

Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-24**Report by Kevin Anderson, Executive Director - Place****Report for Decision****1 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Council approves the Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy publication in line with the legal requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Housing Act 2001.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the Council's Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy as the basis for effective tenant and customer participation.

Date: 9 June 2021**Report Contact:** Simon Bain, Acting Head of Housing Services**email:** simon.bain@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background

- 3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced new rights for tenants and obligations for social landlords in relation to tenant participation and consultation.
- 3.2 These duties include:
- Councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) must prepare and publish a Tenant Participation Strategy. The Strategy must include an assessment of resources required to ensure effective tenant participation. The Strategy should show how the Council intends to take views of tenants into account, what matters the Council is likely to consult tenants about and the information that it will provide to tenants.
 - The requirement to set up a publicly available Register of Tenants Organisations (RTO's) in line with guidance from the Scottish Government.
 - Landlords must ensure that the Tenant Participation Strategy complies with equal opportunity requirements.
- 3.3 The draft Strategy will replace the Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy, 2017-20. The key aim of the Strategy is to maximise tenant and customer involvement in influencing and scrutinising our housing services.
- 3.4 Prior to the development of the 2021-24 Strategy, a review of the previous Strategy and good practice from other RSL's was undertaken to inform the development of the new Strategy. This review was held during mid-2020 comprising both Council staff and the Midlothian Tenant Panel and tenant and resident group members.
- 3.5 The new draft Strategy was fully consulted on during October-December 2020. Consultation methods used included social media messaging, the Tenant Winter Newsletter issued November 2020 and virtual meetings held with Midlothian Tenant Panel and tenant and resident group members.
- 3.6 There was strong support for the new Strategy. All views were considered by the Midlothian Tenant Panel and tenant and resident group members and where appropriate reflected in the new draft Strategy.
- 3.7 Subject to formal approval, the Strategy will be formally launched and promoted to tenants and customers, including the provision of a summary version.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

The existing tenant participation and customer engagement Strategy budget will be met from existing resource.

4.2 **Digital**

There are no digital implications related to this report.

4.3 **Risk**

It is a statutory requirement to prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy.

4.4 **Ensuring Equalities** (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and no negative impacts have been identified.

4.4 **Additional Report Implications**

Appendix 1 – Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-24.

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy contributes to the Midlothian 2020 vision of improving the quality of life for Midlothian’s citizens and safeguarding housing assets for future generations.

The Strategy links into the Local Housing Strategy 2021-26 and Housing Service Plan.

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious

A.4 Delivering Best Value

There are no direct implications related to this report.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The consultation and engagement methods used are set out in sections 3.4 and 3.5 of this report.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy sets out ambitious plans to deliver good quality housing and housing related services.

It is important tenant and other customers find it easy to participate and influence their landlord’s decisions at levels they feel comfortable with.

The Strategy covers how the Council will gather and take account of the views and priorities of tenants, other customers, and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations; how services are shaped to reflect these views; and how they help tenants, other customers and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations to become more capable of involvement, including supporting them to scrutinise the Council's housing services.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

See section A.6