

Agenda Item	15.
Report No	HP/33/24

The Highland Council

Committee: Housing and Property

Date: 6 November 2024

Report Title: Tenant Participation and Engagement Update

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the work being carried out to encourage engagement and participation with our tenants across Highland.
- 1.2 This report includes a new Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy and Action Plan informed and developed by tenant volunteers.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. **APPROVE** the Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy 2024-2029 as detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report; and
 - ii. **NOTE** the ongoing activities and commitment to tenant engagement demonstrated by tenant volunteers and officers.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.
- 3.2 **Legal** - Tenant Participation has been a legal requirement for all social landlords since the introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 with additional regulatory requirements to report Annually on outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- 3.3 **Risk** - Risk is managed through regular review and reporting to allow corrective action to be taken if necessary.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - There are no health and safety risks arising from this report.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children’s Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary

- 4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 26 April 2024. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.
- 4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that this Strategy, when executed, has potential for some positive impacts for our tenants through ensuring engagement opportunities are inclusive and tailored to meet the needs of our diverse protected communities, actively targeting underrepresented groups. Members are asked to consider the summary below to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children and Young People – <i>Positive</i>• Children affected by disability – No impact• Older adults – <i>Positive</i>• <i>Disability – Potential positive</i>• <i>Ethnicity - Positive</i>
Socio-economic	<i>Positive</i>
Human Rights	<i>Potential positive</i>
Children’s Rights and Well-being	<i>No impact</i>
Island and Mainland Rural	<i>Potential positive</i>
Climate Change	<i>Positive</i>
Data Rights	<i>no impact</i>

5 Background

- 5.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) was established in April 2012 and sets out the standards and outcomes that service users such as tenants, homeless households and Gypsy/Travellers can expect from social housing providers. As part of the regulation process, the Scottish Housing Regulator requires social landlords to provide an annual performance return, focused on the outcomes of the Charter. A number of these outcomes are referenced from the comprehensive satisfaction survey, which all social landlords are required to carry out at least every three years.

5.2 One of the fundamental Charter principles is that social landlords need to involve tenants and other customers in the design and delivery of housing services. The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out 4 outcomes that directly relate to Tenant Participation. These are listed below:-

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.
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Outcome 3 - Participation: Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.
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Outcomes 14 and 15 - Rents and service charges: a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and to what extent current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them. Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent.
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6 Communication

6.1 The pandemic saw a fundamental shift in the way we communicate and engage with our tenants moving towards more digital options for tenants. Although many of the meetings have remained online, and a hybrid approach has been trialled, there has also been a return to local face-to-face meetings and events where tenants have indicated a preference for this.

6.2 We will continue to explore the most appropriate and effective ways of communicating with tenants, offering a variety of suitable options. There has been a gradual reduction in sending letters as the primary communication option and more use is made of text messaging services and emails. It is important to recognise the need to offer various communication options in line with tenant needs and preference

6.3 The tenant newsletter continues to be a valuable tool for sharing information with tenants. The Tenant Participation Team will continue to produce the newsletter biannually and will work with our tenants to look at suitable options for delivering this information based on tenant preference. The Highland Tenant Network private online platform that allows a wide range of information to be shared, such as housing legislation, tenancy issues and local news from the resident groups. The number of users is slowly building by promoting it to new and existing tenants and giving tenants across the region an opportunity to connect.

6.4 The Tenant Participation Team continue to offer support and guidance to individual tenants and groups to ensure we are communicating and sharing information effectively and in the most suitable format.

7 Participation

7.1 The main objectives of the Tenant Participation Team are:-

- to actively encourage tenants to be involved in decisions which will affect them, their homes and communities;
- to actively support tenants and the Council to work together to improve services for all tenants;
- to offer a range of options for tenants and residents to participate collectively or individually at a level that suits them;

- to ensure tenants have the support and information needed to enable them to be involved;
- to provide tenants with up-to-date information on services which affect them;
- to develop training opportunities for staff and tenants across a range of housing activities; and
- to ensure Tenant Participation activities reflect equal opportunities and are accessible to all.

During the past 12 months we have continued to attempt new ways of engaging with tenants, including trialling a fully hybrid Tenant Forum in September as part of our efforts to provide different options for tenants to engage according to preference.

- 7.2 Officers continue to support various tenant working groups whereby interested tenants review housing issues that matter most to them. The Value for Money Group has been scrutinising the Tenant Participation budget and suggesting areas where savings could be made, such as in the frequency and accessibility of the tenant newsletter. The Communication Group has reviewed the Annual Customer Report, and the Strategy Working Group has co-produced the Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy 2024-2029.
- 7.3 The Tenant Participation Team have been exploring the most effective way of collaborating with tenants to improve their local areas. In the last year, the Tenant Participation Team have worked with tenant groups to organise 15 clean-ups and community litter picks. Groups have also been assisted with their requests to manage small parcels of land within their estates.

8 Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy

- 8.1 In 2022 a working group of interested tenants was established with officers and a representative from the National Tenant Participation Advisory Service. Its purpose has been to review and update the Strategy:-
- to ensure it was reflective of the changes to the way we engage with our tenants;
 - to promote further a culture of tenant engagement; and
 - to commit the Council to a number of actions to progress tenant engagement services.

A number of meetings were held to agree the contents. It was decided that the strategy should be driven by tenants for tenants, and this is reflected in the final version of the Strategy at **Appendix 1**.

- 8.2 This process has involved getting feedback from tenants to help inform the methods of engagement, ensuring they are fit for the Highland area and that they meet the various needs of our diverse tenant base. The working group have taken significant time to promote the voice of Highland tenants and offered numerous opportunities for tenants to express their views to help inform the Strategy.

- 8.3 The Strategy emphasises the Council's commitment to meaningful engagement with tenants by adopting a human rights-based approach to participation. It provides clear routes on how, through their involvement, our tenants can help improve the housing services they receive and details of the resources and support available to tenants who are interested in getting involved.

9 Rent Consultation

- 9.1 The 2025/26 rent consultation will begin in mid-November and will involve all mainstream tenants being contacted. Tenants will be contacted by either email, text or by post – depending upon their communication preference. A dedicated phone line will be available to enable tenants to speak to an officer should they wish to discuss the consultation and the options being presented.
- 9.2 The consultation will be widely promoted across all digital channels and amongst all interested tenants, resident and community groups. The Tenant Participation Officers will be holding drop-in events at various locations across Highland, recognising that not everyone will wish to, or be able to respond, digitally. Elected Members are asked to encourage any tenants they have contact with to engage in this process and have their views considered.
- 9.3 This consultation will offer a list of the services and improvements funded by tenant rent money. This includes consideration about housing estate environmental improvements, energy improvement works and building of new social housing – the latter within the current Housing Challenge context. Tenants will be asked to rate their priorities to help steer a longer-term rent setting strategy and inform Housing Revenue Account budget-setting.
- 9.4 A meeting is scheduled for October for registered tenant organisations and interested tenants to take an in-depth look at the Housing Revenue Account. Its focus is on the pressures and requirements of the budget lines and how that aligns to the priorities of tenants and affordability of rents.
- 9.5 Following the consultation exercise, the responses will be presented to Committee as part of the Revenue Estimates report.

10 Comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction Survey

- 10.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator requires social landlords to carry out a comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction survey every three years. This is a questionnaire focussing on the key indicators from the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The latest Highland survey was carried out between March-May 2024 through a telephone interview conducted by an independent market research company, Research Resource. The survey results show a decline in general satisfaction across all of the indicators compared to the 2021 survey.
- 10.2 This reflects a national trend in tenant satisfaction levels since the end of the pandemic and highlights tenant concerns about service delivery and rent affordability as a result of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

- 10.3 Whilst the key Charter Indicators results show decreased satisfaction ranging from 6.82% to 14.53%, satisfaction across all indicators remains above 70%.
- 72.12% of tenants were very or fairly satisfied with the overall service provided by Highland Council's Housing Service (85.91% in 2021 and 78.1% in 2018);
 - 77.98% of tenants said that the Highland Council's Housing Service was very good or fairly good at keeping tenants informed about services and decisions (92.51% in 2021 and 69% in 2018 survey);
 - 81.85% of tenants said they were very or fairly satisfied with the opportunities to participate in Highland Council's Housing Service's decision-making process (93.81% in 2021 and 55.7% in 2018 survey); and
 - more recently repair satisfaction data has been collected at the point of completion with the introduction of the repairs text messaging service resulting in 92.17% of tenants satisfied with the service.
- 10.4 The tenant strategy working group agreed it would be valuable to address some of the key issues raised in the satisfaction survey in the Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy Action Plan in **Appendix 2** to help improve key satisfaction measures.

11 Next Steps

- 11.1 In addition to the work detailed already in this report our priorities for the coming year are to:-
- continue developing the Highland Tenant Forum format, looking at offering a variety of options best suited to tenants needs to join the conversation;
 - embed a human rights-based approach to tenant engagement, seeking meaningful co-design and co-production of policy and services;
 - plan and deliver effective training programme to build capacity and empower our interested tenants; and
 - carry out a review of estate improvements, exploring how tenants and owners can identify and contribute to estate improvements.
- 11.2 Tenants have been key in providing input and feedback to the My Council Programme which reports to the Council Redesign Board. This has included the development of the proposed Customer Charter. Officers will continue to work alongside the My Council Programme Team to align the principles of tenant engagement with the Customer Experience Strategy.

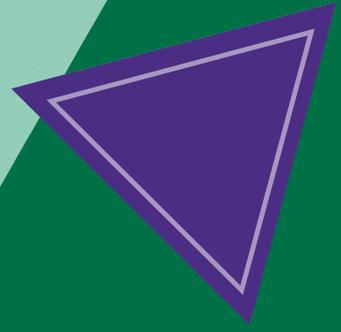
Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

Date: 30 September 2024

Author: Brian Cameron, Strategic Lead – Housing & Building Maintenance
Suzy Boardman, Principal Tenant & Customer Engagement Officer

Background Papers: Scottish Housing Charter

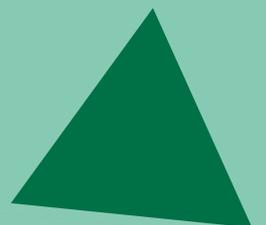
Appendices: Appendix 1 – Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy
Appendix 2 – Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy Action Plan



Tenant Participation & Engagement Strategy

2024 -2029

Ro-innleachd Com-pàirteachaidh & Co-cheangail Luchd-gabhail na Gàidhealtachd



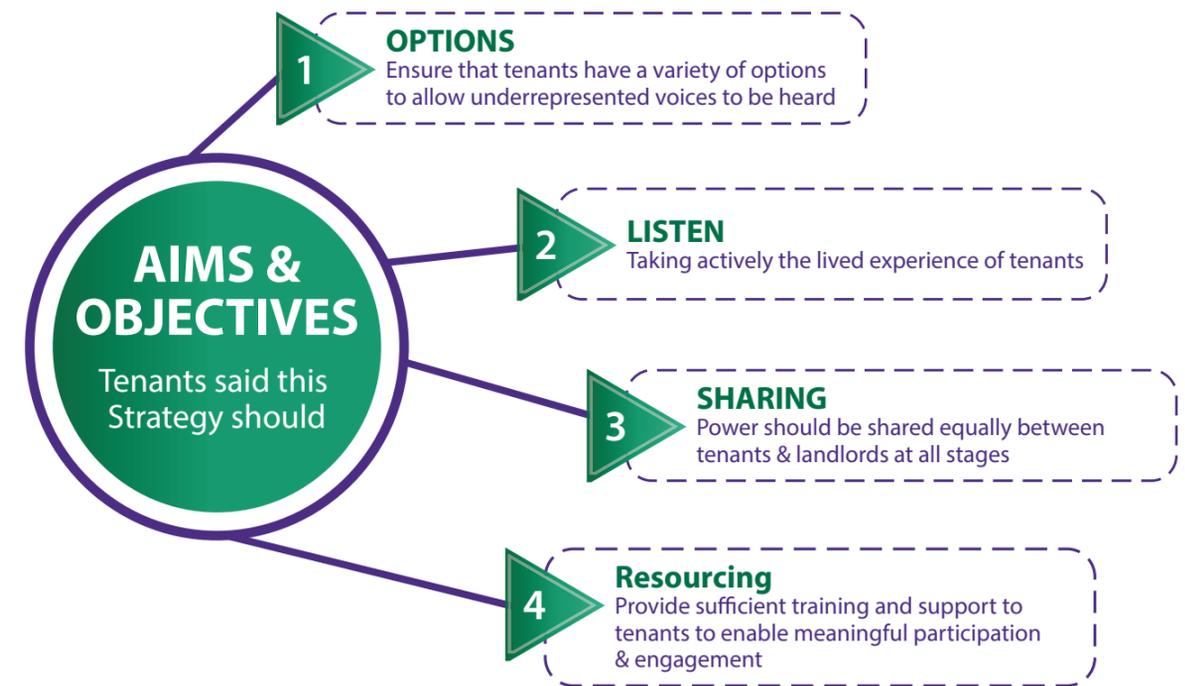
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Aims & Objectives

• These aims & objectives will be assessed against the Action Plan (Appendix 1)



Welcome to our Tenant Participation & Engagement Strategy

This Strategy is a marker of a new start and fresh approach to tenant participation & engagement in a post pandemic world.

Many things have changed over the past few years at a rapid speed, and this is a chance to take stock of our approach to Tenant Participation and look at the best ways to ensure all tenants are able to have their views heard and join in with activities that suit their needs and schedules.

This Strategy aims to provide a clear and concise route for effective tenant participation suited to the unique needs of the Highland Region, highlighting the benefits, successes and challenges faced by landlords and tenants in this current climate. It's been written by tenants for tenants to encourage meaningful engagement at many levels.

Striving to ensure tenants' views are listened to and considered when decisions are made, working together to continually improve housing services. However, we can't do this without your input.

As we begin this fresh start to participation, we aim to provide many opportunities for tenants to have their views heard. To achieve this, we will foster a secure and welcoming environment where they are able to provide honest and direct feedback. To make this participation meaningful, it will be a two-way process whereby, as tenants, we can have a real influence on decisions.

We hope you find something in this strategy to encourage you to get involved and we welcome your comments and feedback.

Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy Working Group.

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To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, computer disc, audio tape or suitable language, please contact:

Ma tha fiosrachadh a dhìth oirbh bho Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd ann an cànan no cruth eile, leithid Braille, teip claisneachd no clò mòr, cuiribh fios gu:

The Highland Council's Tenant Participation Team
 Phone: 07557 744413
 Email: tenant.participation@highland.gov.uk



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How the Strategy was developed and who has been involved

To reach this point the Strategy has been through many versions and drafts. It began with a Working Group of Interested Tenants and Highland Council Staff, receiving feedback from various tenant forums, focus groups, resident groups as well as from individual tenants.

There has been input from independent tenant participation consultant as well as the tenant working group to develop this document. Hours of research into Participation & Engagement Strategies of other landlords seeing what has been working in other areas, always mindful that Highland should be adopting a version that suits the needs of tenants throughout the region.

Initial consultation took place in 2022 focusing on priorities and how to increase participation and engagement. An agreement was reached on the structure for the consultation and delivery of the strategy document.

The key messages from the engagement emphasised the importance of using every opportunity to raise awareness of tenant participation and the benefits of co-production when developing services.

The benefits of **TENANT PARTICIPATION**

- 1 NEW AND SHARED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS** 
- 2 IMPROVED COMMUNICATION** 
- 3 INFLUENCE DECISIONS** 
- 4 IMPROVED SERVICES** 

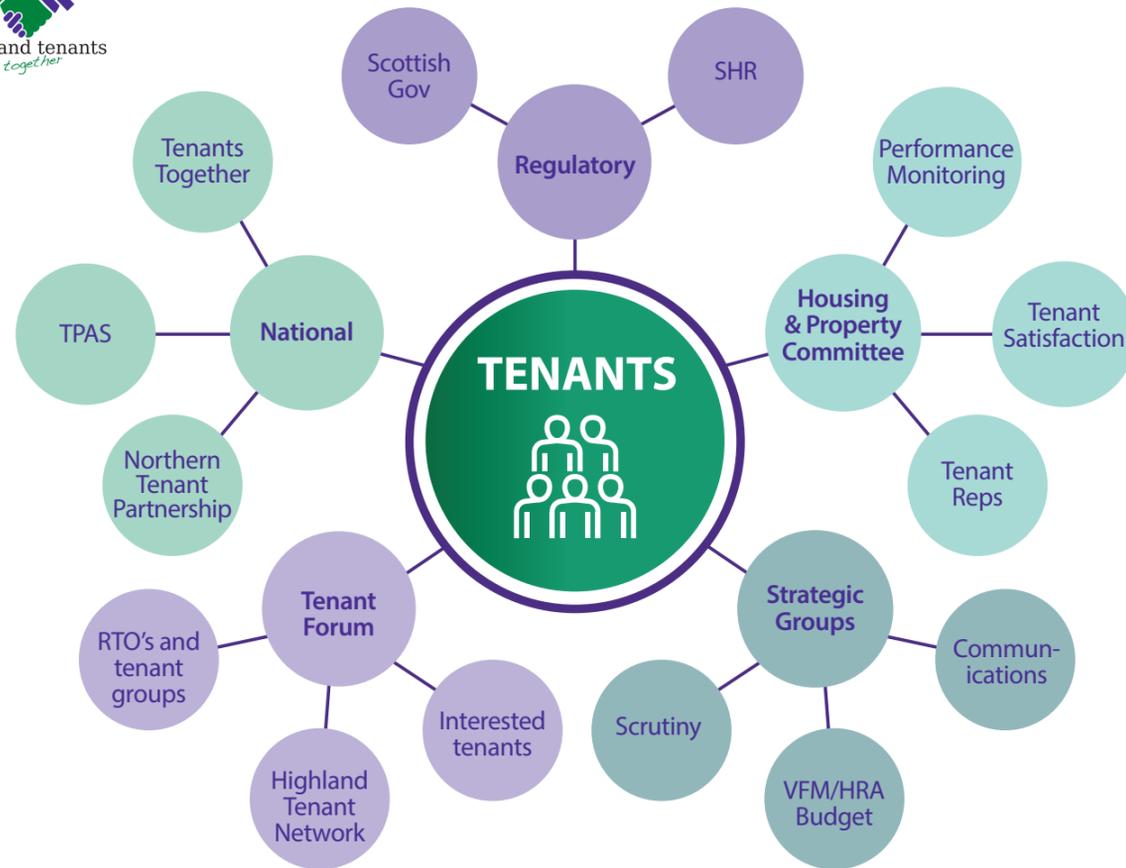
Tenant Participation Legal Background

Our Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy's background is laid out in The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (legislation.gov.uk) The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010-2014 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk) and The Scottish Social Housing Charter 2012-2017 The Scottish Social Housing Charter (www.gov.scot).

This legislation sets out what social landlords must do to engage tenants in the work that they do. Tenants have a legal right to be consulted on any changes in policy and procedures that affect tenants and service users. Tenants also have the right to be consulted and engaged in any changes to services that the landlord provides for us. Highland Council is fully committed to Tenant Participation and to ensuring these rights are upheld.

Highland Council have a focused Tenant Participation Team whose role is to encourage and promote Tenant Participation within the Council structure and who will work with tenants and service users to provide opportunities for tenants to have their voices heard, listened to and their ideas and opinions considered. The Tenant Participation Team also holds a budget for any training and learning that may be required and for attendance at meetings, courses and conferences. The budget also covers travel, accessibility and expenses. You will not be "out of pocket" if you wish to become involved with your landlord.

Tenant Participation is about you as a tenant and service user being involved with your landlord, to scrutinise the services provided, make recommendations, and ultimately improve the lives of all tenants. You can do this in a small way by being an interested tenant or you can delve into things at a national level via Tenants Together (Scotland). Regardless of the time you have available, Tenant Participation has something meaningful for you to be involved in. Further details of the activities you can be involved in are listed later in this strategy.



Stages of Involvement

We recognise that tenant involvement and engagement requires certain levels of commitment, we have outlined below the key categories of involvement that tenants are able to be part of dependant on current circumstances.



Human Rights Context

Tenant Participation is vitally important to the progressive realisation of the right to adequate housing. As the Scottish Human Rights Commission notes:

“Fundamentally, human rights require that the voices of people whose rights are affected by a decision, are heard throughout the process of making and implementing that decision. The procedural legal obligation of participation of individuals in decision making and, where appropriate, the design of services helps ensure that systems are responsive to the particular needs of disadvantaged groups. A failure to include mechanisms to satisfy these procedural requirements of participation, access to information and transparency and due process in decision making may amount to violations of these international obligations.”

The Social Housing Charter states that ‘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.’

By taking a rights-based approach, our Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy aims to inspire a cultural shift towards equal participation: co-design and co-production. In other words, ‘nothing about us without us’. A rights-based approach would ensure that the rights and needs of tenants and service users are embedded in policies and practices at every level of housing.

Local Housing Strategy

In 2023 Highland Council published its Local Housing Strategy in which it sets out the aspiration that:

“everyone in Highland has access to a quality home which is affordable and supports the local economy in a sustainable, connected community where people wish to live, work and study”

The LHS must be

- ▶ Informed by latest housing insights and evidence.
- ▶ Developed in collaboration with partners, stakeholders and residents.
- ▶ Informed by extensive engagement.
- ▶ Clear, concise and easy to read.
- ▶ Clear on the structure & framework for engagement.

These principles provide the foundation for this Tenant & Customer Engagement Strategy, directly underpinning the aims and objectives set out to achieve greater engagement with a wider group of tenants.

Highland Outcome Improvement Plan:

Throughout the country, Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires every Community Planning Partnership to publish a Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The five core outcomes identified within the HOIP are:

- ▶ **Community Participation & Dialogue:** People in Highland will be more involved in decisions that affect their lives.
- ▶ **Community Safety & Resilience:** People in Highland will benefit from living in stronger, safer and more resilient communities.
- ▶ **Infrastructure:** Fewer people in Highland experience transport and digital connectivity as a barrier to accessing opportunities.
- ▶ **Mental Health & Mental Wellbeing:** People in Highland will benefit from good mental health and wellbeing.
- ▶ **Poverty Reduction:** More people in Highland will live a life free from the experience of poverty.

All of the above reinforce the need for a joined-up approach to achieve the best outcomes for our communities and those that live within them.

Keeping Tenants Informed

Highland Council and the Tenant Participation Team strive to keep tenants and service users informed about the services it provides and about Tenant Participation activities and opportunities, in a way and at a time that suits them. As a tenant, it is important for you to keep Highland Council updated with details of your preferred method of contact. When you sign your tenancy agreement with Highland Council, you will be asked for a phone number and email address to enable effective communication. You will be provided with the name of your Housing Officer and the contact details for the Tenant Participation Team. Highland Council uses a variety of methods to communicate with tenants:

- Phone
- Letter
- Email
- Text Message
- Newsletter
- In Person
- Social Media – Facebook The Highland Council | Facebook X(twitter) @HighlandCouncil , Instagram
- Mighty Networks (Highland Tenants Together) Highland Tenants Network (mn.co) YouTube Tenant Participation Highland - YouTube
- The Highland Council Website Tenant participation | Tenant participation | The Highland Council
- Meetings and forums online using Microsoft Teams or in person

Highland Council can also produce this strategy and other communications in a range of accessible formats on request, for example:

- Large print
- Audio description
- Alternative languages

Please contact the Tenant Participation Team for further information on **07557 744413** or email **tenant.participation@highland.gov.uk**

Consultation

- ▶ How well tenants are consulted directly impacts on how engaged tenants are and how services are developed and improved. For any consultation to be successful, tenants need to be provided with the right information to allow them to consider any proposals and take part in meaningful, constructive discussions.
- ▶ The Tenant Participation team will use the most appropriate methods depending on the audience, adopting a blended approach making use of both online, in person or paper-based exercises. Mindful to provide information that is in a suitable accessible format.
- ▶ There will be clear deadlines to ensure your views are included and, where possible, reminders will be sent out.
- ▶ By creating a culture of openness and transparency, tenants can fully participate in decisions that may affect them.
- ▶ Helping to understand their landlord performance allowing robust and meaningful discussions and making landlords accountable for their decisions.
- ▶ Some of the methods that we will use for consulting are:
 - Text, email, letter
 - Newsletter, flyer
 - Online surveys, advertised on social media and through staff members
 - In person visits to tenant groups and individuals
- ▶ Clear contact details will be included to allow tenants to speak to a member of staff should they wish to.
- ▶ We will promote using links to local groups, put up posters in local shops and libraries and ask our housing staff & elected members to help promote any surveys etc.



Feedback

When providing feedback, it must be clear on how and why decisions have been made, particularly if it is different from the recommendations.

Making use of all communication channels - online platforms, newsletters, text messages - as well as forums and meetings.

Monitoring & Reviewing the Strategy

It is important that this Strategy is a constantly evolving document which is regularly reviewed. The tenant working group agreed they would like to evaluate the progress of the Strategy annually to keep on target with any agreed actions.

This process will fully review the action plan against the aims, looking at where objectives have been met and if these successes have improved the lives of tenants. There will also be room to recognise and reflect when targets haven't been met and what needs to be done to get these back on track.

Following the review process, the action plan will be updated and made available to tenants via the newsletter, website and other communication channels.

Performance Standards

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) was established on 1 April 2011 with one statutory objective: to 'safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities.'

Every year Highland Council collect and submit information on key performance indicators to the SHR, this is known as the Annual Return on the Charter. This information will be published allowing tenants to see how their landlord is performing against other landlords across Scotland. The right to adequate housing is a human right in international law. The Charter supports this right by setting the standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve for their tenants and other customers by delivering good quality homes and services. The Charter came into effect in 2012 and is reviewed every 5 years.

Each October, Highland Council are also required to prepare and publish an Annual Assurance Statement. This statement confirms that it is complying with all regulatory requirements and standards. If it is not meeting these requirements, the Council must advise the SHR what it is doing to address the issues. Once it has been approved, the Statement is signed and submitted to the SHR and then made available on the Council's website.



Training

In order to provide tenants with the skills and confidence to actively participate with the Highland Council housing service, we aim to offer training and support to help build the necessary knowledge and confidence. We offer a range of options for building this:

- ▶ One to one support from a Tenant Participation Officer.
- ▶ Access to the Highland Tenant Network, with relevant and recent information on housing policy, legislation as well as local information on events and group meetings.
- ▶ Information sessions with Highland Council staff on specialist topics.
- ▶ Access to Tenant Participation advisory service (TPAS Scotland) membership including training webinars.
- ▶ TPAS Tenant Participation certificate, providing the equivalent to an SQA level 2 certificate.
- ▶ Skills sharing with other tenants involved at the national level with Tenants Together (Scotland).
- ▶ Additional, specialist training will be sourced as required delivering an understanding of some of the more technical topics, such as Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets and Net Zero targets.

Resources

The Tenant Participation Team can offer support to individuals and groups.

Highland Tenant Network provides a huge amount of background reading as well as the latest news from the Scottish Government, Scottish Housing Regulator and other relevant housing news.

- ▶ Support from other Housing Services and other Council staff.
- ▶ Attendance at events, conferences and other learning activities.
- ▶ Grant funding and support for starting a group and running a group.
- ▶ Support and resources for community events.
- ▶ Digital support to access engagement activities – helping tenants to get online.
- ▶ Specialist training and information on a range of topics to ensure that you are well informed and confident in challenging.
- ▶ Support from other involved tenants and residents.

Equalities & Fair Access to Participation

Highland Council recognises the equality characteristics which are protected under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership).

The Social Housing Charter obliges social landlords to “perform all aspects of their housing services so that they support the right to adequate housing and every tenant and other customer has their individual needs and rights recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services”.

This includes “the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. It includes landlords’ responsibility for finding ways of understanding the rights and needs of different customers...and delivering services that recognise and meet these. This may include making reasonable adjustments.”.

Highland Council’s commitment to equal opportunities includes:

- ▶ ensuring that all individuals and groups have equal opportunities and access to participate.
- ▶ ensuring that all individuals and groups involved with tenant participation promote equality and welcome participation from all our tenant community.
- ▶ ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and equally, with a zero-tolerance policy against harassment, bullying, and discrimination in its Code of Conduct.
- ▶ ensuring that information is clear and easy to understand; available in other languages and formats, such as Easy Read, audio, BSL, or large print (upon request).
- ▶ ensuring that all venues for meetings and events are accessible; with accessible transport provided (upon request).
- ▶ ensuring that young people/children have equal opportunities and access to participate, as guaranteed to them by the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.
- ▶ ensuring that Highland Council is achieving improved equality by carrying out an Intergrated Impact Assessment on its Tenant Participation Strategy.





Highland Council Tenant Participation Action Plan April 2024-2029

Area	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Organisational Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Tenant Participation (TP) across all Council staff in line with new Highland wide Customer Charter and My Council Project. Sharing TP Training module as part of the induction process. 	TP Team, Council Officers, Tenants	My Council roll out and for staff induction training
	Mainstream tenant engagement into practice, reviewing, planning and decision making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping tenants informed of their right to participation Keeping Elected Members informed and aware of TP activities Reporting successes to all tenants. 	TP Team, Senior Housing Staff	Ongoing
Performance Monitoring & Scrutiny	Review TP Strategy Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out Annual review to monitor progress and recognise when actions have been met Add new actions as required. 	Principal Tenant & Customer Engagement Officer & TP Working Group	Annually
	Reporting performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish performance indicators on Highland Council website, Highland Tenant Network and in Newsletter Include any positive statements / feedback. 	TP Team, Tenants	Annually
	Improve communication with all tenants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making information available and easily obtainable in a variety of formats Linking in with Highland Council new website design. 	TP Team, Communications Groups, Tenants	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny and Tenant Representatives - support development of Tenant Scrutiny groups across Highland. Offering continuing training for panel members, create opportunities to meet with other scrutiny groups – TP scrutiny forum. Continue supporting development of Highland Tenant Forum to bring together interested tenants, and representatives from the Strategic groups. 	TP Team, Strategic Tenant Groups, Tenants	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how we can involve tenants in monitoring feedback from contract works and sharing satisfaction feedback from large capital projects. Potential for Tenant Working Group to review customer care aspects of contracts. 	TP Team, Tenants	October 2025
Consultation and Decision Making	Continue to seek views of tenants, tenant groups and other customers on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> our policies in relation to housing management, repairs or maintenance rent setting & annual rent increases 	TP Team, Tenants	Ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tenant satisfaction with services in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance Tenant Participation strategy a disposal which would result in a change of landlord Design of new builds and street scape Retrofit, aids & adaptations. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve tenant opportunities to input into Committee providing the necessary information, skills and knowledge to empower our tenant reps with regular training and briefing sessions with key staff. Include potential new tenant reps in pre committee meetings. Council induction for tenant reps Tenant Rep, nomination and selection 3-yearly cycle. 	Housing Management Team, Tenants	August 2025
Information, Communication and Feedback	<p>Improve how feedback is shared with tenants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the You Said, We Did, did we get it Right? Format for sharing results of consultations Explore involving tenants in gathering feedback, tenants talking to tenants and provide a route for capturing this feedback. 	TP Team, Tenants, Strategic Groups	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and support a local network of tenant representatives to help cascade information and two-way communication. Support and empower tenant representatives to actively engage with tenants in their community with clear guidance on their role and conduct. 	TP Team, tenants, elected members	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out comprehensive satisfaction survey to provide baseline of customer knowledge to help understand and plan for communication expectations. 	TP Team, tenants	3 yearly
Involving all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop and support Tenant representatives on Committee, Tenant Forum, RTO's, Strategic Groups (Communications, Scrutiny, Value for Money, Action Plan Monitoring), interested tenant groups, individual interested tenants. 	TP Team, tenants	Ongoing
	<p>Highland tenant forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring new tenants are informed of the forum and invited to join Promote the use of Highland Tenant Network to share information between meetings agendas to be set and agreed by tenants at pre meetings Hybrid format to be further developed Meetings to be more focus on single issues, with relevant officers attending. 	TP Team	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop and promote local networking events, workshops and fun days linking to wider public and Third sector community development initiatives and activities Linking with Community Planning Partnership. 	TP Team/partners, tenants, registered tenant organisations, community councils, elected members	Ongoing

	<p>Overcoming barriers and encourage the involvement of under-represented and hard to reach groups such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ work in partnership with schools / youth groups / youth development officers ○ work with care experienced young people / young carers • minority ethnic communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ working with residents on Gypsy Traveller Sites ○ making links through organisations already working with Refugee programme and migrant communities. • tenants with support needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ working in partnership with organisations already supporting these tenants ○ supporting tenants with literacy issues. • Homeless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Temporary accommodation surveys. 	TP Team / partners	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and consider other good practice approaches to incentives to participate • Improve co-ordination and delivery of volunteer training 	TP Team	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Northern Tenants Partnership - staff/tenant organisation for sharing good practice, joint training etc. 	TP Team / Landlords / Tenants	Ongoing
Resources and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote opportunities for skills development and training with accredited qualifications with tenant reps completing the Tenant Participation level 2 certificate. • Review next steps for training with Chartered Institute of Housing. 	TP Team	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with other resource supports as set out in the 'Grants for Groups'. 	TP Team	Ongoing