of its ½ day training sessions.

4.2.6 Budget spend

The Association has a budget to facilitate the delivery of its TP Strategy. The budget covers all expenses relating to TP. The budget set for 2018.19 is £2,807. Wherever possible the Association will seek to secure external funding to offset the cost of TP events.

The budget does not include staff resources to deliver TP. Where the Association has undertaken a new TP function it carries out a cost benefit analysis to determine if it represents VFM for tenants.

Spend is monitored quarterly and reported to the Board through the Management Accounts.

4.2.7 Summary of Review

The findings of our review demonstrate that the Association has made continuous improvement in tenant participation and is committed to working with its tenants to improve the housing services they receive.

The Association however cannot look at TP in isolation and has to consider what other priorities it has and any changes envisaged during the period of the strategy e.g. plans for 2018.19 include rebranding, relocation, a new IT system and the full Universal Service coming in September 2018 which will impact on delivering its business objectives. As such the Action Plan for Year 2 of the new TP Strategy reflects this and will be delivered within current staffing resources. (See Appendix 1 for Year 2 Action Plan).

5.0 TENANT PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

5.1 Individual Tenants

We are keen to help and encourage any tenant who wishes to be involved. When a tenant expresses an interest in participating we will ensure that they are given the relevant information on opportunities available to them and help them work out the best option for involvement. Whilst we encourage the formation of tenants groups we don't give priority to this way of being involved, any level of involvement from a tenant is equally important and is treated as such.

Tenants can get involved by:

- Responding to individual consultation requests via letter/ email/ telephone and face to face contact
- Completing surveys & questionnaires
- Attending focus groups & public meetings
- Attending events
- Being on our consultation register
- Becoming a member of the Board

5.2 Consultation Register

We invite tenants both at the start of and during their tenancy to register any interests they have in any aspect of the housing services we provide. When these services are being reviewed or changes introduced we seek the views of those on the register and wherever possible take account of them.

5.3 Tenants Groups/ Register of Tenants Organisations

We currently do not have any tenants groups. We are happy to help and support tenants who are keen to set up a new group and to assist them through the initial stages of developing the group.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed a duty on the Association to keep a register of tenants groups. The Association has established a register however currently we do not have any tenant organisations on our register.

Appendix 1 gives details of the criteria required for group to become a registered Tenants Organisation (RTO), the support available and the criteria for removal from the register.

5.4 External Groups

We are aware that we do not work in isolation within our areas and as such our tenants may be involved in other groups within the community. We recognise that value of these groups and will, where we know of their existence, try to foster good relationships that will benefit everyone e.g. Foxbar & Brediland Community Council whose area includes some of our properties.

5.5 Standards

In delivering tenant participation the Association will apply its service standards to enquiries and responses. In addition it will;

- Attend meetings as appropriate when requested by tenants or tenants & residents groups where 2 weeks notice is given.
- Facilitate and arrange training to meet the joint needs of tenants within 3 months of either a request or an identified need.
- Undertake an annual review of the register of tenants groups
- Provide tenants and tenant & resident groups with an agenda at least 1 working week before a meeting date.
- Provide a minimum of 2 working weeks consultation period for seeking views from tenants and tenant & residents groups.
- Provide feedback to all consultation exercises
- Undertake an equal opportunity assessment for all events to ensure that the Association has attempted to overcome any barriers to tenants being involved e.g. using accessible venues, arranging meetings/events at times that suit tenants, providing assistance with travel and childcare, providing information in a range of formats and ensuring venues have disabled access.

Where either tenants or tenants & residents groups feel that the Association is not applying the standards detailed above they should use the Association's Complaints Policy (See Section 6 Complaints)

5.6 Working with us

To support and encourage the development of tenant participation we offer any tenants looking to form a group the following resources:

- Administrative and organisational support
- Use of the Association's office meeting room
- Tenants and residents group grants.
- Free use of photocopier.
- Use of the Association's web site to promote organisation /events and available minutes
- Opportunities to attend other tenant and tenants & residents groups events
- Advice and assistance on setting up and running a tenants & residents group including accessing funding.
- Training events and information including joint training with housing staff.
- Support of Association staff including attendance at meetings, where appropriate.
- Access to independent advice and assistance.
- Guidance and support to all groups to assist them to become RTOs although the Association is more than willing to work with tenants at whatever level of participation they wish. The Association recognises that not all groups may wish to become RTOs, our resources and support are available to all tenants who wish to work with us to improve services.

Appendix 2 & 3 provide information on the registration of tenants groups and the aims of a group

6.0. COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Association aims to ensure that the service provided to residents is of the highest quality. If this is not the case, a Complaints Policy and Procedure is in place to allow all residents or affected parties to state their grievance. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is the final stage of this process.

7.0. DATA PROTECTION

When implementing the policies and procedures of the Association all staff and committee members must adhere to and be aware of the requirements of the Association's approved Confidentiality Policy and the Data Protection Act 1998.

In situations where there may be any doubt about the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 it is recommended that the Association seeks the views of its legal advisors

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Association promotes equal opportunities and will not discriminate between persons on grounds of gender or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions. See our Equalities and Diversity Policy.

9.0 MONITORING

The Tenant Participation Strategy is a working document with an annual Action Plan. The HM will be responsible for the delivery of the TP Strategy and for developing the Action Plan for the coming year.

10. REVIEW

This Strategy will be reviewed in full by the Association every 3 years. Amendments to the strategy will be made in the interim to respond to any changes in legislation and to reflect any changes in any of the Associations related strategies, policies and procedures. The Action Plan will be made available to tenants on request and via our website.

Amendments approved by the Board 27th March 2018. Amendments made to remove reference to the Tenant Participation Working Group further to the group disbanding.

Appendix 1 Action Plan 2018.19

Objective	Action(s)	Who is responsible	When	Outcome
Communication	Incorporate TP It requirements in new system.	HM	Q2 through to Q4	
	Website development to me more user friendly	SMT	Q1	
	Increase usage of Facebook	TM/HM	Throughout year	
Increase engagement with harder to reach groups – young people/ families and working tenants	Universal Credit event	WBO	Q2	
	Promote community engagement through Environmental Survey works and gauge interest by tenants in forming local groups and having local events	HO	Throughout the year	
	Undertake planned maintenance events as required	TM	Throughout the year	
Promotion – tell people what works	Produce a events calendar	SMT	December	
	Use website & social media to promote events and invite reviews of events	HO	For each event	
Support & training	Provide a staff and Board TP refresher session where identified as a need	HM	Q4	
Value for Money	Source funding/partners for events	All staff responsible for delivering an event	At planning stage of event	

Appendix 2

Registration of Tenant/Residents Organisations Information Sheet

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires Local Authorities, Housing Associations and Housing Co-operatives to set up a Register of Tenant Organisations (RTO's) that operate in their area.

The register is to be available for everyone to see and includes the name of the group, the area it operates, contact addresses and other details such as the date of meetings.

There are certain criteria that RTO's need to have in order that they can be accepted onto the register.

The Association has produced a Tenant Participation Strategy which gives information on the ways in which we will consult with tenants and tenants groups.

If you would like information on Tenant Participation please contact Paisley Housing Association Ltd, 64 Espedair Street, Paisley PA2 6RW, Tel nos 0141 889 7105 or email admin@paisleyha.org.uk.

Establishing a group

If you are interested in establishing a group you will need to have the following in place. Please remember you can contact the Association if you need help establishing a group.

Your group would need to have a constitution that sets out

- Its objectives and area of operation
- How people can become members of the organisation
- The way the committee will operate
- How people can become committee members/office bearers
- How the business of the organisation will be conducted
- How decisions will be reached democratically
- How funds will be managed
- Arrangements for public meetings
- Arrangements for an annual general meeting
- How changes will be made to the constitution
- Its commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities
- Its commitment to the promotion of the housing and housing related interests of tenants

Your group would need to have a committee that

- (after the first year) is elected at an AGM
- Has at least three members
- Can co-opt others onto the committee during the course of the year
- Has elected office bearers
- Can demonstrate that decisions are reached democratically
- Promotes equal opportunities

Your group would need to operate within

- A defined area which includes housing stock owned and managed by the landlord with whom it is seeking to register; or

- Membership of the organisation and participation in its activities must be open to all eligible tenants within its defined area of operation
- Your group will need to maintain appropriate accounting records and have an audited annual financial statement to be presented at your AGM.

It is important that you represent the views of your members and the simplest way of doing this is to detail how you intend to obtain the views of your members.

How does your group apply for registration?

To apply you need to complete the Associations registration form and return it along with

- Your written constitution
- Names and addresses of committee members (identifying the office bearers)
- The area/scheme(s) your group represents

The registration form can be obtained from
 Lorna Gilroy
 Housing Manager
 Paisley Housing Association Ltd
 64 Espedair Street
 Paisley
 PA2 6RW
 Tel: 0141 889 7105
 Email: lorna.gilroy@paisleyha.org.uk

All requests will be processed within 28 calendar days and confirmed in writing

All registered groups will be asked to re-register every 3 years

Group meetings

It is important that meeting takes place in a fair and accountable way. So you should promote the following approach

- One person should speak at a time
- Meetings should start and finish on time as agreed by the participants
- A common view, where possible should be reached on issues being discussed. Where this is not possible, differences of opinion will be recorded and taken into consideration before the RTO reaches a final decision.
- Offensive behaviour should not be permitted; this includes racist, ageist and sexist remarks
- All items to be discussed should be agreed on at the start of the meeting

Supporting your group

The Association wants to support your group and recognises the importance of tenants to have a voice and input into the development of the Association.

Staff will always be willing to assist you should your group need support, we are happy to attend meetings and the Association will also assist with a start up grant.

Following a group becoming constituted and register further support and funding may be available to assist them in developing and operating within their community. The Association will offer assistance in signposting to these other agencies.

Removal of Groups from the Register

A residents group can be removed from the register in any of the following circumstances

- The tenants' organisation no longer meets the registration criteria
- The organisation ceases to exist and does not operate
- There is mutual agreement between the Association and the residents organisation for the group to be removed

Appeals

A tenant's organisation can appeal against the Association's decision to:-

- Not register the organisation
- Remove the organisation from the register
- Not remove the organisation from the register

The appeal would be considered by the Scottish Housing Regulator Tenant Participation Section. An appeal would only be heard by the Scottish Housing Regulator after the Association's internal appeal procedure had been followed.

Details of this procedure are available on request. The internal procedure will be started without delay and will be completed within 1 month of the appeal being made.

Procedure for Appeal

The appeal should be submitted in writing and outline the reasons for the appeal.

The Housing Manager, will be responsible for handling the appeal and will ensure that the following action is taken.

1. Written acknowledgement of the receipt of the appeal will be sent within 3 working days of its receipt
2. The decision being appealed will be reviewed. This will include the review of any paperwork associated with the decision. It will also include a meeting with the group appealing the decision to obtain their views.
3. A written decision on the outcome of the appeal will be submitted to the Association's Committee for consideration. The final decision of the Association will be provided in writing to the group.
4. The group will be advised in writing that should they remain dissatisfied with the decision that they can appeal to the Scottish Housing Regulator Tenant Participation Section. An appeal would only be heard by Scottish Housing Regulator after the Association's internal appeal procedure had been followed.

Appendix 3

The aims of a group

The aims of a group should include:

- Promoting community spirit, tolerance & co operation in all residents
- Promoting residents rights
- Striving to improve housing, environmental & social conditions
- Encourage eligible members to support the group
- Represent the majority views of its members
- Providing information to all members

Tenants groups require to have and work to their constitution.