



<b>Policy Name</b>	Tenant Participation Strategy		
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## **Strategy Summary**

### **Aims**

The Association is committed to involving tenants in all aspects of the Association's business and we know the benefits and rewards of developing and harbouring good relationships with tenants. As a result, we are dedicated to fulfilling this strategy not just because we have a statutory duty to consult with tenants but because we are committed to tenant participation and the benefits and rewards of involving tenants in the decision making process.

The aim of this Strategy is to build on and develop the good working relationships already established with tenants so that we can continue to work in partnership with tenants to develop and influence Housing Services based on the Associations values –

- ✓ Putting Customers First
- ✓ Demonstrate Social Values
- ✓ Embracing Innovation and Adaptability
- ✓ Respect

The Associations goals for the strategy are –

- ✓ To embed Tenant Participation in all aspects of the Associations business
- ✓ To ensure good Governance
- ✓ To continue building and delivering good quality and efficient homes
- ✓ Promote an efficient, responsive and personal Housing Management and Maintenance Service with the highest quality possible
- ✓ Demonstrate social values, respect and putting customers first
- ✓ Be accountable to the community we serve and promote policies which offer a high level of tenant and stakeholder involvement in our decision making process
- ✓ To provide added value
- ✓ Promote equal opportunities across our services and activities

### **Practice**

We need to improve the culture and practice of involving tenants across our all aspects of our housing services. This is done by providing a range of options for tenants to get involved from joining a Tenants & Resident Association, completing a survey or being on our Interested Tenant Register and being kept up to date with developments. The Scottish Social Housing Charter aims to improve the quality and value of services provided by Social Landlords and sets out 16 outcomes and standards that we aim to achieve and by which our tenants can measure our performance and hold us accountable. Involving tenants in scrutinising our performance is essential for improvements to be made and to ensure that tenant involvement is meaningful.

### **Achievements**

- We have a Tenant Forum and we support Ormiston, Inveresk and Salton Residents Group (OISRA) they are an active Resident Group in the Whitfield area of Dundee. Working in partnership with other agencies OISRA run a stay and play group twice weekly and they have

been supporting residents through the COVID-19 pandemic by providing a weekly Foodbank. OISRA in conjunction with Dundee City Council provide youth provision and divisionary activities to children and young people within the community.

- The Association is working in partnership with OISRA to utilise the community facilities to meet tenants and the wider community's needs. This has resulted in a main partnership including the support of a mental health and wellbeing group You Are Not Allowing holding a weekly drop in to support to empower the health and wellbeing of tenants and the wider community. This partnership working has also resulted in a weekly Knit and Katter Group to reduce social isolation and increase social opportunities. The Tenant Engagement Officer will continue to support, develop and replicate this partnership throughout the communities the Association supports.
- Through a successful Connecting Scotland Bid we have distributed 90 digital devices and internet packages across the Associations Housing Stock for tenants who have been digitally excluded. In partnership with Ability Net and other organisations we worked closely to remove barriers of participation and promote digital inclusion reducing social isolation and increase positive mental wellbeing the Association ensured tenants were provided with assistance and training were required.
- The Association successfully supported the role out of Christmas Cheer Project which involved staff donating and securing funding to spread Christmas Cheer to 83 families and tenants throughout Angus and Dundee after a hard year of COVID-19. The pilot was successfully received throughout the Association and has now been established as an annual project.
- The Association secured Fuelwell Funding through the Scottish Government in order to reduce fuel poverty and provide tenants with much need emotional and financial support.
- The Association established a Hardship fund in 2020/21 providing small individual grant to tenants experiencing financial hardship. The Association has invested funds in the projects which were matched to increase the capacity of this fund.
- A small number of tenants were involved in testing the new Tenant Portal and access to the portal was provided prior to the portal going live. Tenant's recommendations and amendments are currently with the software developer HomeMaster to ensure the portal reflects the needs, wishes and views of tenants.
- We are continuing to work with partners and other agencies to support and deliver the Housing Education for Youths (HEY) Project which provides essential Housing advice to all 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils in Dundee.
- In consultation with tenants, the Association redesigned the Tenant Handbook reflecting the feedback that tenants provide to ensure the handbook is more accessible and user friendly.
- Tenant Participation training was delivered in partnership with Tenant Participation and Advice Service to all staff.
- The Association employed a part-time Tenant Engagement Officer (TEO) in August 2020 and as a result of the work undertaken by the TEO the position was made full time in April 2021 to meet the ongoing need and demand for the service. The Association is fully committed to Tenant Participation and sees the benefit this role has on tenant and communities throughout Angus and Dundee.

## Action plan

As well as the Annual Tenant Report required by the Scottish Housing Charter, we have created a range of actions to ensure that the aims of 'Involving You' can be put into practice and tenant impact can be measured. Being able to demonstrate outcomes achieved by tenant involvement is one of the best ways of encouraging more people to get involved while ensuring that we are a continually improving the organisation. **Join Us** is the name we have used for this Strategy and that is exactly what we want and need to do.

## Section 1

### Introduction

Welcome to our Tenant Participation Strategy 2021 - 26 produced in partnership with tenants and tenant representatives. It sets out our commitment to develop effective consultation and participation, by working with our tenants we can continuously improve the homes and services we provide. Although there is a legal obligation on the Association to involve tenants we believe that tenants should be involved in the decision making process as this enhances the work of the Association and benefits tenants and the wider community.

Angus Housing Association developed the Strategy around the views of our tenants who helped us identify what we are doing well and where we need to improve. The Strategy will ensure that we can demonstrate that we are delivering real outcomes for our tenants and the wider community as part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

This Strategy tells you how we will achieve good Tenant Participation. You can find out how we are going to provide you with information, consult with you and work together, using your views and opinions to influence what we do and hold us accountable. We have set out:

- our aims for tenant participation for 2021 - 26
- an action plan for the period 2021 -26 which tells you how we are going to achieve our aims
- how we will assess our progress and measure the impact of the Strategy
- information about the resources and support we make available to support tenant involvement

### Our Vision

The Association's vision is to promote and involve tenants in the decision making process to ensure -

- ✓ Good Governance
- ✓ Stability and Growth across the Association
- ✓ Equality and Diversity
- ✓ Value for money
- ✓ Added Value
- ✓ Wider Involvement to promote and empower added value

## **What is our vision for stakeholder engagement?**

Without feedback, involvement in decision-making, opportunities to participate and partnership engagement, we limit our ability to meet strategic aims and deliver improved services in a way that meets the expectations of our customers.

Any interaction with a stakeholder is an opportunity to get an insight into how we are performing, identify levels of satisfaction and reasons for dissatisfaction. The Association welcomes that feedback, whether it be a complaint or a compliment. Either are equally useful for planning our service delivery and improving our customer service. Listening to our stakeholders increases trust and leads to improved opportunities for meaningful participation.

## **Who are our stakeholders?**

There are a range of individuals and organisations who have an interest in the work that we do. From our tenants, factored owners, applicants including those who are homeless, members, Committee of Management, local tenants and community groups, our lenders, local authorities, voluntary and third sector organisations, regulatory bodies to contractors and developers.

## **Why do we want to engage with stakeholders?**

Without knowing the views of those we work with and provide services for, we cannot make strategic decisions about the direction of the Association or properly assess our performance in relation to what matters to our customers. It should be recognised that stakeholders have differing expectations and these may sometimes be conflicting. These tensions are ones, which need to be managed by us and our Management Committee however, the important factor is that we understand the views held by different stakeholders and can make informed decisions with those in mind.

Naturally, we will have different levels of engagement for different groups. Due to the nature of our work, our resources for engagement will be targeted towards our tenants. Engagement with other stakeholders may be project specific or due to regulatory requirements. We recognise that engagement is a two way process and we will provide feedback to the organisations that we work with to allow them to monitor performance and improve their services.

For further information, please refer to our Stakeholder Engagement Policy Appendix 4.

## **What is tenant participation?**

*“It’s about tenants and tenants and residents groups taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies, conditions and related services. It is a two way process, which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power. Its aim is to improve housing conditions and services.”*

(‘Partners in Participation, A National Strategy for Tenant Participation’ produced by the Scottish Executive in 1999.)

This definition is useful because it tells us what tenant participation is, what needs to happen to make it work and what the outcome should be. We have included it again in this Strategy, as tenant

representatives agreed that it is a clear definition and emphasises the two way process so is continually relevant.

## Section 2

### **Background**

Involving tenants and the wider community in decisions about their homes and communities is now accepted as normal practice within social housing. We have a Legal Duty to involve tenants and service users, but more importantly, we have a long history of active tenant involvement and are committed to ensuring that continues.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the first Legal Framework for tenant participation by giving tenants the rights to participate and be consulted with. The Act also put new duties on all Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Scotland which all still apply.

Your rights:

- To form independent representative organisations and apply for registration and funding
- Access information about housing policies and related services
- Be consulted on issues that affect your homes
- Participate in decisions that affect the services you receive and have enough time to consider draft proposals and put forward views

The Association's Duties:

- Develop a Tenant Participation Strategy in consultation with tenants and service users and put it into practice, ensuring that it complies with equal opportunity requirements
- Put the Tenant Participation Strategy into practice and measure performance against the agreed action plan
- Provide resources and support to make sure tenant participation is effective
- Regularly review how well tenant participation is working
- Set up arrangements for registering tenants groups
- Consult individual tenants and tenants and residents groups before making any decision that would change,
  - ✓ How we manage our housing properties
  - ✓ The standard of service we provide
  - ✓ Any proposals to transfer or demolish our housing
- Take on board tenants' views before decisions are taken

### **Other Relevant Publications**

It is important that our Tenant Participation Strategy links into and contributes to other Association plans and policies, for example:

- Angus Housing Association Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026
- Angus Housing Association Values
- Stakeholders Engagement Policy

- National Standards for Community Engagement

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 has also created rights for communities to have greater influence or control over how land and buildings are managed and used.

### **Our Principles**

Our Principles reflect those of the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Tenant Participation "Partners in Participation" (April 1999)

#### ***Trust, Respect and Partnership***

It is important that tenants, Committee and staff trust and respect each other and work together in partnership to improve housing services and conditions.

#### ***Sharing information, ideas and power***

Everyone taking part in involving tenants will share information and ideas. It is important that we have a shared understanding of the issues so that we can work towards a joint solution to take these forward.

#### ***Setting the agenda together***

We want to jointly agree with you the agenda for involving tenants. We will make sure that everyone has the information required to consider issues properly. We will provide information that is clear and easy to understand and is available in a variety of formats.

#### ***Allowing time to consider issues properly***

We will share information in a way that allows everyone time to make an informed decision. Individual tenants and Tenants and Residents groups will have enough time to work out a common view before they meet Association representatives.

#### ***Openness and accountability in decision- making***

We will make decisions in a way that is open, clear and accountable. We will provide feedback following all consultations.

#### ***Recognition for tenants' organisations***

The Association recognise that tenants and residents groups are independent Organisations that provide a valuable role in shaping housing services.

#### ***Good working relationships***

The Association will build good working relationships with individual tenants and Tenants and Residents groups. These relationships require flexibility to meet local needs and circumstances.

### ***Valuing our volunteers***

Without tenants who volunteer, we don't have Tenant Participation and The Association values the time that tenants give up to get involved with us. We hope that any involvement will be personally rewarded but we also provide transport or cover travelling expenses for any tenant attending a meeting arranged by Housing Services and our TP Grants cover out of pocket expenses for Tenant and Resident Group Members as well as the running costs of the group.

We will provide support and training to help tenants get involved. Volunteering in any Tenant Participation activity can be a good way to help people get back into employment and we will provide references for any Tenant who has been actively involved for at least 6 months.

### ***Including people***

We will take account of **E**qual **O**pportunities **L**aw and **G**ood **P**ractice. We will promote approaches and work in ways that are appropriate to different people and differing needs within our communities.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Our commitment to meeting the main parts of the general duty in terms of Equal Opportunities is set out in our Equality Statement.

- ✓ We want to eradicate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ We want to encourage Equal Opportunities
- ✓ We want to encourage good relations between all people

We will make sure that, specifically in regard to tenant consultation and participation all tenants are treated equally, irrespective of their sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other social attributes including beliefs or political opinions.

We will promote inclusive approaches and work in ways that are appropriate to different people and differing needs within our communities. We have also carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on this Strategy to minimise any barriers that tenants may experience.

Our Tenants and Residents Associations also have to show their commitment to Equal Opportunities to meet our registration conditions (as issued by the Scottish Government) to become registered Tenant Organisations.

We will continue to use a number of methods to give all tenants the opportunity to get involved and influence decisions about housing services, policies and standards and provide information in a range of formats and various languages to suit our tenants and prospective tenants' needs.

We will try to ensure public meetings will always be held in accessible buildings with LOOP system facilities.



### Section 3

Due to COVID-19 the Association was limited to the level and type of engagement which could take place. Nevertheless where possible the Tenancy Engagement Officer made best use of every available opportunity and will continue to gather and obtain future feedback on the Strategy where possible.

The Tenancy Engagement Officer carried a number of consultation events with support of Housing Management colleagues, this took place in the form of online event, in person, telephone and group consultations. The Association ensured there were a variety of opportunities available to tenants in order to maximise participation.

Articles were also posted on Facebook and the Tenancy Engagement Officer took advantage of every opportunity to promote the new Tenant Participation Strategy. The Tenancy Engagement Officer also carrying out individual consultations with tenants on the Register of Interested Tenants as well as discussion the Strategy with Ormiston, Inveresk, Salton Residents Group (OISRA).

### Section 4

#### **Aims of the Strategy**

Our aim is to improve the Associations Services by working in partnership with tenants to develop and influence how these services are provided. The aims reflect important Legislative and Regulatory requirements.

The Association carried out a Tenant Satisfaction Survey in February 2020 and it's important we use the feedback from this and other surveys including the 2021 Rent Consultation Survey to engage and work with tenants to improve our services. By working together and listening to tenants our long term aim would be to deliver the services tenants want and eventually increase tenant satisfaction levels.

To achieve this we will:

1. Improve the culture and practice of involving tenants across the Associations services
2. Improve our feedback to tenants so that we can prove where our tenants and the wider community have influenced or shaped the housing service
3. Promote and provide a wide range of options for tenants to get involved
4. Encourage involvement of under- represented groups such as young people, homeless people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic groups
5. make sure that tenants are aware of the options available to them to shape the Associations services
6. Improve tenants' involvement in monitoring and improving performance through our Tenant Scrutiny Panel and encourage tenant scrutiny activity
7. Make sure that the resources we put in place and practices we carry out are adequate to support and develop tenant involvement
8. Make sure that we communicate effectively with our tenants and provide good quality, accessible information that tenants want

Our Action Plan in *Section 11* sets out how we will meet these aims.

## **Section 5**

### **How you can get involved**

We have a long history of tenants being active and getting involved through various Tenants and Residents Associations. While our Associations have an important part to play and we continue to support them, we recognise that not all tenants want to or have the time to get involved in this way.

It is important that we offer all tenants a choice so that they can get involved at a level that suits their interest and their individual circumstances.

#### ***Individual Tenants***

We want to encourage all tenants to get involved with shaping our services and provide you with as many opportunities as possible to do this. Tenants regularly contact us via letters, email, and telephone or in person at our local Housing Offices. You can also get involved in the following ways:

#### ***Straight Talking***

We use Straight Talking newsletter to provide you with information about the Association and to invite you to get involved in consultations when required. Tenants can write or email if they have a question about Housing Services or if they would like to comment on the Straight Talking newsletter. Our aim is to make the Straight Talking newsletter as interactive as possible and be use it to collect tenant views on the performance information they want to see in our annual Tenant Report.

#### ***Completing surveys or questionnaires***

We use a number of satisfaction surveys which ask tenants about specific areas of our Housing Service. For example, customer satisfaction forms used by our repairs service or when tenants first move into a tenancy.

Consultation surveys will also be carried out from time to time and we will promote them through Straight Talking newsletter, our website and Facebook [https://www.facebook.com/AngusHousing Association](https://www.facebook.com/AngusHousingAssociation) to make them available to individual tenants as well as TRA members.

The Association will carry out a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey to capture tenants' views every 3 years.

Where the Association has made service improvements or changes we will carry out tenants satisfaction surveys to get your views.

#### ***New tenants***

Housing Officers advise new tenants on their rights to participate as part of the New Tenancy Sign Up Process. They will use this and the new tenant visit to explain the opportunities available for tenants to get involved in their particular area as well as an individual tenant.

The Tenant Engagement Officer will also send out a follow up post card with contract details to encourage each new tenant to get involved.

### ***Interested Tenant Register***

Many of our tenants don't want to get involved in a group or don't have a group in their area but still want to have their say so we have an 'Interested Tenant Register'.

Tenants on the Register are provided the same information shared with our Tenants and Residents Associations and receive direct invites to get involved in consultations or other events. They don't have to attend regular meetings but can still keep up to date with what's happening in housing services and can be involved in topics that they are interested in. Any tenant can join our Interested Tenant Register by contacting the Tenant Participation Officers or through their Housing Officer.

### ***Reader's Panel***

Our Reader's Panel is another option for individual tenants to get involved and can be done in their own time and at home. Members read over publications to make sure they are understood and their comments are used to improve our publications. They regularly review Straight Talking newsletters and help us develop more tenant focus to the articles.

### ***Attending conferences and events***

Throughout the lifetime of the strategy the Association will work to develop and hold annual information/fun days or conferences designed to attract individual tenants to engage with Housing Services and to develop existing groups. These events raise awareness about services provided, ask tenants and other customers for their views on different areas of the housing service and provide an opportunity to ask questions. Representatives from our Registered Tenant Organisations are invited to be involved in planning the events with us.

We also provide funding for tenants to attend conferences and events run by TPAS, CIH or any other relevant organisation.

### ***Attending focus groups and public meetings***

From time to time, we will set up focus groups or public meetings which look at a particular part of our service. For example, if we review our Allocations Policy or Repairs. We let tenants know about these meetings by promoting widely and by a range of communication methods like publishing the details in Straight Talking, putting information on the Association's website, social media platforms or by putting up posters. Representatives from Tenants and Residents Associations, our Interested Tenant Register and Tenant Forum members are invited directly to attend these meetings too.

### ***Tenants and Residents' Associations***

Tenants and Residents' Associations are made up of local tenants and residents who represent their area to bring about improvements in Housing and other related services. We recognise the independence of these Associations and the contribution they make in improving services for all tenants and in representing the area they live in.

Tenants and Residents Associations have opportunities to be involved in developing our services in the following ways:

- ✓ Responding to consultations
- ✓ Attending consultation meetings, focus groups and working groups
- ✓ Completing surveys and audits
- ✓ Training events and information sessions
- ✓ Open days and other tenant events
- ✓ By acting as a link to a wider range of tenants and providing feedback about tenants' housing and related issues

See appendix 3 for a full list of all Tenants and Residents Associations.

The Association understands that not all Tenant and Residents Groups want to be registered, therefore the Association will support all active groups in our area regardless of registration. All groups can apply for a Tenant Participation Grant.

### ***Registered Tenant Organisation***

Tenants and Residents' Associations that meet the criteria set out by the Scottish Government are able to register with the Angus Housing Association as a registered tenant organisation. Registration is easy and doesn't require the Associations to do much more than they are already required to do under their constitution. The key difference between a Tenant Group Association and a Registered Group is that by registering with the Association, the group have a recognised role in the decision making process.

Contact details for all Registered Tenant Organisations can be obtained in the Arbroath or Dundee Office or from the Tenant Engagement Officer.

Groups that do not wish to apply for funding can still become a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO).

### ***Liaison Meetings***

The Association would like to initiate and develop regular meetings with representatives from the Tenant Forum and RTO's so that tenant representatives and Senior Housing Staff can work together to support the delivery of the Housing Service. This would ensure that our tenant representatives have direct access to those in authority.

### ***Representing all Tenants***

The Association is aware that there are groups of tenants that are often under-represented in Tenant Participation. For example, young people, homeless service users, people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic groups (BME) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups.

We will look to develop different ways to involve tenants to ensure that no one is excluded and will collate feedback from these underrepresented groups on how they would like to be involved and what aspects of the housing service are of most interest to them.

When consulting and involving tenants we will ask for equalities monitoring information to help gauge progress on ensuring that everyone has a voice.

### ***Complaints and compliments***

Angus Housing Association is committed to providing a high quality service and aims to constantly improve communities and the services we provide. Our complaints procedure lets you tell us what you feel has gone wrong and helps us improve our services for everyone. We will use complaints to listen to and hear the views of tenants, thus allowing us to improve practise and service delivery.

It is also good to hear when things work well, it is important for us to know that the service we provide meets the needs of tenants and the wider community.

Complaints and compliments are recorded and reported to Committee of Management. The Association publishes the reports on the website and in the Association's Straight Talking newsletter. We also discuss these with staff and use the reports for staff training purposes to improve performance and service delivery. Its important staff are aware of the difference they can make and are making to the communities and the lives of the tenants we serve.

### ***Tenant Portal***

The Association has a tenant portal, which is available to all tenants. The portal allows tenants to view their rent account, report repairs and update their household details.

## **Section 6**

### **Scottish Social Housing Charter and reporting performance to tenants**

The Scottish Social Housing Charter came into effect on 1st April 2012. Tenants across Scotland were involved in its creation and its review in 2016/17 to ensure it was still fit for purpose. The Charter aimed to improve the quality and value of services provided by social Landlords and set out 16 outcomes and standards that Social Landlords should aim to achieve when performing its housing activity. You can see the full list of Charter Outcomes in Appendix Six.

The Scottish Housing Regulator is an independent body responsible for monitoring, reporting and assessing how well Social Landlords, like Angus Housing Association, are achieving the Charter's outcomes and standards. Each year the Association must gather evidence to demonstrate to the Regulator, tenants and service users that it is meeting the outcomes of the Charter. Tenants can also use the Regulator's website to compare how well the Association is performing against other Social Landlords. This helps tenants understand their Landlord's performance.

<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/>

### **How we measure performance**

We measure performance to make sure we are improving the services we provide and to identify where improvements can be made. Understanding how the Association performs financially and in terms of our service delivery requires good data and the ability to interpret that data. We have developed a Performance Management Strategy and will produce quarterly Corporate Scorecard

with KPI's from each department. This will be made available to our staff, tenants and Management Committee.

The Association is currently developing the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations Social Value Toolkit and this will be used to measure the impact we have as a Social Landlord, the lives of tenants and the communities we represent.

We will also use Tenant Satisfaction Surveys to monitor, benchmark and report on our performance. This will be done monthly, quarterly and annually, with results being published on the website, tenant newsletter and in our Annual Landlord Report for tenants.

### **How tenants are involved in monitoring performance**

We have developed clear, understandable performance information which we regularly include in Straight Talking to increase tenant awareness around our performance and to help tenants scrutinise how we are doing. We will also work with tenants to develop performance information for the website.

We will also collect, collate and publish the information received from the Tenants Satisfaction Survey, Annual Rent Consultation and other departmental quarterly and monthly questionnaires and surveys. We will discuss the results with tenants and where required, produce action plans to increase tenant satisfaction and improve performance.

### **How tenants are involved in Scrutiny**

Tenant scrutiny is the name we give to the activities that offer tenants an opportunity to get involved in assessing our Housing Services. This allows tenants to influence and hold their Landlord accountable by focusing specifically on how Housing Services perform.

Angus Housing Association currently doesn't have a Scrutiny Panel, however we are committed to working with tenants to identify if this is something tenants are interested in developing. The Association envisages Scrutiny activities will be thematic for example, in consultation with tenants we may decide to scrutinise the repairs service or allocations process.

### **How performance is reported to tenants**

In addition to submitting annual performance information to the Regulator, the Association is also required to produce a Landlord Report to show progress in meeting the Charter outcomes to tenants, other customers and service users. Tenants play a key role in creating the look and content of our report to ensure that the performance information included is what they are interested in. The report is reviewed annually involving tenants to ensure it continues to reflect tenant's priorities.

## **[Section 7](#)**

### **Consultation and Feedback**

Angus Housing Association has agreed to keep to the following good practice when carrying out consultation;

- ✓ We will include tenants and tenant organisations into the consultation and participation process from the start
- ✓ We will use a number of approaches when consulting, for example, Straight Talking, leaflets/posters, public meetings, conferences / seminars, open days, home visits, focus groups, questionnaires / surveys and through our website and social media
- ✓ The method of consultation will depend on the scale and significance of the project, we will take into account the views of tenant organisations on the consultation methods used
- ✓ We will try to structure our consultation with tenants by asking specific questions although at times we may ask more general questions.
- ✓ We will give detailed information to tenants and tenant groups on any proposals we are consulting on, including:
  - How and when the final decision will be taken
  - How the proposal will affect tenants
  - How and within what timescales tenants can make their views known to us
  - The contact officer dealing with the consultation and
  - Information on how and where to complain
  - Where possible, individual tenants and tenant organisations will be given a minimum of 4 weeks to respond to changes in our housing policy.
  - Participation Committee Participation Report

There will be times when we may not be able to do what tenants want and we will have to manage tenant expectations, but we will always listen and communicate why we are unable to do something. Where appropriate, the Association will use the services of consultants and experts with specialist knowledge to explain the reasons and answer tenants questions and queries to ensure transparency.

When we talk about Associations Services -

### **Housing Management**

The Housing Management Department deals with all aspects of the tenancy from allocating properties to collecting rent and dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour. We also support tenants with welfare benefits and money advice and ensure tenants have the support required to sustain their tenancy.

The department is committed to tenant participation and involving tenants in the services we provide this includes; reviewing policies and improving service delivery for example, working with tenants to develop the tenant portal, supporting OISRA to deliver their food provision and arrange estate walkabouts with tenants.

### **Asset Management**

The Asset Management Department is responsible for all Day to Day repairs, void property repairs, Planned Cyclical and Improvement works as well as Medical Adaptations and the full new build development programme.

The Department is fully committed to consulting with our tenants as part of our comprehensive maintenance service, but particularly in our Improvement programmes, where tenant participation is fundamental in the long success of our investment for our customers.

Tenants' feedback on maintenance and development is also an important factor in driving and influencing the right choices the Association makes in its future business programmes, standards and policies.

## **Finance**

The Finance and Corporate Services Department is responsible for all aspects of the Association's Finances including preparation of Annual Statutory Financial Statements, quarterly management accounts, the Annual Budget and longer term Business Plan. The Department is also responsible for HR and IT provision.

The Department is committed to Tenant Participation and consults with our tenants on an annual basis as part of the annual rent review. The Department also ensures that all residents who are members of the Association are invited to the Annual General Meeting of the Association and any Special General Meetings that may be required. The Department also assists the tenants' group, OISRA, by preparing and auditing its annual accounts and assisting with its payroll.

## **Feedback**

We use the voice of tenants and the wider community to shape and improve our services. It is important that we let you know we have listened to and acted on your suggestions. Providing feedback is also important as it encourages others to get involved. In our last Tenant Satisfaction Survey in February 2020 91.31% of tenants asked thought the Association was very good or fairly good at keeping them informed about services and decisions. However, we know we can improve and it's important to give tenants the confidence that getting involved makes a difference.

## **Seeking your views**

We use a range of methods to seek your views. This might be because we want to know if you are satisfied with a service, because we are reviewing a policy or the way that we deliver a service or it may be because we are considering some other action which will affect tenants.

## **Influencing decisions**

When we ask for your views we ensure they are reported to both Senior Management Team and Committee of Management. It is vital Committee hear your views to ensure that tenants voices are being heard during the decision making process in order to ensure tenant participation is heard throughout the Association.

We will ensure that we tell you how we used your views, this can be done a variety of different ways including public meeting, website, letter etc. We will also share these outcomes with RTOs, the Tenant Forum and publicise it in Straight Talking newsletters to show you how we are using your views and suggestions.



## Section 8

### **Keeping you informed**

We know how important it is that we provide you with good quality, up to date information which is accessible to everyone and jargon free. Some of the methods we use include:

- ✓ Letters and email
- ✓ Surveys and questionnaires
- ✓ Website and social media
- ✓ Face to face meetings
- ✓ Home visits where a need is identified
- ✓ Tenants and Residents Associations and Registered Tenant Organisations
- ✓ Through the Register for Interested Tenants
- ✓ Focus groups
- ✓ Public meetings
- ✓ Thematic studies
- ✓ Tenant handbook
- ✓ Tenant conferences or other tenant events
- ✓ Straight Talking newsletters
- ✓ Notice boards in our maisonettes or tenement flats
- ✓ Housing offices

We produce two editions of our tenant newsletter 'Straight Talking' each year and accessed through the tenant portal and where required copies will be distributed to tenants, local Councillors, Housing Offices, local libraries and to all our Tenants and Residents Associations.

Straight Talking is also on our website which is Browsaloud enabled, the newsletter can also be transferred onto audiotape for visually impaired tenants.

We encourage tenants groups as well as staff to use Straight Talking as a way of communicating with all our tenants.

The Association will provide all written information in a clear, accessible and easy to understand format, using plain language and where necessary in community languages. This includes making information available on request in other formats such as Braille, large print as well as audiotape.

### **Tenants Handbook**

Our Tenant Handbook is an important part of our commitment to providing tenants with detailed information about our Housing Services and their tenancy. We will invite tenants to help us review the content, look and style of the Handbook to make sure that it is in a style and format which is useful, accessible and attractive to you.

### **Tenant Portal**

Tenants can view rent statements, report repairs and update household details, the Tenant Portal is constantly being developed and updated to ensure it is providing tenants with relevant information and advice.

## **Stakeholders Engagement Policy**

The Association's Stakeholder Engagement Policy sets out how the Association will provide information, the types of information provided and how we will provide feedback.

For further information, please refer to appendix 4.

### **Section 9**

#### **How we will resource and support tenant participation activity**

To make the process of involving tenants successful, we provide a range of resources, which both individual tenants and TRAs have access to.

#### ***Staff***

All staff are responsible for encouraging and supporting tenants to get involved. This can include practical support such as; help with photocopying, providing information about our services, attendance at meetings, providing training or information sessions and delivering consultation events.

#### ***Tenant Engagement Officer***

The Association has a Tenancy Engagement Officer (TEO) who is responsible for supporting and developing Tenant Participation activity across the Association. The TEO ensure that the Association meets the aims of this Strategy by implementing the action plan and reporting the outcomes. The TEO also provides encouragement, training and support to individual tenants and tenants on our Tenant Forum, Interested Tenant Register and TRAs to participate and develop.

#### ***Funding Tenants and Residents Associations***

TRAs play a vital part in making sure our services reflect the needs of local communities. We are committed to providing support and resources to make sure Associations are in a position to fully participate.

Grants are available for new Associations and annual grants are available to existing Associations to cover their administration and running costs funded from the Housing Account. For example, to pay for photocopying, telephone calls, the hire of local community halls, postage or travelling expenses. One-off expenses to provide equipment to groups, such as laptops are made available to well established group.

There is currently one Association, which has a lease for using the community premises attached to the Dundee Office. They use the premises for community activities, local foodbank, and office and meeting space.

#### ***Information, Training and Support***

All TRAs are offered support and training. Our Associations will be offered assistance to carry out action planning to assist them to achieve their objectives and demonstrate their achievements.

Tenant Participation training is made available to all staff to ensure we can put our Tenant Participation Strategy into practice effectively.

We are developing our Interested Tenant Register and will be working with tenants to develop quarterly information notes to keep them informed about housing policy and services.

We will also hold information sessions as and when required.

Straight Talking is distributed to all tenants and TRAs twice a year and used as our main way of sharing information with all tenants.

Training and encouragement is made available to all tenants to help them get involved. We will also develop incentives to encourage more involvement, e.g. references after a tenant has volunteered for at least a 6-month period to help them back into employment.

### ***Conferences and events***

Tenants who are represented by a Tenants and Residents Association or who are on the Associations list of Interested Tenants can attend annual conferences and events carried out by the Association, the Chartered Institute of Housing, the Tenants Information Service or the Tenant Participation Advisory Service. Costs for participation, transport and crèche facilities are met through the Tenant Participation budget.

The Association will also investigate the possibility of holding an Annual Tenant Feedback day.

### ***Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS) and Tenant Information Service (TIS)***

The Association is committed to supporting and promoting good tenant participation practises and is a member of both TPAS and TIS.

### ***Including everyone***

Our resources and support services are there for everyone to get involved. We use the principles set out in the National Standards for Community Engagement to ensure that where possible, there are no practical barriers to tenants being fully involved. This includes:

- ✓ Suitable transport to attend meetings
- ✓ General assistance
- ✓ Access to premises
- ✓ Communication aids (such as loop systems, advocacy and interpreting services)
- ✓ Opportunities to meet at a time and a place that suits

Access to other sources of information, support and advice:

- Scottish Government Social Housing Services Team

Contact: 0131 244 0710 or email: [anne.cook@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:anne.cook@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

- Tenants Information Service (TIS)

Contact: 0141 248 1242 [www.tis.org.uk](http://www.tis.org.uk)

- Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland (TPAS Scotland)

Contact: 0141 552 3633 [www.tpasscotland.org.uk](http://www.tpasscotland.org.uk)

- Equality Advisory and Support Service

Contact: 0808 800 0082; textphone: 0808 800 0084 [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com) FREEPOST Equality Advisory Support Service FPN4431

### **The Tenant Participation Budget**

All direct funding to support Tenant Participation activity, such as information, grants to groups or transport costs come from tenants rents.

Tenant participation will be resourced annually and we will measure our successes and failures to continue to learn and improve.

The Association will resource:

The Tenant Participation Budget for 2021-22s was allocated £5,000. We will spend this funding on,

- ✓ Grant support to TRAs
- ✓ Provision of tenant events
- ✓ Making the Association's newsletter Straight Talking more interactive
- ✓ Consultation events
- ✓ Provision of information (leaflets, guidance notes etc.)
- ✓ New Tenant Participation Strategy and associated publicity material to promote tenant participation
- ✓ Training, capacity building and conference events for tenants provided by other organisations
- ✓ Travel expenses and crèche facilities
- ✓ Surveys or questionnaires
- ✓ Discussing tenant scrutiny with tenants
- ✓ Setting Up a Register of Interested Tenants
- ✓ Setting Up a Readers Club

## **Section 10**

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The Tenant Participation Strategy is a working document, which we will continue to review by regularly monitoring the action plan. The Housing Manager and Tenant Engagement Officer will continue to provide regular progress reports to the Tenants Forum and RTO's.

We will produce a Tenant Participation Performance Report and share it with all Registered Tenant Organisations, Tenants on the Interested Register, make available on the Association's website and will be available upon request.

Of the 16 Charter outcomes there are four main ones that are particularly relevant to our activity of involving tenants:

## **Outcome 2 – Communication**

*Social Landlords manage their businesses so that:*

- ✓ Tenants and other customers (i.e. residents) 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 the Landlord provides.

## **Outcome 3 – Participation**

*Social Landlords manage their businesses so that:*

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

## **Outcome 14 & 15 - Rents and Service Charges**

*Social Landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:*

- ✓ A balance is struck between level of service provided, the costs of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them.
- ✓ Tenants get clear information on how rents and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between Landlords and tenants.

We will report how well we are achieving these outcomes as well as measuring how the TP Budget is spent, what we produce as a result and the outcomes for tenants. We will report this to both Tenants and to the Committee of Management in the Tenant Performance Report.

## Section 11

### The Action Plan

Our action plan sets out how we will meet the aims of the Strategy.

What we will do	How we will do it	When we will do it	Outcomes
<p><b>1.</b> <b>We will improve the culture and practice of tenant participation across housing services</b></p> <p>We will carry out good practice in Tenant Participation across all parts of the Housing Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to ensure all staff receive Tenant Participation training. Tenancy Engagement Officer will attend department meetings to provide and identify any staff training needs.</li> <li>• monitor Tenant Participation service standards to ensure that Tenant Participation practices are built into all parts of the Association's service</li> <li>• produce quarterly TP updates for Service Delivery Sub Committee.</li> <li>• record outcomes from involving tenants</li> <li>• publish a Tenant Participation annual report each year</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Tenant Participation Training April 2021.</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Annually in June</p>	<p>Increased awareness and understanding of Tenant Participation practices and requirements across departments.</p> <p>All staff must promote and support tenant participation and we are able to evidence tenant involvement.</p>

What we will do	How we will do it	When we will do it	Outcomes
<p><b>2.</b> <b>We will improve our feedback to tenants so that we can demonstrate where our tenants and the wider community have influenced or shaped the Association's service</b></p> <p>We will demonstrate that tenants' views are considered as part of the decision making process.</p> <p>The outcome(s) of tenant involvement will be regularly widely promoted to ensure that tenants can see where they are making a difference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when consulting with tenants we will tell them how their views will be used and when decisions are likely to be made</li> <li>• changes made to proposals as a result of consultation will be communicated to participants and will be publicised via the Straight Talking Newsletter, webpages and social media</li> <li>• support TRAs to demonstrate their achievements locally</li> <li>• publish annual tenant involvement outcomes as part of TP performance report</li> <li>• develop and demonstrate the outcome(s) of tenant involvement in tenant scrutiny activities and events</li> <li>• develop and support tenants and TRA representatives to review papers going to Committee and encourage them to participate in the Tenant Forum</li> </ul>	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>2022/23</p>	<p>Tenant participation is working and tenants are encouraged to get involved.</p> <p>Individual tenants and TRAs are encouraged to get involved.</p> <p>Direct, up-to-date evidence of the impact of tenant involvement is shared with tenants</p>

What we will do	How we will do it	When we will do it	Outcomes
<p><b>3. We will promote and provide a wide range of options for tenants to get involved with us.</b></p> <p>We will promote existing methods available to tenants to get involved both as individuals and as part of more formal structure(s).</p> <p>We will continue to introduce new methods so that we increase the ways tenants can get involved and provide methods, which may be more attractive to under-represented groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote the menu of options and support in place to encourage tenants to get involved</li> <li>• produce a leaflet version of the TP Strategy 2021-2024 to make the TP Strategy more accessible and user friendly</li> <li>• support TRAs to produce leaflets and or websites promoting the work that they do and how to get involved</li> <li>• develop training and support provided to Tenant Forum, TRAs, and tenants on the Interested Tenants Register</li> <li>• continue to develop and deliver an annual tenant conference or event</li> <li>• explore new methods to provide information and obtain tenants' views (social media, tenant portal)</li> <li>• provide character references to tenant volunteers to reflect the impact volunteers have in their community and as an incentive to get involved</li> <li>• develop a walkabout process for tenants to inspect their local area and produce action plans for improvements along with Housing and Maintenance Officers</li> </ul>	<p>On-going</p> <p>August 2021</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>When Required</p> <p>Throughout 2021/22</p>	<p>Increase tenants awareness and understanding of options and support available to help them get involved</p> <p>Increase the number of tenants getting involved</p>



What we will do	How we will do it	When we will do it	Outcomes
<p><b>4.</b>  <b>We will encourage involvement of under-represented groups such as young people, homeless people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic groups.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investigate the opportunities to develop a youth housing forum to involve tenants aged 16-25</li> <li>• link into established groups to find out how they would like to get involved and what topics interest them</li> <li>• Link with Resettlement Programme</li> <li>• Link into Equality Forum in Angus and Dundee</li> </ul>	<p>2022/23</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>2021/22</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>Increase the involvement of groups of people who are under represented in tenant participation</p>
What we will do	How we will do it	When we will do it	Outcomes
<p><b>5.</b>  <b>Ensure tenants are aware of the options available to them to shape the Association's plans and budgets</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• produce and promote an annual consultation calendar</li> <li>• carry out an annual consultation on rents increases and provide clear information for tenants to be able to make informed choices</li> <li>• develop tenant involvement in finance scrutiny</li> <li>• develop tenant involvement in the decision – making process of setting rents, Capital programmes and agreeing Business plans</li> </ul>	<p>Annually from 2022/23</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Starting 2022/23</p> <p>Starting 2022/23</p>	<p>Tenants know in advance about different options which are open to them to influence the Association's services</p> <p>Tenants can get involved in influencing housing across the Association's housing stock in Angus &amp; Dundee and how their rent is spent</p>

What we will do	How we will do it	When we will do it	Outcomes
<p><b>6. Assess our performance in line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and involve tenants in our annual Tenant Report.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agree with tenants what Charter indicators they want included in the Tenant Report.</li> <li>• review the best style to use to ensure the report is accessible and easy to understand</li> <li>• support scrutiny activity by offering formal training for staff and tenants taking part</li> <li>• recruit and develop Scrutiny Panel, events or exercises</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>On-going once Scrutiny Panel, exercises or events are established</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>Ensure that the Association complies with requirements under the Scottish Social Housing Charter</p> <p>Performance information is made available to tenants in a format which is useful and easy to understand</p> <p>Opportunities for tenants to test and improve housing services performance</p>
What we will do	How we will do it	When we will do it	Outcomes
<p><b>7. Ensure that the resources we put in and practices we carry out are adequate to support and develop tenant participation activity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review resources required to deliver Tenant Participation and Tenant Scrutiny requirements</li> <li>• review grant system and resources provided to TRAs, including resource requirements for community premises</li> <li>• support the Forum and TRAs to use action planning to organise their activities and to demonstrate their achievements</li> <li>• develop training section on TP web page and promote training opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>April 2022</p>	<p>Sufficient resources for tenant participation activity and tenant scrutiny requirements</p> <p>Demonstrate value for money</p> <p>Increase take-up of training opportunities</p>

What we will do	How we will do it	When we will do it	Outcomes
<p><b>8.</b>  <b>We will ensure we communicate effectively with tenants and provide good quality, accessible information that tenants want</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review and improve the content on the TP web pages and use of social media.</li> <li>• review the Association’s revised Tenant Handbook</li> <li>• continue to produce regular editions of Straight Talking Newsletter to all tenants keeping them up to date with housing investment and developments</li> <li>• encourage the Forum,TRA’s, and active tenants to contribute articles and suggest material to be covered in Straight Talking Newsletter</li> </ul>	<p>April 2022</p> <p>April 2022</p> <p>April 2022</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>Improved information and communication for all tenants</p> <p>Provide information that tenants and TRAs want</p>

## Appendix 1

### **Jargon Buster**

#### *Initial*

TRA	Tenant & Resident Association
TP	Tenant Participation
TPAS	Tenant Participation Advisory Service
SHQS	Scottish Housing Quality Standard

#### *Organisation*

Scottish Government	This is a collective term for the Scottish Government that includes Ministers and civil servants based in Holyrood
Scottish Housing Regulator	Regulates all Registered Social Landlords and the Landlord and Homelessness Services of Local Authorities, protects the interests of current and future tenants and the wider community.
Tenants Information Service	A national organisation run by a board of tenant directors that provides information, advice and training to tenants across Scotland
Tenant Participation Advisory Service	The national tenant and Landlord Participation Advisory Service for Scotland which promotes good practice in Tenant Participation throughout Scotland. TPAS works with Tenants' Organisations, Housing Associations and Local Authorities.

#### *Word*

Action Plan	A list of things a landlord or tenants organisation must do to meet its aims and objectives
Asset management	Responsible for the Associations properties to make sure they are well maintained and improved.
Capital programme	A programme of planned improvements that a landlord undertakes to keep its housing stock in good quality (such as kitchen and bathroom replacements, window replacement etc.)
Consultation	Tenant consultation means having a chance to comment on proposals prepared by the Landlord before a decision is taken.

Stakeholders Engagement Policy	A document, which sets out how the Association will communicate and inform tenants, tenants and residents
Corporate Plan	A document that sets out the Association aims and objectives and how it plans to will deliver its services
Equal opportunities	not discriminating against a person based on things like their age, race, disability, sexual orientation, faith, religion or beliefs. All Landlords and tenants organisations are required to have a commitment to Equal Opportunities under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
Housing policies	Documents that explain how Landlords will deliver its services such as allocations, repairs etc.
Housing (Scotland) Act 2001	Housing Legislation introduced by the Scottish Government in 2001
Housing (Scotland) Act 2010	Housing legislation introduced by the Scottish Government in 2010.
Housing (Scotland) Act 2014	Housing Legislation introduced by the Scottish Government in 2014.
Interested Tenants Register	A list of tenants who want to be contacted about events and consultations but do not want to be part of a group.
Local Housing Strategy	A statutory document produced by all Local Authorities that assesses the Housing Need and resources required to meet that need in their areas.
Local Plan	This plan identifies areas for new build developments.
Monitoring and evaluation framework	Measures that will be used by the Association and tenant representatives to check how Tenant Participation is being delivered
Mystery Shopping	Tenants volunteer to act as 'mystery shoppers' to test the Housing Service and record their experience and impressions. This helps the Association to ensure that standards of customer service are maintained and improved where necessary
National Strategy for Tenant Participation 1999	The first national strategy agreed by the Scottish Government, tenant and Landlords about how Tenant Participation should work

National standards for Community Engagement	Good practice standards issued by Communities Scotland to provide a framework to help people influence the planning and delivery of services in their local area
<i>Word</i>	
Participation	This is when the Association, tenants, Tenants and Residents Groups and the Forum come together and work as equal partners in making improvements to the Associations Housing Services
Partnership working	Landlords, tenants and other agencies working together to get things done
Registered Social Landlord	A non-profit Landlord that is registered and monitored by the Housing Regulator
Registered Tenants Organisation	A tenants and residents group that has registered with its Landlord and can demonstrate that it is democratic and represents the views of tenants
Register of Tenants Organisations	A register a Landlord has to keep up-to-date which lists the number of Registered Tenants Organisations
Resources	Money or “in-kind” support that is made available to tenants and tenants and residents groups
Scottish Housing Quality Standard	The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) is the main measure of Housing Quality that establishes if properties reach the required minimum set out by the Scottish Government.
Scottish Social Housing Charter	Created under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 the Charter sets out 16 standards and outcomes which all social landlords must achieve
Service standards I	Indicators that outlines acceptable services of standards
Social Landlords	Organisations such as Housing Associations and Local Authorities who provide social rented housing.
Tenant Scrutiny	Tenants volunteer to get involved in reviewing and inspecting the Association’s services and make recommendations on how to improve services. Tenants decide which services they want to inspect and the process should lead to better services and therefore better outcomes for tenants

Tenants and Residents group's	Local groups that are set up to represent the views of tenants and residents and to influence services in the area. They consist of local people who are democratically elected at the group's Annual General Meeting
Tenant Engagement Officer	Specific responsibility for supporting Tenant Participation and delivering the Tenant Participation Strategy
Tenant Participation-working group	A short term working group made up of representatives from Forum, registered Tenant Organisations and Housing staff.
Tenant Scrutiny Panel	A formal body, which serves as the hub for the range of tenant scrutiny activity and focal point for assessing performance and holding the Association to account.

## Appendix 2

Staff chart



### Appendix 3

#### List of the Association's Registered Tenant Organisations (RTO's) and Tenants and Resident Associations

- Angus Housing Association Tenant Forum
- Ormiston Inveresk and Salton Residents Association

Contact details of all Tenants and Residents Association can be obtained from the Tenant Engagement Officer by calling 03451 772244.

Appendix 4



**ANGUS HOUSING**  
ASSOCIATION

<b>Policy Name</b>	Stakeholder Engagement Policy		
<b>Policy Ref</b>			
<b>Review Date</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2020		
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>CONSIDER &amp; APPROVE</b>		
<b>Next Review Date</b>	October 2021		
<b>Committee</b>	Management Committee		
<b>Author</b>	Gail Robertson		
<b>Internal Policy</b>		<b>To be published</b>	X

## What is our vision for stakeholder engagement?

Without feedback, involvement in decision-making, opportunities to participate and partnership engagement, we limit our ability to meet strategic aims and deliver improved services in a way that meets the expectations of our customers.

Any interaction with a stakeholder is an opportunity to get an insight into how we are performing, levels of satisfaction, reasons for dissatisfaction and the Association welcomes that feedback, whether it be a complaint or a compliment. Either are equally useful for planning our service delivery and improving our customer service. Listening to our stakeholders increases trust and leads to improved opportunities for meaningful participation.

**The Association has a Tenant Engagement Policy, which has a high degree of similarity with the aims and methods noted within this policy. The Tenant Engagement Policy has a particular focus on the aims and methods of interaction with our tenant base and therefore it is appropriate for it to remain separate from our overall engagement.**

## Background

The Scottish Social Housing Charter places a responsibility on us to:

- Identify areas of strong performance and areas where we need to improve
- Allow tenants to hold us to account
- Achieve outcomes that matter to our customers

These are specifically covered in several of the outcomes within the Charter dealing with Communication and Participation.

## 2: Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- *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.*

This **outcome** covers all aspects of landlords' communication with tenants and other customers. This could include making use of new technologies such as web-based tenancy management systems and smart-phone applications. It is not just about how clearly and effectively a landlord gives information to those who want it. It also covers making it easy for tenants and other customers to make complaints and provide feedback on services, using that information to improve services and performance, and letting people know what they have done in response to complaints and feedback. It does not require landlords to provide legally protected, personal or commercial information.

### 3: Participation

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

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

This **outcome** describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants, other customers, and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations; how they shape their services 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 – this could include supporting them to scrutinise landlord services.

#### Who are our stakeholders?

There are a range of individuals and Organisations who have an interest in the work that we do. From our tenants, factored owners, applicants including those who are homeless, members, Committee of Management, local tenants and community groups, our lenders, Local Authorities, voluntary and third sector organisations, regulatory bodies to contractors and developers.

#### Why do we want to engage with stakeholders?

Without knowing the views of those we work with and provide services for, we cannot make strategic decisions about the direction of the Association or properly assess our performance in relation to what matters to our customers. It should be recognised that stakeholders will hold differing expectations and these may sometimes be conflicting e.g.: XXX. These tensions are ones which need to be managed by us and our Management Committee however the important factor is that we understand the views held by different stakeholders and can make informed decisions with those in mind.

Naturally, we will have different level of engagement for different groups. Due to the nature of our work, our resources for engagement will be targeted towards our tenants as those that receive the bulk of the services that we provide. Engagement with other stakeholders may be project specific or due to regulatory requirements. We recognise that engagement is a two way process and we will provide feedback to the organisations that we work with to allow them to monitor performance and improve their services.

#### Methods for Engagement

We want to ensure that anyone who wants to engage with us can do so and to that end, we have a variety of methods to allow stakeholders to engage. We encourage both formal and more informal engagement with us and appreciate the value in both.

We will:

- Publish newsletters which will be available both as hard copy and electronically
- Use our social media presence through the AHA Facebook sites
- Send letters and leaflets with information
- Support tenants/community groups
- Utilise regular full scale or pulse surveys (hard copy and electronic)
- Meet stakeholders face to face for meeting
- Meet tenants face to face through regular estate management walkabouts
- Arrange or take phone calls
- Make staff available for face to face home or office visits
- Enable our technology to allow staff to meet stakeholders online
- Utilise mystery shoppers to assess performance in key areas of service delivery
- Send digital documentation through the tenant portal facility
- Support choice and variety in engagement methods
- Encourage engagement through Membership of the Association
- Publish required performance data through the Tenants Annual Report on Charter
- Liaise with stakeholders on additional information they feel is relevant to be published in the above document.

## Technology

Our website, tenants' portal and social media provide excellent opportunities for us to give stakeholders information and receive feedback and we are developing our capacity to do so through digital access however we recognise that not all our stakeholders have access to or would opt to use this technology. We believe it strengthens our ability to assess our performance and give stakeholders immediate access to ask questions, gain information or provide comment but true engagement can only be delivered where all our customers can be represented. To that end, while we develop our digital access, we will always ensure non-digital means of engagement are offered.

## Local Context

The Association works in two geographically diverse areas. In Dundee, the stock is close to the office and there is **an existing community**. This lends itself to stakeholder engagement and for that engagement to come from not only our tenant base **but also** the wider community. Within Dundee, we have easy access to our own community base where we can arrange engagement activities. Within Angus, our schemes are smaller and less concentrated with several local towns having **two** or **three** schemes within them. Stakeholder issues are likely to have less commonality within Angus and the more rural aspect of engagement does not lend itself so readily to community engagement. In more rural towns and villages we will use Local Authority run venues for our face to face engagement where required.

## Performance Management and Strategy

Two key drivers for stakeholder engagement are for the Association to review its performance including identifying areas of service that need improved and to set the future direction of the Association. Ultimately, the responsibility for this comes within the remit of the Management Committee. As part of our Regulatory Framework, our Management Committee is required at standard 2.4 to:

***Seek out the needs, priorities, views and aspirations of tenants, service users and stakeholders. The governing body takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions.***

They in turn need to be satisfied that the Association is asking the right questions for our stakeholders. In particular, they need to be satisfied that the information we communicate is relevant and appropriate, that the methods used for its delivery are effective and that the evaluation of the responses are robust. Effective communication is only the start and true engagement is only realised where we have the ability to listen and make decisions based on stakeholder feedback. The Management Committee has the duty to make business decisions and as a result, feedback from tenants may not always be the deciding factor but where it is available, it will be considered.

## Equal Opportunity to Engage

We are aware that some of our stakeholders may not engage with us, as we do not provide the right set of circumstances for this. We want to ensure that barriers such as inability to access a venue, a sensory loss, English not being a first language, care responsibilities or requiring advocacy do not deter stakeholders from being heard. To this end, we will ensure that venues are accessible, that we provide translators in person or online, assist with care costs and promote the use of advocates as representatives.

Feedback from engagement will be provided using these methods where required.

## Outcomes

Ultimately, the Association wants to perform well, provide value for money and deliver its values and objectives to those it aims to serve. This requires a balance of meeting business and regulatory objectives along with meeting the needs, priorities and aspirations of its stakeholders.

The use of the Engagement Strategy will ensure that the customer view is at the centre of the Management Committee's decision making process.

## Review Process

The effectiveness of our approach is key to this policy and as such, there must be a process for review. Formally, the Management Committee will review the policy annually and its use will be considered during the processes completed to submit our Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator. We will also consult with local tenants groups and online to our wider

stakeholder group to ensure it meets its stated outcomes and take account of views when presented for approval to the Management Committee. This policy will be refined and developed continuously using our experiences and feedback from our stakeholders

## Appendix 5

### Angus Housing Association's Complaints procedure

#### How do I complain?

You can complain in person at any of Angus Housing Association Offices, by phone, in writing, by email or via our complaints form <https://www.angusha.org.uk/contact.html>

#### Complaints Procedure

You can make your complaint in writing or in person at one of the Associations Offices Arbroath Office, 93 High Street, Arbroath, DD11 1DP or Dundee Office, Ormiston Crescent, Dundee, DD4 0UD by telephoning the Association on 03451 772244, or by email the Association at [admin@aha.org.uk](mailto:admin@aha.org.uk)

We have a two-stage complaints procedure. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

#### Stage 1: Frontline Response

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within five working days if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2.

#### Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We will acknowledge your complaint **within three working days**.

We will confirm the points of the complaint to be investigated and what you want to achieve.

We will investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **twenty working days** unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

#### Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.

There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint

For more information on making a complaint please refer to our website <https://www.angusha.org.uk/making-a-complaint.html>



## APPENDIX 6

### The Scottish Social Housing Charter

In 2012, the Scottish Social Housing Charter for all Social Housing Landlords in Scotland was introduced.

The Charter sets out national outcomes and standards that all Social Landlords should aim to achieve and was developed in consultation with Landlords, tenants and residents and other interested groups. It has 16 main outcomes and includes areas such as participation, quality of housing, repairs and maintenance and communication.

The Association will report against the outcomes to demonstrate our performance and how we are meeting the needs of our tenants and other service users.

### Charter Outcomes and Standards

#### *Outcome 1: Equalities*

Social Landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

*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.*

This outcome describes what social Landlords, by complying with equalities legislation, should achieve for all tenants and other customers regardless of age, disability, gender, reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. It includes Landlords finding ways of understanding the needs of different customers and delivering services that recognise and meet these needs.

#### **Outcome 2: Communication**

Social Landlords manage their businesses so that:

*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 that the landlord provides.*

This outcome covers all aspects of Landlords' communication with tenants and other customers. It is not just about how clearly and effectively a Landlord gives information to those who want it. It is also about making it easy for tenants and other customers to make complaints and provide feedback on services, using that information to improve services and performance, and letting people know what they have done in response to complaints and feedback. It does not require Landlords to provide legally protected, personal or commercial information.

### **Outcome 3: Participation**

Social Landlords manage their businesses so that:

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

This outcome describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory tenant participation duties. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants, how these views are reflected in the landlord's services and how landlords help and support tenants and other customers to build up their capacity for effective involvement.

### **Outcome 4: Quality of Housing**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

*Tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015, and continue to meet it thereafter and are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair when they are allocated.*

This standard describes what landlords should be achieving in all their properties. It covers all properties that social landlords let, unless the Scottish Government has agreed that particular properties do not have to meet the standard.

Beyond SHQS, landlords should be looking for cost effective ways of achieving higher energy efficiency standards for their properties to provide warmer homes for their tenants and help to address climate change. During the life-time of this Charter, the Scottish Government will consult on higher standards. If adopted, these new requirements will form part of the next Charter.

### **Outcome 5: Repairs, maintenance and improvements**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

*Tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.*

This outcome describes what landlords should achieve for their tenants by meeting their statutory duties on repairs and by providing repairs, maintenance and improvement services that safeguard the value of their assets and take account of the wishes and preferences of their tenants. This could include setting repair priorities and timescales, setting repair standards such as getting repairs done right, on time, first time, and assessing tenant satisfaction with the quality of the services they receive.

### **Neighbourhood and Community**

#### **Outcome 6: Estate Management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes**

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that:

*Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods, where they feel safe.*

This outcome covers a range of actions that social landlords can take on their own and in partnership with others. It covers landlord action to enforce tenancy conditions relating to estate management and neighbour nuisance, to resolve neighbour disputes, and to arrange or provide tenancy support where this is needed. It also covers the role landlords can play in partnership with others to address antisocial behaviour.

### **Access to Housing and Support**

#### **Outcomes 7, 8 and 9: Housing options**

Social landlords work together to ensure that:

*People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.*

- ✓ Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options
- ✓ People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness

These outcomes cover landlords' duties to provide information to those looking for housing and advice for people at risk of becoming homeless, including helping tenants and people on housing lists to review their options to move within the social housing sector or to another sector.

#### **Outcome 10: Access to social housing**

Social landlords ensure that:

*People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed*

This outcome covers a range of actions that social landlords can take to make it easy for people looking for social housing to apply for the widest choice of social housing that is available, suitable and meets their needs. It includes actions that social landlords can take on their own and in partnership with others, for example through Common Housing Registers, or as members of a mutual exchange scheme, or through local information and advice schemes.

#### **Outcome 11: Tenancy sustainment**

Social landlords ensure that:

*Tenants get the information they need on how to access support options to help them to remain in their home and can get suitable support including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.*

This outcome covers what landlords can achieve for tenants who may need support to help them maintain their tenancy. It includes tenants who may be at risk of getting into arrears with their rent and tenants who may need to have their home adapted to cope with age, or disability, or caring responsibilities if they are to remain there.

#### **Outcome 12: Homeless people**

Local authorities perform their duties on homelessness so that:

*Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice, are provided with suitable, good quality temporary or emergency accommodation, when this is needed, and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep a home.*

This outcome describes what local authorities should be achieving by meeting their statutory duties to homeless people.

## **Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges**

### **Outcome 13: Value for money**

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:

*Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.*

This standard covers the efficient and effective management of the services that social landlords provide. It includes landlords' ability to minimise the time houses are empty; to manage arrears and all resources effectively; control costs; get value out of the contracts they let; and deliver improving value for money by increasing the quality of services with minimum additional cost to tenants, owners and other customers.

### **Outcomes 14 and 15:**

#### Rents and Service Charges

Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

- ✓ *A balance is struck between level of services provided, the cost of the services and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them*
- ✓ *Tenants get clear information on how rents and other money is spent, including details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.*

These outcomes reflect a landlord's legal duty to consult tenants about rent setting, the importance of landlords taking account of what their current and prospective tenants and other customers are likely to be able to afford, and the importance that many tenants place on being able to find out about how their money is spent.

Whether information about expenditure above a particular level is published and in what form and detail is a matter for each landlord to decide in discussion with their tenants. What matters is that discussions take place and the decisions made reflect the views of tenants and other customers.