

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Health Committee

11 March 2015

Perth and Kinross Tenant Participation Strategy 2014-17 Progress Report

Report by Executive Director (Housing and Community Care)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is ask Committee to note the progress in achieving the Tenant Participation Strategy aims and the Scottish Social Housing Charter Participation Outcome. The report also asks committee to approve the prioritising of tenant participation activities and resources to support the Rent Restructure Review and in Estate Based Initiatives in 2015/16.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 Section 53 (1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to prepare a tenant participation strategy which includes an assessment of resources required and a statement of the resources to be made available. The Strategy must demonstrate how, as a landlord, the Council intends to communicate with, and listen to, tenants and residents.
- 1.2 The introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter through the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 requires Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) to report to the Scottish Regulator annually on the achievement of the Charter Outcomes.
- 1.3 While the involvement of tenants and others is central to achieving of all the Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes, the Tenant Participation Strategy focuses on the achievement of Charter Outcome 3: *Participation - Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with*. The outcome describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation, covering the ways in which social landlords gather and take into account the views and priorities of their tenants; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants and other customers to become more involved.
- 1.4 The Perth and Kinross Tenant Participation Strategy 2014-17 was approved by Housing and Health Committee on 12 March (Report 4/113). The Tenant Participation Strategy Monitoring and Implementation Group monitors the implementation of the strategy action plan and the achievement of its aims and strategic outcomes.

2. PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN 2014/15

- 2.1 Below is a summary of progress over the last year towards achieving the Tenant Participation Strategy aims and strategic outcomes.

2.2 Outcome 1 - *Develop a range of opportunities for people to get involved, which reflect local circumstances and allow people to participate effectively.*

2.2.1 We have been working with tenants in Letham, Invergowrie and in Pomarium Court to increase their engagement with our services and be more involved in meeting needs of their communities. We have also begun engagement activities with gypsy travellers to develop a thematic forum to discuss housing and site issues that affect them.

2.2.2 We have implemented the recommendations from the Strategic Tenant Engagement in the Annual Rent Setting (STEARS) Group and increased the number of opportunities for our tenants to be involved in the consultation on the rent setting process. As a result, over 800 people responded to the rent setting survey, 90 people responded through the Tenant Network Events and 50 people attended the Tenant Conference. We also held a Tenant Winter Forum Event, where a further 20 people attended to hear about the rent proposal for 2015/16 and question senior officers about the rationale for the decision. We are now currently reflecting with tenants and the STEARS Group to review and improve the process for this year.

2.3 Outcome 2 - *Build and develop an agreed programme of scrutiny activities with people who use our services.*

2.3.1 We have recruited a range of people to be members of our scrutiny panel, The Service User Review and Evaluation (SURE) Team and they led on the appointment of their independent tenant advisor - PS Consultants. The team is currently engaged in a pilot scrutiny activity of our complaints handling and, with our senior managers, are agreeing the scope of scrutiny activities in relation to our repairs services. Recommendations from their activities will be presented to senior managers and any agreed improvement actions will be included in service and team plans.

2.3.2 We have implemented our first Mystery Shopping Project which focused on the delivery of our Customer Service Standards. The project is being supported by the Tenant Information Service and with agreement our staff and union representatives. The Mystery Shoppers were recruited, trained and a programme of 'shops' agreed. Once prepared, a report on their findings and recommendations will be discussed with senior managers.

2.3.3 Graduates from our Homeless Academy have worked with our services, the Salvation Army and Churches Action for the Homeless (CATH) to develop quality checklists to support inspections of hostel accommodation and empty temporary accommodation. Once complete, this information will be presented to each establishment and improvements agreed with them.

2.3.4 The Quality Panel has also been very involved in the review of garage sites and lock-ups, as well as supporting improved communication through quality checking leaflets, posters and standard letters, which is detailed below.

2.4. Outcome 3- *Ensure all tenants, staff and all other people who use our services, will be given access to adequate levels of training and support that will enable them to participate more effectively.*

2.4.1 We have continued to deliver our Resident Academy Programme, with 10 people taking part in the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Level 2 Programme in Resident Inspection Course. Twelve tenants also took part in the Mystery Shopping Training and 6 people attended a non-accredited training course, 'Over 2 You': an introduction to peer mentoring. We also delivered, at the requests of tenants, 'First Responder' training. In addition, ten members of staff have taken part in CIH modules in Supporting Resident Scrutiny.

2.4.2 We continue to support our Registered Tenant Organisations, at their request, and have distributed £4,852.76 of grant funding to individual tenant groups. We have also supported *US and The Housing* to develop a constitution to enable them to become a Registered Tenant Organisation, as well as supporting former sheltered housing tenants to become the constituted Dalreoch Friendship Group. A number of tenants were also supported to attend national housing conferences.

2.5 Outcome 4 - *Continuously develop ways of improving communication and information sharing to meet the needs of all.*

2.5.1 Through our communications we have increased the number of interested persons to 206 and have 259 followers on our Tenants Facebook Page and 124 people now follow us on Twitter. We have also agreed targets with tenants attending the Tenant Participation Strategy Implementation Monitoring Group to raise these by 10% each year through the life span of this strategy.

2.5.2 To improve our written communication, staff from Housing Services have worked with the Quality Panel to review our standard letters. The Quality Panel have also developed a Customer Approved Logo that will be applied to our standard letters and leaflets in the future.

2.5.3 Through our Tenant Participation Forum meetings, our tenants were actively involved in the design of our Annual Housing Performance Report. They gave guidance on the presentation of information and also identified the indicators they want to see reported.

2.6 Outcome 5 - *Regularly monitor and review this strategy to ensure it continues to be effective.*

2.6.1 We regularly meet with our Tenant Participation Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Group to monitor review this strategy and also hold regular Tenant Participation Strategy Forum meetings to ensure wider consultation on feedback from this and other working groups.

2.6.2 As result of our activities this year, we can demonstrate that we are effectively achieving the Scottish Social Housing Charter 'Participation Outcome', highlighting the positive ways our tenants have influenced decisions about

housing services. The implementation of our Scrutiny Framework and the SURE Team support tenants to scrutinise services and work with our staff to continue to improve housing services.

- 2.6.3 It is also recognised through the Tenant Participation Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Group that it is important to acknowledge this work has been achieved in partnership with our tenants and residents and with the dedicated hard work of volunteers.

3 PRIORITIES FOR 2015 /16

- 3.1 We will continue to implement the Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plan to achieve the existing target and milestones into 2015/16 and developing our scrutiny activities. However, there are two main priorities for Tenant Participation activities and resources: supporting tenants to be involved in the Rent Restructure Review and in Estate Based Initiatives (EBIs).
- 3.2 As part of the Rent Restructure Review our activities will be focused on supporting the recruitment and development of the volunteers who will make up the Rent Restructure Review Tenant Working Group. They will be actively involved in the recruitment of an Independent Advisor for the group. Although the role and remit for this group has to be agreed, it is envisaged it will play a critical part in developing tenant engagement activities for the review and a reference point prior to wider consultation with all tenants.
- 3.3 At the heart of the success of the Estate Based Initiatives is our locality based Housing Services engaging tenants in the process of identifying and prioritising local improvements, especially in areas where tenants are not represented by Registered Tenant Organisations. This is a real opportunity to increase engagement with people in matters that are important to them in their neighbourhoods and be involved in less formal structures to make a real difference through participation in local EBI Panels.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 This report summarises the activities undertaken to achieve the Scottish Social Housing Charter Participation Outcomes and demonstrates the positive impact of tenant involvement in influencing decisions about housing services. The report recognises and acknowledges the effective partnership working with tenants and residents and the dedicated hard work of volunteers.
- 4.2 It is recommended that Housing and Health Committee:
- (i) Notes the progress in achieving the Tenant Participation Strategy aims and the Scottish Social Housing Charter Participation Outcome.
 - (ii) Approves the prioritising of tenant participation activities and resources to support the Rent Restructure Review and in Estate Based Initiatives in 2015/16.

Author

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	YES
Corporate Plan	YES
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This report supports the delivery of the outcomes of the Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This report supports the delivery of the outcomes of the Corporate Plan.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 Head of Finance and supported has been consulted on the proposals in this report. The costs of the activities outlined in this report will be contained within the Tenant Participation budget of £101,000 2015/16. This will be reviewed in subsequent years.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken in relation to this report can be viewed by clicking <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=29628&p=0>.

The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Services that are the focus of this report provide positive outcomes through care, support and assistance to range of clients.

3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.1 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Legal and Governance

- 3.2 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted and there are no direct legal implications in this report.

4. **Consultation**

Internal

- 4.1 The Tenant Committee Report Panel was consulted on this report. They noted that, due to the nature of this report, they were well versed on this strategy and implementation of it. They found the paper to be well presented and said that it showed what can be achieved by working together.

5. **Communication**

- 5.1 None

2. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

3. **APPENDICES**

None

