

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: TENANT & CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2016-19
Meeting: EXECUTIVE - HOUSING
Date: 23 FEBRUARY 2016
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & HOUSING SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline our three year strategy for ensuring tenants and other customers are consulted and can participate in decision making in relation to housing services. It outlines our legal obligations; how customers have participated in developing this strategy and updates Members on the achievements of the previous participation strategy. Successful tenant participation delivers benefits for staff, landlords and tenants creating a culture of trust, respect and partnership.

2. BACKGROUND

Duties to Consult

- 2.1 Participation is about our tenants influencing the decisions made about the service and management of their homes and neighbourhood.
- 2.2 The Council's duties to consult with tenants and enable them to participate in the running of the service are contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. These are:
1. To consult affected tenants on any proposed increases in rent or other charges payable under the tenancy; to have regard to their views and to provide 4 weeks' notice of any increase;
 2. To publish a Tenant Participation Strategy containing an assessment of resources;
 3. To publish a list of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs);
 4. To notify tenants and RTO's of any proposals that would significantly affect tenants, explaining the likely effect, to give them reasonable timescales to respond and to have regard to the views of tenants or other organisations responding to the consultation. This includes proposals relating to policy on housing management, repairs, maintenance; standards of service; and the tenant participation strategy.

Regulatory Standards

- 2.3 The Council's regulatory requirements in terms of standards and outcomes are also contained in the Scottish Social Housing Charter, introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. The Charter sets out the 14 outcomes that all landlords are measured against on an annual basis – this is called the Annual Return on the Charter. The emphasis of the Charter is on tenants scrutinising the performance of our services and governance. The Charter outlines the "Customer/Landlord Relationship" requirements as follows:

- Equalities- every tenant and other customer have their individual needs recognised, are treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services.
 - Communication – tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
 - Participation – tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.
- 2.4 These requirements are addressed in the draft Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy for 2016-2019 (Appendix 1). It also seeks to build on the good practice implemented as a result of the 2013-2016 strategy, which was approved by Housing & Social Care Committee on 6 November 2012; and to work in tandem with the overarching corporate community participation requirements set out in Falkirk Council’s ‘Have Your Say: A Plan for Local Involvement’ and the forthcoming Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 2013-2016 STRATEGY

- 3.1 The 2013-16 Tenant & Resident Participation Strategy was successful in enabling customers to influence our service in a range of ways. We have gained external recognition for some of the excellent work that has taken place as a result of tenants and other customers’ input. Highlights include:
- The tenants’ magazine, ‘**Tenant Talk**’ receiving the Gold Award for Best External Publication at the Scottish Pride Awards in 2014. The Council’s internal Communications unit were instrumental to this success and they continue to work in partnership with tenants and housing staff on ‘Tenant Talk’ and a wide range of other reports and communication methods.
 - **Charter Chat** events to promote the Scottish Social Housing Charter and public performance reporting being highlighted as good practice by the Scottish Housing Regulator.
 - The first **Annual Report to Tenants** 2014 being used by the Scottish Housing Regulator as a good example of what the report should look like.
 - Examples of good practice by Falkirk Council in relation to **consultation with gypsy/travellers**, recognised in the Scottish Housing Regulator in their ‘Report on Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland – A Thematic Enquiry’ 2015
- 3.2 A Customer Led Inspection of the Estate Management aspects of Housing Services resulted in the publication of an action plan in 2015 to make services more customer-focused. The Tenants’ & Residents’ Forum are continuing to monitor progress against the actions agreed. Once fully implemented, our estate management service quality will better reflect the priorities of our tenants and other customers. This, coupled with the introduction of the tenants & residents’ Scrutiny Panel, which has so far scrutinised repairs satisfaction rates, puts the Council in a good position to involve customers in self-assessment, in keeping with the regulatory framework introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.

4. PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPING THE 2016-19 STRATEGY

- 4.1 Extensive consultation has taken place on the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2016 – 2019) (Appendix 1). This included independent research involving 1,034 telephone surveys in 2014/15, discussions with the Tenants' & Residents' Forum, consultation with our 13 Registered Tenants & Residents Organisations and a general opportunity to provide views by email, telephone or letter, advertised in the tenants' magazine, 'Tenant Talk'.
- 4.2 From the feedback provided through the consultation period, it is clear that the majority of tenants and customers are happy to impart or exchange information through letters, magazines, leaflets, websites etc. They are also willing to be involved for a short period by making comments or complaints, completing short surveys or questionnaires or attend 'one-off' events. However, when more time or commitment is required, our tenants and customers are less likely to be involved, mainly because of work/family commitments or for health reasons. Forums, groups, regular meetings and scrutiny exercises are less popular in terms of customer involvement but still have a vital role for tenants and customers. For these reasons, the new strategy broadens the scope for involvement and will capture a broader range of tenant/customer views.

The draft strategy was approved by the Tenants & Residents Forum at their meeting on 26 August 2015. The draft Action Plan was reviewed by the Tenants & Residents Forum in December 2015 and issued to Registered Tenants & Residents Organisations, as well as staff for comments. The Strategy and Action Plan attached reflect the feedback from these processes.

5. AIMS OF THE 2016 – 2019 STRATEGY

- 5.1 The 2016-19 Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy aims to ensure the Council complies with its legal obligations and gives tenants and other customers a bigger say in how housing services are run.
- 5.2 The draft Housing Participation Action Plan (Appendix 2) outlines the target dates and milestones to be achieved, and the Tenants & Residents Forum will monitor our delivery against the agreed actions.
- 5.3 The Housing Participation Action Plan is based around the three regulatory standards outlined at 2.2 in terms of how we will:
- Recognise individual needs and ensure all customers receive fair access to housing services (Equalities)
 - Communicate more effectively (Communication)
 - Enable tenants and other customers to participate in setting housing services' priorities, policies and service standards (Participation)

6. THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

6.1 The benefits of participation are for our service users and staff in terms of:

- Higher customer satisfaction because we design services to reflect customer priorities
- Fewer customer complaints because we listen and learn from feedback
- Higher staff satisfaction because we get better feedback from customers
- Higher quality services because our customers can hold us to account

7. RESOURCES FOR THE 2016-2019 PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

7.1 The resources needed to implement the Tenant & Customer Participation strategy are required by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to be assessed and incorporated into the strategy itself. As with previous strategies, resources will be available from a variety of budgets depending on the area of consultation or participation are as follows:

Dedicated Staff (2FTE):	£65k
Other Resource Budget (See Resource Summary table below)	£125k
Total Budget	£190k

7.2 The proposed resources are in line with Falkirk Council's 2015/16 budget for tenant and resident participation which is benchmarked annually with other social landlords. Scotland's Housing Network (SHN) benchmark data on tenant participation covers resource budgets in recognition that generic, as well as dedicated staff deliver participation strategies. Our proposed annual resource budget is equivalent to £7.69 per tenant household (based on an average of 16,250 tenant households). This is close to the SHN's average spend per tenant in Scotland for 2014/15 of £7.65 per year.

Resource Summary	
Equalities	Training for staff Training for tenants & customers Customer Surveys and associated publications
Communication	Annual Performance Report to Tenants Charter Chat Events 3 Editions of Tenant Talk per year Electronic Information Posters & Flyers Promotional Materials
Participation	Tenants & Residents Forum Registered Tenants & Residents Organisations Point of View Consultation Register Scrutiny Panel Editorial Panel Housing Asset Management Plan Sub-Group Variety of Short Term Sub Groups Make a Difference Project Awards Exhibitions

- 7.3 In addition, housing staff with generic functions such as Neighbourhood Officers will be instrumental in the delivery of the strategy. The Council's Central Communications Unit will also be instrumental to the delivery of communications elements of the strategy in partnership with tenants and housing staff. The participation action plan will therefore be incorporated into the Housing Services Plan, Divisional Team plans and individual work plans on an annual basis.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Tenants and other customers have helped formulate a new strategy to give them a greater influence on the way housing services are delivered. The strategy and action plan will ensure we meet our legal obligation to consult tenants on matters affecting them and design services that reflect their priorities, an issue of particular importance during challenging financial times. The strategy and action plan will be challenging to deliver but if successful will result in better quality services to tenants and other customers using the homeless and access to housing services.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is recommended that Executive approves the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy 2016-19 (Appendix 1) and associated Action Plan (Appendix 2).

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & HOUSING SERVICES

Date: 11 February 2016

Ref: AAB230216 – Tenant Customer & Participation Strategy

Contact Name: Kenny Gillespie / Lorna Dunsmore

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Housing & Social Care Committee: Tenant & Resident Participation Strategy, 6 November 2012

LIST OF APPENDICES

1. Appendix 1 - Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2016 – 2019)
2. Appendix 2 - Action Plan for the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy 2016-19

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 590851 and ask for Lorna Dunsmore or Alan Christie.

**Housing Services
Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy**

2016 – 2019

A Strategy for Partnership, Performance & Improvement

Contents *(Include Page Numbers)*

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- How do our customers engage with the Housing Service?
- How can our customers participate in the Housing Service?
- How can our customers scrutinise the Housing Service and its performance?
- What will the Housing Service do to make sure tenants and other customers know they can be involved?
- How will the Housing Service make sure everyone is included and treated equally?
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- Statement of Resources
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- Conclusion: Where do we go from here?

- Appendix 1: Action Plan for the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy 2016 - 2019

(Insert Photograph)

Foreword

Welcome to Falkirk Council Housing Services' strategy for involving our tenants and other customers in improving the services we provide. This strategy has been written following extensive consultation with our tenants and residents and has been approved by our Tenants & Residents Forum, comprised of our local Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations and individual tenants and residents.

We recognise that informing our customers and listening to their views is an essential part of shaping housing services to meet our customers' needs and aspirations. A key part of this strategy is to provide more opportunities for our customers to express their views in a way that suits them.

The Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2016 – 2019) is focusing on how we communicate with our customers and how they communicate with us. We are committed to providing tenants and other customers' greater opportunities to influence the services they receive and to reflect their priorities and needs.

Our Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy has been written with our customers' views in mind, to ensure that we work more closely and more effectively together to improve housing services.

We wish to encourage people to participate in the activities of Falkirk Council's Housing Services in a way that suits them and hope that this Strategy document will provide a framework to make that happen.

Jennifer Litts
Head of Housing

Our Vision

Housing Service's vision for participation is one of *'sharing information with our customers in a variety of ways; providing opportunities for our customers to express their views in a way that suits them; listening and responding to our customers views to improve the services we provide and allowing our customers to scrutinise our performance.'*

Falkirk Council's Corporate Plan 2014 – 2017 sets out our overarching vision of becoming *'The Place to be in the 21st Century'*. Tenant and customer participation promotes the high quality services necessary to achieve that vision, through our core values of *Public Service, Performance* and *Partnership*.

Introduction

What is Participation?

‘Participation’ is about how we communicate with our tenants and other customers. It is also about what opportunities our customers have to provide feedback and express their views; how our customers can be actively involved in helping shape services and how they can scrutinise our performance, all with a view to improving services.

How did we develop this strategy?

Falkirk Council’s Housing Service has had a strong track record of customer participation. The first Tenant Participation Strategy was introduced in 2002. A Tenant Involvement Group was set up to review the strategy in 2008. This group was instrumental in forming and monitoring the next Tenant Participation Strategy with the support and assistance of the council’s Tenant Participation Service and staff from across the Housing Service including:

- Housing Strategy & Development
- Housing Investment
- Housing Maintenance & Repairs
- Housing Allocations
- Neighbourhood Offices

The 2016-2019 strategy has been developed by carrying out a large-scale telephone survey of 1,034 tenants to ask them what their preferred methods of engagement are, what barriers they face when trying to participate and how satisfied or dissatisfied they feel about the opportunities to participate. We have also asked the Tenants & Residents Forum and our 13 Registered Tenants & Residents Organisations what they think about the strategy. In addition we sought feedback from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) on how the strategy could be improved. Finally, we asked our staff who will be involved in delivering the strategy what they thought.

We have listened to what tenants’ and other customers’ have told us to develop this strategy so we can offer effective, practical methods of providing our customers with information and ways to communicate with us; suitable methods for our customers to engage with us; a variety of options for customers to participate at a level, and in a manner, that suits them and practical ways of scrutinising our performance. The strategy also sets out the mechanisms we have put in place, and the resources that are available, to support the strategy to make sure it is successful.

This strategy builds on the success of previous Tenant & Resident Participation strategies. It recognises the need to work with other customers of the Housing Service who are not necessarily tenants of the council as the previous Tenant & Resident Participation Strategy (2013 – 2016) acknowledges, and as introduced with the Scottish Social Housing Charter. ‘Other customers’ include (but are not limited to) Travelling Persons’, Homeless People, Factored Owners and Applicants for Housing.

It extends to people who are affected by our Estate Management Services or share common areas with our tenants and those people affected by antisocial behaviour. It also recognises that to improve services based on customers' experiences of the services we offer, there is a need to build a strong lasting, relationship through the stages of communication, engagement, participation and scrutiny.

The progress made in the Housing Service from following previous tenant participation strategies include:

- Introducing a Tenants' & Residents' Forum with established Terms of Reference to oversee all communication, engagement, participation, and scrutiny activities and hold the council to account for working effectively with its customers, taking account of their views and shaping services accordingly
- Supporting customers to set up Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations (RTOs) throughout the Falkirk Council area
- Introducing a Partnership Agreement with Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations
- Providing financial incentives to our Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations (and those areas where there were no RTOs) to come up with a project in their community that would make a difference
- Setting up a Project Award Panel to encourage community engagement and participation at a local level and strengthen Housing Service's relationship with RTOs
- Establishing a regular Housing Service publication containing housing information for all tenants and customers
- Setting up an Editorial Panel made up of customer representatives to review and input to Housing Service's publications
- Supporting Customer Led Inspections of the Repairs & Maintenance Service in 2011 and the Estate Management Services in 2013/14
- Hosting various events, conferences and exhibitions
- Carrying out regular Tenant Satisfaction Surveys (both transactional and large-scale) to monitor and evaluate our customers' experiences of the services they receive
- Conducting a variety of public relations activities to encourage engagement, participation and scrutiny

Why do we need a participation strategy?

Outcomes

This participation strategy is important because it will help deliver the following outcomes:

- Equalities: *‘Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.’*
- Communication: *‘Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.’*
- Participation: *‘Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate and influence their landlords’ decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.’*

These outcomes are part of the [Scottish Social Housing Charter](#) which states clearly what tenants and other customers can expect from social landlords, to help them hold landlords to account. This was introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 which also enhanced the role of tenants and customers in regulating social landlords. We publish an [Annual Landlord Report to Tenants](#) on our website showing our performance against Charter indicators selected by the Tenants & Residents’ Forum.

Tenants’ Rights to Consultation

The Council’s duties to consult with tenants and enable them to participate in the running of the service are:

1. To consult affected tenants on any proposed increases in rent or other charges payable under the tenancy; to have regard to their views and to provide 4 weeks’ notice of any increase;
2. To publish a Tenant Participation Strategy containing an assessment of resources;
3. To publish a list of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs);
4. To notify tenants and RTO’s of any proposals that would significantly affect tenants, explaining the likely effect, to give them reasonable timescales to respond and to have regard to the views of tenants or other organisations responding to the consultation. This includes proposals relating to policy on housing management, repairs, maintenance, standards of service, the tenant participation strategy and any stock transfer resulting in a change of landlord.

These obligations are contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

It is important that Housing Services’ Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2016 – 2019) links in, and works with, national plans and strategies and those that Falkirk Council already has in place. These links will enable a joined-up approach to how services are delivered across the whole Falkirk Council area and avoid

duplication or conflict. This strategy has been formulated taking account of tenants and other customers' views, as well as the following plans, strategies and documents:

National Influences:

- [Digital Participation: A National Framework, Scottish Government, 2014](#)
- [Frontline Futures: New Era, Changing Role for Housing Officers, Chartered Institute of Housing 2014](#)
- [Guidance on Tenant Participation, Scottish Government, 2002](#)
- [National Standards for Community Engagement Review, Scottish Community Development Centre, 2015](#)
- [Participation Statement, Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland](#)
- [Scottish Social Housing Charter, Scottish Government, 2012](#)
- [The Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)
- [The Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#)
- [The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#)
- [The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

Falkirk Council Strategies, Plans and Reports

- [Annual Landlord Report to Tenants](#)
- [Falkirk Council Corporate Plan 2012 – 2017: One Council One Plan](#)
- [Falkirk Council Local Development Plan \(Statement of Conformity with Participation\) 2014](#)
- [Falkirk Integrated Strategic Plan 2016-2019](#)
- [Have Your Say: Plan for Local Involvement, 2014](#)
- Learning to Achieve – A Strategy for Raising Achievement, Education
- [Local Housing Strategy 2011 - 2016](#)
- Service Plan, Corporate & Neighbourhood Services (2015 – 2018)
- [Single Outcome Agreement, Falkirk Council](#)

What are the benefits of participation?

There are clear benefits of participation for our tenants, other customers of the housing service and our staff. These relate to:

- Higher customer satisfaction because we design services to reflect customer priorities
- Fewer customer complaints because we listen and learn from feedback
- Higher staff satisfaction because we get better feedback from customers
- Higher quality services because our customers can hold us to account

Aims of the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy 2016- 2019

This strategy aims to:

- Raise awareness of tenant participation through improved communication to tenants and tenants & residents organisations
- Increase the opportunities for tenants and other customers to influence the delivery of housing services and scrutinise performance
- Comply with the statutory requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and the proposed Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- Enable the Council to achieve effective outcomes for our tenants and other customers, as outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Enable the Council to achieve its strategic outcomes as outlined in Falkirk Council's Single Outcome Agreement, Corporate Plan, Local Housing Strategy and strategy for community engagement
- Make sure the strategy is able to adapt to the changing needs of, and issues raised by, our tenants and other customers
- Continually develop and improve customer relations, including communication, engagement, participation and scrutiny across a broad range of housing and housing-related services

Objectives

We recognise that to meet the aims of this Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy then we must also meet the following objectives:

- Make sure information about the Housing Service is what our tenants and other customers are looking for, available in formats that meet their needs and accessible to them using methods they feel comfortable with
- Consult with our tenants and other customers on issues that are most important to them, in ways that are most effective for them
- Offer a wide range of options for tenants and other customers to communicate, engage, participate and scrutinise in a way, and at a level, that suits them
- Promote the values of good customer relations to staff at all levels within the Housing Service and amongst elected members, tenants and other customers
- Offer and agree levels of support and resources for tenants' and residents' groups
- Review and monitor Housing Service's Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy on a regular basis in consultation with our tenants and other customers
- Increase the number of democratically elected Tenant & Resident Organisations in the Falkirk Council area, in particular those achieving Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) status.

The *Action Plan for the Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy 2016 – 2019* (**Appendix 1**) provides full details of how we will meet the aims and objectives of this strategy including target timescales.

Consultation Methods and Minimum Timescales

Methods – we will use the right methods of engagement in each situation and ensure that timescales are long enough for people to participate effectively.

What this means in practice:

- We will try to use the most appropriate method for each consultation or engagement exercise. In some situations face to face discussion is essential, whilst in other situations, a survey may be the only practical way to get the views of a lot of people.
- We will always allow at least 6 weeks when we are asking community groups including Registered Tenant & Resident Organisations (RTO's) to respond to a consultation or attend a consultation event. This is because we realise that community groups usually only meet once a month, so need 6 weeks' notice to discuss things at their meetings.
- We will always allow at least 3 weeks' notice when we are asking individual community members to respond to a consultation or attend a consultation event.

This approach is consistent with Falkirk Council's corporate approach outlined in [Have Your Say: Plan for Local Involvement, 2014](#).

How do we relate to our customers?

Every tenant and other customer should have their individual needs recognised, be treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services.

They should also find it easy to communicate with us and get the information they need about Falkirk Council as their landlord, how and why we make decisions and the services we provide.

It is important to us that our tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

The information we gathered from a survey of 1,034 of our tenants has told us that their preferred methods of communication, engagement, participation and scrutiny were:

COMMUNICATION ('the imparting or exchanging of information'*)

We asked: *'How would you prefer the council to keep you informed about general issues such as their services or decisions or events?'*

The following information tells us how this question was answered in order of preference, starting with the most popular, and the percentage of people who said this was their preferred method:

- * Magazine (77% of people who responded)
- * Personal letters (77% of people who responded)
- * Information leaflets (48% of people who responded)
- * Posters & flyers (27% of people who responded)
- * Annual Performance Report (23% of people who responded)
- * Email (19% of people who responded)
- * Information Screens at One Stop Shops/DVD (17% of people who responded)
- * Website (17% of people who responded)
- * Text (11% of people who responded)
- * Telephone (3% of people who responded)

Other forms of general communication we use that are available, but we did not ask about in the survey, include:

- * New Tenancy Packs
- * One Stop Shop Portals

ENGAGEMENT ('to begin an action with' or 'employ for a short period'*)

We asked: *'Are you aware of the following ways in which you could become involved in Falkirk Council's Housing Services to improve their services?'* and *'Whether or not you have participated in these activities in the past, would you be interested in participating in any of these in the future to help the council improve their housing services?'*

* Dictionary definition from Collins English Dictionary: 21st Century Edition.

The following information tells us how these questions were answered in order of preference, starting with the most popular, and the percentage of people who said this was their preferred method of engagement:

- * Tenant Satisfaction Surveys: Large Scale (60% of people who responded)
- * Day-to-day Customer Satisfaction Surveys: Transactional (58% of people who responded)
- * Comments Cards (41% of people who responded)
- * Face-to-face surveys (30% of people who responded)
- * Open Days & Exhibitions: i.e. Charter Chat Events etc (14% of people who responded)

Other forms of engagement that are used on a regular basis, but we did not ask about in the survey, include:

- * The New Tenancy Handbook
- * Making a Complaint
- * General Publicity (i.e. 'Inspector Tenant' logo/mascot, key-rings, balloons etc.)

PARTICIPATION ('to take part, be or become actively involved, or share in'*)

We asked: *'Are you aware of the following ways in which you could become involved in Falkirk Council's Housing Services to improve their services?'* and *'Whether or not you have participated in these activities in the past, would you be interested in participating in any of these in the future to help the council improve their housing services?'*

The following information tells us how these questions were answered in order of preference, starting with the most popular, and the percentage of people who said this was their preferred method of participating by becoming actively involved:

- * Estate Walkabouts (23% of people who responded)
- * Tenants' & Residents' Forum (18% of people who responded)
- * Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisation (16% of people who responded)
- * Sub-groups on specific subject areas (15% of people who responded)
- * Consultation Register: 'Point of View' (14% of people who responded)
- * Being on an Editorial Panel who comment on the content and publication of the 'Tenant Talk' magazine and other publications (9% of people who responded)

SCRUTINY ('close examination; a searching look'*)

- * Annual Landlord Report to Tenants [and other customers] (23% of people who responded)
- * Open Days and Exhibitions: i.e. Charter Chat events etc (14% of people who responded)
- * Scrutinising Housing Service's performance (11% of people who responded)

* Dictionary definition from Collins English Dictionary: 21st Century Edition.

How will we keep our customers informed and how do our customers access services and information?

Housing Services need to keep our customers informed and make sure our services and information are accessible to our tenants and other customers.

Information should also be consistent in terms of content and style so that our tenants and other customers receive clear information regardless which method of access they use. For example, if a customer picks up a leaflet on any given housing topic, the information they read should be consistent with our website and Tenants' Handbook.

To enable customer access to our services and information, Falkirk Council, including the Housing Service, will use the following methods:

- The Falkirk Council **Website** www.falkirk.gov.uk . On the website, our customers can find out about our policies, performance and other topical issues. They can also make a request for service, report a problem or pay a bill
- Falkirk Council's **Contact Centre** allows our customers to access services, including the Housing Service, by telephone, email or text relay (for hearing or speech-impaired customers) as a single point of contact
- **Falkirk Council News** is delivered regularly to every home in the Falkirk Council area and contains information about achievements, community events, local news as well as topical information on Housing Services
- There are currently seven **One Stop Shops** and/or **Neighbourhood Offices** spread across the Falkirk Council area to take services out to communities and make them more accessible to the people who use them. The Housing Service is one of the key services located in these local offices
- A **One Stop Shop** portal is located in the public area at each One Stop Shop and/or Neighbourhood Office. The portal enables tenants and other customers to access the Falkirk Council website and any other relevant information about council services
- **Plasma Screens** in each One Stop Shop and/or Neighbourhood Office display information on topical issues, performance and other useful information about community achievements, community events, local news and any other relevant information about the Housing Service
- **Information Leaflets** are available in the reception area of the each One Stop Shop and/or Neighbourhood Office. These leaflets contain useful information on various aspects of the Housing Service and the services we offer. Each leaflet includes information on how tenants and other customers can participate in, or scrutinise, each part of the service
- **Posters and Flyers** are displayed in One Stop Shops and/or Neighbourhood Offices to advertise particular events of interest

- A **Tenancy Agreement** and summary of the Tenancy Agreement is provided to each new tenant. This legal document outlines the tenants' rights & responsibilities and the Council's rights and responsibilities as a landlord. Section.8 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement outlines the tenants' rights to information and consultation
- Each new tenant is issued with a **New Tenancy Pack** with useful information about their home, their rights and responsibilities, the various services on offer to assist them in maintaining their home and other service providers who can assist tenants to enjoy their home
- Tenants are provided with a **Tenants' Handbook** that contains information to tenants on how to manage their home. For example, how to contact the Council and how to request a service, report a problem or pay a bill. It also contains information on how they can engage with, participate in, or scrutinise the Housing Service's performance
- The '**Tenant Talk' Magazine** is published on a regular basis throughout the year. This publication contains information on topical issues, Housing Services' performance, options for participation, feedback on consultations, community projects & events as well as promotional material on participation and scrutiny. The magazine also contains competitions, prizes, hints and tips etc. It is sent directly to each individual tenant, is available online and in the reception areas of Falkirk Council offices where the Housing Service has a presence. Copies are also sent to each Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisation, The Castings, YPeople Project and the Travelling Persons' Site
- **Personal Letters** sent to tenants and other customers include the sender's **office address** and **direct dial telephone number** so that tenants and other customers can contact officers direct if they wish
- **Email** correspondence from Housing Services' staff includes the responding officers' office address, direct dial telephone number and other contact information should our customers wish to communicate using another method
- Officers across the service have a **Voicemail** telephone facility so that customers can leave a message if the officer is not available
- On some occasions the Housing Service will use **text messaging** and **Twitter** to inform our customers of decisions or events
- Events hosted by the Housing Service are included in Falkirk Council's **Events Diary** on the council website
- To ensure inclusiveness in leaflets, literature, questionnaires and publications, both paper and electronic can be requested in **other languages and formats**

How do our customers engage with the Housing Service?

A key aim of this strategy is to *‘provide opportunities for our customers to express their views in a way that suits them’*.

It is clear from the survey carried out late 2014 (which included 1,034 of our tenants) that the majority of our customers are happy to engage using informal methods, or through methods that do not require a great deal of time or long-term commitment. In response to this, and based on the feedback from our tenants, the Housing Service will offer the following methods for our customers to engage:

- **Large scale tenant (and other customer) satisfaction surveys.** These consist of a large, representative random sample of our tenant/customer population who are asked a series of questions in a survey. The survey may vary in length depending on the amount of information to be gathered. The methodology used will largely depend on the sample size, target group, subject and questions asked.
- **Transactional day to day surveys.** These are short surveys that are completed at the end of a routine transaction. For example, the completion of a repair or improvement, end of a case or completion of a pilot. The information will be gathered at the end of the transaction and gauge the customer’s experience of the service(s) they received.
- We will continue to use **face to face surveys** where appropriate as a means of gathering information from our customers. These will consist of a series of questions asked directly to a customer in an interview style and face to face as the title states.
- **Postal surveys** will be used as transactional surveys and, depending on the subject for general surveys, be sent to the consultation register ‘Point of View’.
- Where appropriate, **online surveys** will be used as an option for those customers who have access to internet and/or do not wish to complete and post a paper survey.
- Falkirk Council’s **Complaints Handling Procedure** supports customers when they complain about the services they receive, including Housing Services. There are a variety of methods for making a complaint, which are logged and tracked to identify trends that can be used to influence change in policies, procedures and practices.

Customer comment cards will be available in the reception areas of One Stop Shops and /or Neighbourhood Office to encourage positive, negative or constructive comments from our customers on our services.

- We will use **promotional material and publicity** as a means of engaging with our customers and encouraging them to participate in the improvement and delivery of the Housing Service.

How can our customers participate in the Housing Service?

For those tenants and other customers who want to take part and be actively involved in shaping the Housing Service, we will offer a range of options for them to be involved in a way that suits them and at a level that they are comfortable with.

Taking account of the views expressed during the 2014 survey of 1,034 of our tenants we will make the following participation methods available to our customers:

- The **Tenants' & Residents' Forum** will be held regularly throughout the year and is open to any tenant, customer or member of the wider public who wishes to attend. The main purpose of the forum is to oversee implementation of this strategy and make sure that Falkirk Council's Housing Service fulfils its statutory obligation to consult with, and take account of, tenants and other customers' views. The forum has a key role in this strategy in terms of representing the views of customers on the Housing Service they receive.
- A variety of **short term subgroups** can be set up to provide feedback to consultations on particular areas of the service. These groups will be made up of customer volunteers. The size and frequency of these subgroups can vary depending on the subject and the extent of the consultation. Each subgroup provides feedback to the Tenants' & Residents' Forum. Each subgroup is open to anyone who may be interested in the subject, whether they are already actively involved or not, and will be advertised as such.
- Where a number of tenants and other customers want to set up their own local group, they can apply to form a **Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations (RTOs)**. RTOs have a statutory right to be consulted on issues that may affect them or the wider tenant population. There are currently 13 RTOs in the Falkirk Council area.
- For those customers who wish to express their views without attending a forum, group or meeting, there is a register of tenants and customers who wish to be consulted. This register is called **'Point of View'** and enables our customers to express their view from the comfort of their home by returning feedback on consultations sent to them. All postal surveys or feedback requests will be sent with a pre-paid envelope to encourage responses.
- Where appropriate or necessary, the Housing Service uses the council's **Citizens' Panel** on issues that require feedback from the wider customer base. Examples include the Local Housing Strategy, Estate Management Policy etc.
- The content and design of the 'Tenant Talk' magazine is approved by an **Editorial Panel** made up of tenants and other customers. The group also oversees information (including web content, leaflets, booklets etc) that the Housing Service produces to make sure it is easy to read and understand. A 'Tenant Approved' logo marks those leaflets that have been approved by the Editorial Panel and/or other customers.

- Influence on the **Housing Asset Management Plan (HAMP)** is, in the main, by a group of four tenants and residents who meet every three months with staff responsible for assets and investment to discuss management of the councils assets (i.e. capital investment programmes etc.) and proposed council programmes for building new homes for rent.
- Regular **Estate Walkabouts** are hosted by local One Stop Shops and/or Neighbourhood Offices. These Estate Walkabouts are open to anyone who lives locally, and gives our tenants and other customers the opportunity to meet with local officers and their partners to identify areas of concern on their estate. It also provides an opportunity for those who attend to offer suggestions on how these areas of concern can be addressed.

How can our customers scrutinise the Housing Service and its performance?

In general terms, to promote scrutiny the Housing Service will provide information on their performance on the Falkirk Council website, in 'Tenant Talk' magazine and on plasma screens in the One Stop Shops and/or Neighbourhood Offices throughout the year. Our annual performance will also be published on the Scottish Housing Regulator's website to enable comparisons to be drawn with other social rented sector landlords across Scotland.

In addition to these methods of reporting, we will also report on performance and support scrutiny in the following ways:

- Housing Service's **Landlord Report to Tenants** is published by the end of October each year. The report is written in consultation with our tenants and other customers who tell us what performance information they want in the report, and how they want the information presented.
- **Open days and exhibitions:** e.g. 'Charter Chat' events will be hosted periodically throughout the year and in various locations to allow our customers to view information on the services we provide under each of the Scottish Social Housing Charter headings. These exhibitions will allow customers to drop in when they can, view information, check out how the Housing Service is performing, ask questions, provide feedback and leave when they wish.
- A **scrutiny panel** made up of tenants and other customers was set up in early 2015. This group has gone through the Scottish Government's 'Stepping Up to Scrutiny' training programme. Each panel member is fully trained on scrutinising Housing Services' performance. The group not only check that the performance figures we report are correct, but also look for verification & evidence that supports the performance figures we report to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The group represents the views of our customers and offer suggestions on how services could be improved. It is open to any tenant or other customer who wishes to be involved. However, any new member must go through the 'Stepping Up to Scrutiny' training provided by Falkirk Council. Like every other subgroup, the scrutiny panel regularly update the Tenants' & Residents' Forum on their work.

What will the Housing Service do to make sure tenants and other customers know that they can be involved?

Our Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2013/14 showed that 34% of the 1004 people surveyed did not know they could have a say in the Housing Service they received. The more recent tenant survey on participation (December 2014) showed that 20% of the 1034 people who responded were not aware of opportunities to participate.

Throughout the duration of this strategy, the Housing Service will work closely with Falkirk Council's Communications & Marketing Team and the News & New Media Team to promote customer involvement and encourage our customers to have their say.

We will do this by using the information gathered from the large-scale tenants' surveys carried in 2013/14 and late 2014, and by setting up a joint working group of officers who will consider the following:

- Internet content.
- Colour, style, design and content of printed information provided by the Housing Service to ensure consistency across the service and information that is provided to our customers. For example, we will ensure that information is consistently managed so that our customers will receive the same clear message regardless of which method of communication they use (i.e. website, leaflet, booklet, poster, flyer etc).
- Promoting the range of ways for customers to get involved using a variety of methods. These methods will include a strap-line promoting involvement on all printed information provided by the Housing Service; using our 'Inspector Tenant' logo and mascot on literature (particularly literature relating to scrutiny) and at events; articles and adverts in the 'Tenant Talk' magazine; advertisements on the home page of the Falkirk Council website; a promotional DVD advert featuring customers who are already involved on the plasma screens in One Stop Shops and/or Neighbourhood Offices; posters and flyers at targeted locations; flyers and information posted directly to members of the 'Point of View' register; Twitter and any other appropriate means of raising awareness.
- Promotional materials including use of the 'Inspector Tenant' mascot at events, 'Inspector Tenant' key-rings to new tenants, balloons for children at events and any other appropriate promotional material.

How will the Housing Service make sure everyone is included and treated equally?

Falkirk Council believes that the diversity of its community is an essential part of its values.

The Equality Act 2010 promotes equality of opportunity, protects individuals from discrimination and adds a particular responsibility on public bodies to consider socio-economic inequalities.

The council is committed to achieving equality of access for all citizens and avoiding unlawful discrimination including direct, indirect, by perception or association or third party harassment. We recognise that people can be discriminated against for reasons including age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These characteristics are known as protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Legislation also protects people being discriminated against on the grounds of unrelated criminal convictions, trade union activity, and long term unemployment or because they have AIDS or are HIV positive.

Falkirk Council's Housing Service is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with our own Equal Opportunities Policy and associated policies
- Taking lawful, affirmative, or positive action where appropriate, and in accordance with legislation

The Housing Service is committed to fulfilling our statutory duty to promote equality and treat people with respect, fairness and equality across all areas of our business, including access to, and the provision of, quality housing, addressing homeless needs, managing our estates, tackling antisocial behaviour, providing support, managing rent arrears, working with other tenures and in our relationships with our tenants and other customers. We are also committed to tackling discrimination and harassment in all our activities and to ensuring that our services are accessible to everyone. Housing Services will encourage and provide active measures to ensure that all groups and individuals have equal access to communication, engagement, participation and scrutiny where they want to.

A commitment to equality and opportunity must also be reflected in the work and involvement of the Tenants' & Residents' Forum, the consultation register 'Point of View', Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations and any other group or sub groups formed as part of this strategy. These groups should also involve and represent all sections of the communities they are active in. Falkirk Council will encourage each of the groups involved with the Housing Service to adopt an inclusive approach towards involving minority groups, or groups that are at risk of being excluded, in the community they are active in. Groups or individuals involved with the Housing Service who act in a discriminatory or offensive way towards minority groups could be subject to removal from the involvement process.

How will the Housing Service remove barriers that prevent customers being involved through participation and scrutiny?

Falkirk Council wants everyone to have the opportunity to become involved in the services they receive. We know from the recent tenant survey on participation (conducted in December 2014), to which we received 1,034 responses that the main barriers to involvement are:

- Health/disability issues (31% of people who responded)
- Work commitments (28% of people who responded)
- Not aware of meetings/opportunities to participate (20% of people who responded)
- Childcare commitments (19% of people who responded)
- Not interested (16% of people who responded)
- Don't understand enough about the work of the Council's Housing Services (8% of people who responded)
- Lack of confidence in speaking up (4.5% of people who responded)
- Transport issues (1.5% of people who responded)

To show Housing Service's commitment to our relationship with our customers and to encourage their involvement, we will seek to overcome these barriers in the following ways:

- **Health/disability issues:** We will make information as accessible as possible and in various formats including large print or Braille for those who are visually impaired. Promotional DVDs will be available with subtitles for those who are hard of hearing or deaf. We recognise that some meeting venues may not be suitable for people with physical disabilities or impairments so we will hold meetings in venues that are accessible, secure and convenient. We will provide a wide range of options for people to become involved in a way that suits them; including options that mean they do not have to leave their home if they do not want to.
- **Work commitments:** As far as is reasonably possible we will arrange meeting and event times taking account of the needs and preferences of local communities and people who are invited to attend. We will provide a wide range of opportunities for customers to provide feedback at a time that is convenient to them and in a manner that suits them.
- **Not aware of meetings/opportunities to participate:** We will promote customer involvement and the variety of options available for involvement. This will be done in partnerships with the Council's Communications & Marketing Team, News & New Media Team and Housing Service's Communications Group.
- **Childcare commitments:** Where necessary, we will provide crèche facilities during meetings or events, or consider childminding allowances to enable people to attend meetings.

- **Not interested:** We will continue to promote the values and benefits of customer involvement.
- **Don't understand enough about the work of the Council's Housing Service:** We will raise awareness of the variety of services the Housing Service provides and provide information about what these services do.
- **Lack of confidence in speaking up:** We will provide training and support to give tenants and other customers the necessary knowledge to take part in discussions and/or provide comments.
- **Transport issues:** Where requested, we will provide transport for tenants and other customers to attend meetings and events arranged by the Housing Service, or offer financial assistance with transport costs.

Statement of Resources

We recognise that if we are to have a strong, sustainable relationship with our customers, the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2016 – 2019) has to be properly resourced and supported. We will work with our partners in other services to join up budgets and share staff resources to meet common aims and objectives at a strategic and operational level.

A key requirement of this strategy is to carry out an assessment of the resources needed to enable good customer relations through communication, engagement, participation and scrutiny.

Falkirk Council's dedicated resource budget for Tenant & Resident Participation is approximately £7.69 per tenant household per year (based on an average of 16,250 tenants). This is close to the average spend per tenant in Scotland of £7.65 per year. (*Source: Scottish Housing Best Value Report 2014/15*).

The annual resources for delivering the strategy are drawn from a variety of housing services budgets and are summarised on the statement below:

<u>Resource Summary</u>	
Dedicated Staff (2 Full Time Equivalent): £65, 000	
<u>Other Budget (see resource summary table below): £125, 000</u>	
<u>Total Budget £190, 000</u>	
Equalities	Training for staff Training for tenants & customers Customer Surveys and associated publications
Communication	Annual Performance Report to Tenants Charter Chat Events 3 Editions of Tenant Talk per year Electronic Information Posters & Flyers Promotional Materials
Participation	Tenants & Residents Forum Registered Tenants & Residents Organisations Point of View Consultation Register Scrutiny Panel Editorial Panel Housing Asset Management Plan SubGroup Variety of Short Term SubGroups Make a Difference Project Awards Exhibitions

Staff with generic functions such as Neighbourhood Officers will be instrumental to the delivery of the strategy. The Council's central Communications unit will also be instrumental to the delivery of communications elements of the strategy in partnership with tenants and housing staff. The participation action plan will therefore be incorporated into the Housing Services Plan, Divisional Team plans and individual work plans on an annual basis.

The Statement of Resources includes two staff dedicated to the implementation and co-ordination of communication, engagement, participation and scrutiny across the service – The Community Participation Co-Ordinator and supporting officer. Other staff costs that are not reflected in the table include staff that carry out tenant and customer participation activities on a day-to-day basis as part of their generic role.

The Community Engagement Coordinator has a strategic role in managing and co-ordinating all tenant and resident participation activities including communication, engagement, participation and scrutiny. This post includes promoting and supporting good customer relations through effective communication, engagement, participation & scrutiny amongst staff and customers through training and development.

Staff across the Housing Service communicate regularly with customers, seek feedback on services provided, consult on a variety of issues and monitor performance taking account of customers' views with the aim of improving service delivery. These activities are carried out as routine business and not reflected in the budget.

Staff based in One Stop Shops and/or Neighbourhood Offices support their local Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations. This includes assistance with promoting the group, accessing grants, training, managing community based projects, assistance with consultations and administration (including typing, photocopying, printing of local newsletters etc). Support is offered as part of routine business and not reflected in the budget.

Approval of this strategy and supporting action plan by our tenants and other customers will determine future spend of the budget.

A financial breakdown of how monies are spent will be provided to the Tenants' & Residents' Forum on a regular basis, or upon request of Forum members.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategy

To ensure the Housing Service's Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2016 – 2019) is working as intended, and there are positive outcomes, the following monitoring arrangements have been put in place:

- Reporting regularly on the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and in particular 'Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy' outcomes. This will be done in consultation with our customers.
- Checking tenants' and other customers' satisfaction with how good they feel we are at keeping them informed about decisions that effect them, opportunities to participate and overall satisfaction with the Council as their landlord.
- Maintaining a consultation database of all consultation and participation activities across the service ensuring compliance with the National Standards for Community Engagement.
- Checking Falkirk Council's performance against other similar sized social landlords across Scotland.
- Providing regular updates to the Tenants' & Residents' Forum and support a monitoring and implementation group.
- Publishing a variety of events, achievements and feedback to consultations in the 'Tenant Talk' magazine and on the Falkirk Council website.
- Carrying out regular audits of Registered Tenants' & Residents' Organisations.
- Regular updates to the Tenants' & Residents' Forum from the various sub-groups including the Scrutiny Panel, Project Award Panel, Editorial Panel etc.
- Publishing an Action Plan to support the Customer Relations Strategy and reviewing progress on actions with the Tenants' & Residents' Forum.

Conclusion: Where do we go from here?

This Housing Service's Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2016 – 2019) builds on the success of previous participation strategies.

Our customers already actively engage and continue to influence the Housing Service so that the quality of housing and the supporting services that they receive are improving. The Housing Service strives to continuously improve by building a good relationship with our customers, working with those who wish to participate and listening to what our customers tell us about the services we provide, regardless of which method they use to express their views.

Our efforts cannot, and do not, stop with the publication of this strategy. We are always looking to improve and find more innovative and imaginative ways for communicating, engaging more effectively with our customers, and for our customers to participate or scrutinise the services we offer. This strategy will evolve as the relationship with our customers grows and develops.

In summary, this strategy sets out how our customers can access the Housing Service and explains how they can communicate and engage with us; participate in influencing the ways that decisions are made on housing issues and scrutinise how the service is performing.

If you would like more information on this strategy, or how you can become involved, you can contact the Community Engagement Team on 01324 590796, by email at inspector.tenant@falkirk.gov.uk or you can find out more by visiting our website at <http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/homes-property/council-housing/customer-involvement/>. Alternatively, you can ask to speak to a member of staff in any one of our One Stop Shops and/or Neighbourhood Offices.

Charter Outcome: 1. Equalities

Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
1.a) Support customers to scrutinise our equalities related complaints handling	No scrutiny activity on equalities issues to date	Completed Scrutiny Report	Customer approved approach to equalities complaints handling	Dec 2019	Community Engagement Co-ordinator (CEC), Customer Services Team Leader and Scrutiny Panel	
1. b) Conduct a large-scale tenant satisfaction survey a minimum of every three years, which includes analysis of equalities issues	Last survey in 2013/14	Completed Large Scale Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Report on tenant profile, satisfaction and equalities published for tenants	Dec 2016	CEC	

Charter Outcome: 1. Equalities

Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
1. c) Carry out a fit for purpose review of equalities monitoring across housing services	Various equalities monitoring systems in place	Review recommendations implemented	Suitable templates and system to regularly review and report findings	Dec 2017	CEC and Performance & Compliance Officer (P&CO)	
1. d) Regularly audit the Registered Tenants & Residents Organisations (RTO) register, constitutions, groups' Code of Conduct and staff Partnership Agreement, including equalities issues.	Regular programme of audits of 13 RTO's in place	Number of annual audits and number fully compliant	5 annual RTO audits, all fully compliant by end of year	Annual	Neighbourhood Officers supported by CEC	

Charter Outcome: 1. Equalities

Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
1. e) Publicise how we can help equalities groups (e.g. disabled people) to participate, via the tenants magazine	2 tenant magazines per year – opportunity to highlight equalities	Number of features in the magazine on equalities	2 equalities features per year	Annual	CEC, Customer Editorial Panel, Central Communications Unit	

Charter Outcome: 2. Communication

Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
2.a) Increase the percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about services and decisions by 10%	73%	Charter Indicator.3	83% (National average 2014/15 81%)	Dec 2019	CEC	
2. b) Report the outcome of all consultation activity in the tenants' magazine	Most but not all published in 'Inspector Tenant' column	Consultation Register up to date and reported in magazine	100% of housing consultations reported in magazine	Each edition of Tenant Talk	CEC and Customer Editorial Panel	
2. c) Report on Housing Services' performance through a wider variety of	Web, magazine, Forums,	Maintain existing and introduce	Performance Publicity Action Plan developed	Dec 2017	CEC P&CO	

Charter Outcome: 2. Communication

Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
methods	Annual Charter Report and Annual Charter Chats	new methods	and implemented with customers			
2. d) Publish at least 3 tenant magazines a year with help from the customer editorial panel	2 per year	Number of magazines	3 per year	Dec 2017	CEC, Customer Editorial Panel, Central Communications Unit	

Charter Outcome: 3. Participation

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

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
3. a) Increase the percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities given to them to participate in landlords decision making	76%	Charter Indicator	78% (national average 2014/15 70%)	Dec 2019	CEC	
3.b) Comply with our legal obligation to consult tenants on any	Consultation over any proposed policy or service	Reasonable timescale for tenants to reply	Written evidence that we have had regard to the	Audit March 2016 and annually	CEC, Service Managers, Head of	

Charter Outcome: 3. Participation

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

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
proposals that will significantly affect them	standard changes	Report of outcomes	views of tenants and other groups	thereafter	Housing	
3.c) Comply with our legal obligation to consult on any proposed rent or related tenancy charge increases	Annual consultation	Published results and Committee /Executive Report	Evidence that we have had regard to tenant feedback	Annual	CEC, Head of Housing	
3.d) Support scrutiny by our customers to help us improve our services.	16 customers and 25 staff trained by TPAS/SHR on scrutiny	Number of tenants/staff trained Number of scrutiny	25 tenants and 50 staff trained Support up to 5 scrutiny	Jan 2019 Jan 2019	Community Engagement Co-ordinator Scrutiny Panel	

Charter Outcome: 3. Participation

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

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
		exercises completed No. of improvement actions implemented as a result	exercises to be completed At least 3 improvements implemented following each scrutiny exercise	Dec 2019	Service Managers	
3.e) Assess the training needs of staff and tenants in relation to communication, engagement, participation & scrutiny	Training needs assessed individually	Training needs analysis completed	Staff/customer training needs re participation assessed and reported to tenants	Dec 2017	CEC RTO's and Service Managers	

Charter Outcome: 3. Participation

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

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
3. f) Support the Tenants & Residents Forum to review progress against the customer landlord engagement strategy and action plan	No monitoring arrangements in place for 2016-19	Regular monitoring and reporting arrangements in place by Sub Group of Forum	Customer approved approach to monitoring this action plan	April 2016	CEC and Tenants & Residents Forum	
3. g) Increase the number on the 'Point of View'	Register in place	335 tenants on the register, unknown	370 tenants on the register, and 50	Dec 2017	CEC and Neighbourhood Officers	

Charter Outcome: 3. Participation

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

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
housing consultation register by 10%		applicants/other customers on the register	applicants/other customers on the register			
3. h) Support the use of Community Projects by groups	'Make a Difference' financial Award system introduced 2015/16	Number of awards allocated per year	Up to 5 awards per year Resident satisfaction with results	Annual	CEC and Neighbourhood Officers	
3. i) Support Estate Walkabouts with tenants, residents and	Customer led inspection on Estate Walkabouts	Published outcomes	Publish annual walkabout outcomes reports online	April 2016 and annually thereafter	CEC and Neighbourhood Officers	

Charter Outcome: 3. Participation

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

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
Neighbourhood Officers	recommended results are published					
3. j) Support tenants and residents to influence the Housing Asset Management Plan (HAMP)	HAMP Sub-group including 4 tenants/residents meet every 3months	Introduce HAMP sub-group updates to the Tenants & Residents Forum	Increased information on HAMP, and influence by the Tenants & Residents Forum	Dec 2016	CEC and the HAMP sub-group	
3. k) Develop and implement a Consultation Plan for the 2017-22 Local Housing Strategy (LHS)	LHS 2017-22 and Consultation plan are under development	Tenants, homeless people, gypsy/travellers and other customers consulted.	All tenants and other housing service users have had the opportunity to influence the LHS	Dec 2016	CEC and Strategy & Development Co-ordinator	

Charter Outcome: 3. Participation

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

Action	Baseline	Indicator /Measure	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Responsible person	Progress Update
3. I) Create a Participation Plan for the Access to Housing and Homeless Service	Various customer satisfaction surveys Specific consultations as required	Increased influence by customers including those accessing housing advice, supported and temporary lets.	Evidence of customers influencing the Access to Housing & Homelessness Service	Plan by June 2016 Implement by Dec 2019	CEC, Homeless Team Co-ordinator and Housing Support Co-ordinator	