



# TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

Approved/last reviewed by Management Committee : February 2025

**Date Due for Review: February 2028**

The information in this document is available in other languages or on tape/CD, in large print and also in Braille.

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本文件所載資料備有中文(廣東話)版本, 也可以製作成錄音帶/光碟, 以及利用特大字體和凸字印製, 以供索取。  
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## 1.0 Introduction

We have an ongoing commitment to effective tenant participation. The organisation was born out of the desire of the local community to make a difference to the Hillhead area. Honouring that desire and continuing to understand the needs, wishes and aspirations of Hillhead residents is fundamental to our ongoing service delivery and associated activities. Alongside this, we want our services to perform strongly against the standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter and provide value for money - continuous and meaningful tenant participation contributes towards us achieving this.

## 2.0 Background

Tenant Participation (TP) in Scotland is underpinned by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 ('the Act'), which created a legal requirement for landlords to actively develop and support TP.

The term 'Tenant Participation strategy' comes from the Act. Under the Act, landlords must publish a TP strategy in consultation with their tenants and RTOs. The strategy should be reviewed and monitored regularly to ensure that it is working.

Additionally, the Scottish Social Housing Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities and contained within the Charter is a specific 'Participation' outcome which applies across all sections of the Charter. Further information on the Scottish Social Housing Charter can be found at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot).

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor, assess and report on landlords based on their performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Additionally, the SHR have a set of 'Standards' contained within their regulatory framework which landlords must adhere to. Each year the Management Committee must sign an 'Assurance Statement' confirming the landlord's level of compliance with each of these standards. Under Standard 2, there is a requirement that *'The RSL actively seeks out the needs, priorities, views, concerns and aspirations of tenants, service users and stakeholders. The governing body listens to its tenants and service users and takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions'*.<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore recognised that effective participation gives tenants an opportunity to influence decisions and understand the processes around the housing services they receive, and it helps landlords deliver better services that focus on tenant priorities. This

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/regulatory-framework/#section-3>

then allows for the building of trust and good working relationships between tenants and the landlord.

Following consultation with tenants and residents, we produced an 'Interim Tenant Participation Strategy' in 2022 with the aim of providing a foundation to work with tenants to develop a longer term Strategy and Action Plan.

In 2023, we carried out a survey to garner information on how our tenants were managing in the Cost of Living emergency and issued an additional survey on investment priorities.

A Tenant Participation Survey was then carried out in August 2024, and the large scale tri-annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out throughout September and October 2024.

These alongside tenant workshops form the basis of this strategy and the accompanying Action Plan.

### **3.0 Aims and objectives**

This document is intended to outline our strategy in approaching tenant participation from 2025-2028. With the accompanying Action Plan (Appendix 1), it sets out key activities and objectives as well as how we will monitor progress and evaluate activities throughout the duration of this Strategy.

The key aims of the Strategy are:

- Continue to align with our strategic objectives directly relating to local decision making and empowerment, community engagement and improving our utilisation of digital technologies.
- Ensure communication regarding opportunities to participate is clear and wide-reaching.
- Set out an Action Plan with measurable outcomes and timelines with a commitment to improvement in Tenant Participation, not simply meeting the minimum requirements.
- Roll out more targeted participation opportunities to encourage more involvement from specific and hard to reach groups based on demographics and data.
- Implement a consistent timetable of Customer Care Working Group meetings and participation exercises.
- Carry out informal, 'quick and easy' Tenant Participation exercises on a regular basis involving as much of our tenant base as possible.
- Use Tenant Participation to better take tenants' views on board when shaping future services which will truly benefit the community.

- Continue to commit resources to Tenant Participation to make it attractive and free from barriers to participation.
- Implement a process of continuous improvement through review of activities.
- Ensure follow up communication is issued in order that participants understand how their contribution has impacted service delivery.
- Streamline digital participation to make it easier for those who chose to participate digitally.

## **4.0 Development of the strategy**

As above, this Strategy uses the 2022 Interim Strategy as it's starting point and builds on it with tenant surveys and workshops to expand the longer-term plan.

At the end of 2023 we issued two tenant surveys; firstly on the impact of the Cost of Living emergency and latterly on tenant's priorities for Association investment (e.g. planned maintenance).

In August 2024, we issued a survey to all tenants to gather views on participation opportunities and to find out how we can engage with more people to take part in the business of the Association.

Then our large scale tri-annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey was carried out by our research partners 'Knowledge Partnership' throughout September and October 2024. This survey contained standard questions required to be asked by the Scottish Social Housing Charter but we also included non-standard questions to garner tenant insight into the services important to them.

The key findings of these surveys have been publicised to our tenants (on our website and within our newsletter), reviewed by our Customer Care Working Group and fed into the Action Plan accompanying this strategy.

## **5.0 Engaging with our tenants**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on all Councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to consult with tenants and service users on a range of housing issues including:

- The Tenant Participation Strategy
- Changes to rents and service charges
- Housing management, repairs and maintenance
- Standards of service to be provided
- And any proposal to change landlord

As well as this, there are a number of areas we will consult with tenants as it directly relates to services they are receiving such as:

- Any changes to housing law proposed by the Scottish Government
- Topical surveys (such as repair satisfaction or new tenant surveys)
- Tri-annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Our performance
- How we communicate with you
- Strategic Plan/Business Planning Priorities
- Relevant policy reviews
- Wider role activities

In order to establish tenants' views and existing knowledge of participation opportunities as well as their priorities for future activities, a questionnaire survey was compiled to be sent to all tenants in August 2024.

The survey identified that the key areas respondents felt were important to them were:

- Repairs & Maintenance Services
- Welfare Rights & Tenancy Support Services
- Housing Management

These will be key areas for focus in the Tenant Participation Action Plan included as part of this Strategy and this will be reviewed regularly.

The survey also asked about being consulted on key business areas and allowed for an updated consultation register to be created which can be utilised for quick surveys/feedback requests where appropriate. This is in line with another survey finding that the majority of respondents valued activities which are 'quick and easy' to participate in and based on topics important to them.

Tenants will continue to be involved in ongoing consultation to review tenants' priorities and the accompanying Action Plan to this strategy will be updated as appropriate.

The Tenant Participation Survey carried out in August 2024 found that **74%** of those interested in participating in consultation would prefer to give feedback digitally (by text or online survey). The large-scale Tenant Satisfaction Survey, carried out in 2024, also asked tenants about a more digital approach to communication and found that 30.7% of tenants would prefer correspondence to be administered digitally whilst 26.7% had no strong view either way (this may suggest that around six in ten tenants – 57.4% - would be satisfied to receive correspondence digitally). Approx. four in ten tenants (42.1%) would prefer to continue with paper correspondence from the Association and 0.4% did not know. It is important therefore to ensure that correspondence is available in a number of different formats to suit the requirements of all of our tenants.

However, in recognition that consultation should be wide reaching and as inclusive as possible so tenants can become fully involved if and when they choose, a number of methods will be used to encourage and facilitate participation such as:

- focus and working groups;
- estate walkabouts
- Customer Care Working Group
- digital, postal and face-to-face surveys;
- house visits;
- conferences;
- social media
- tenants' forums;
- consultation registers/armchair consultation; and
- attending community events/venues to engage with tenants;

These methods will be reviewed regularly to make sure that they are working, meet the needs of all groups of people and reflect developments in communication methods.

Additionally, we have a view to carry out a programme of house visits to all of our tenants to further enhance understanding of individual contact preferences and ensure these are recorded.

We understand that effective communication is key and so will ensure we are providing concise, easy to understand information and this will be available in formats such as large print, braille or different languages for any person who requires it.

Communications will take into consideration individual preferences, and we will review our digital capabilities to send only relevant information as much as possible.

We will also communicate and give information in variety of different ways such as:

- newsletters and information leaflets;
- events timetables
- having a presence at community events and drop-ins at local community venues
- consultation registers/tenants panels;
- website, social media and IT developments (e.g. use of mobile applications);
- focus groups;
- text messages;
- email bulletins;

The communications we send to our tenants and stakeholders will also be reviewed by our Customer Care Working Group who will assess how we can improve this process.

## **6.0 Timescales for consultation**

All consultation activities will have a set time period for response and the level of time will be appropriate to the matter being reviewed.

The main source of formal consultation will be through the Customer Care Working Group who will collectively agree priorities annually, reflecting both Hillhead HA's priorities and tenants' priorities. They will agree an appropriate timeline for activities so that they have sufficient time to debate and discuss issues and have a real opportunity to influence service and performance.

## **7.0 Wider Community Engagement**

We have an active wider role programme with a specific Wider Role & Community Regeneration Sub-Committee within our governance structure who meet quarterly. Tenant priorities for wider community engagement will likely be an area of consultation and participation and so there are obvious links between wider role activities and tenant participation.

The following projects are currently live within our wider role activities:

- Community Garden – with engagement from local schools and local criminal justice department working in the space.
- Orchard at Friars Croft
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library
- Estate Walkabouts
- Community Litter Picks

## **8.0 Feedback on Participation**

Respondents of the Tenant Participation Survey carried out in 2024 indicated that one of the barriers to participating was that they did not feel that it made a difference. It is therefore vital that we communicate following the conclusion of consultation processes and in a method agreed with tenants. We must let tenants know how their opinions and ideas have helped shape policy and service delivery and where feedback has not been implemented, explain the reasons for this. Some of the ways we will feedback to tenants will be:

- individual correspondence;

- newsletters and information leaflets;
- including in policies or strategies information on changes made as a result of tenant views and involvement;
- websites/social media; and
- follow-up meetings or focus groups.

It is hoped that by keeping tenants informed of how their involvement has influenced an issue, they may be more willing to continue being involved or get involved in other participation activities in the future.

## **9.0 Registered Tenant Organisations**

The Act directs that tenant and resident organisations registered with their landlord, known as Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) should be recognised in Tenant Participation activity. RTOs are independent organisations set up to advocate for local interests on housing and related matters and can be made up of both tenant and owner members.

Hillhead Housing Association welcomes the inception of a local RTO and as per The Act have the facility in place for registering new groups. Through the Action Plan of this strategy, it is hoped we will identify interest from potential RTOs in the course of ongoing contact with tenants. Please see Appendix 2 for more information on applications to become a Registered Tenant Organisation.

## **10.0 Resources**

We are committed to encouraging and facilitating participation and so will offer support and resources to remove potential barriers, such as:

- a dedicated budget to assist with any costs associated with participation activities.
- funding incentive schemes for participation – such as prize draws.
- internal and external training and support for tenants, staff, elected members and committee members – where appropriate joint sessions between staff and tenants will be held as an effective way of building and maintaining positive relationships.
- staff support – staff providing relevant time and resources to assist tenants in their activities such as shadowing or process overviews;



- grants for tenants and residents' groups;
- attending conferences and events (with out of pocket expenses paid);
- providing or hiring meeting rooms;
- the cost of providing refreshments where appropriate for meetings and events;
- providing crèche facilities;
- consultation costs;
- travelling expenses or facilitating transport;
- printing and posting newsletters and other information if necessary;
- funding to help new, developing and established tenant organisations;
- access to IT and support networks;

This list is not exhaustive and any reasonable request for support will be considered.

## **11.0 Equal opportunities**

We aim to ensure that opportunities to participate are open to all and no individual or group is unfairly treated or discriminated against because of age, race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, nationality, political views, religious beliefs or non-religious beliefs. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

When organising events or meetings we will:

- Hold meeting in places that are accessible and/or make any adjustments for specific needs as appropriate.
- Cover reasonable care costs of a registered carer/child-minder -to help if you cannot attend a meeting or event because you have care responsibilities
- Aim to hold meetings in venues which provide a digital hearing system if required
- Use interpreters & signers upon request
- Ensure meetings are appropriately timed so that the maximum number of people can attend
- Meet 'Out of Pocket' expenses where necessary
- Provide documents in, for example, large print and other languages on request.

We will endeavour to make any adjustments within reason to facilitate the participation of individuals and/or groups.

## **12.0 Monitoring and Review**

Our Strategy will be reviewed every three years. However, a progress and evaluation review should be carried out annually to establish:

- progress with the action plan
- tenant and staff training (what training they have had and what they need)
- feedback and follow up on surveys & how this has been communicated
- the number of events held and the numbers attending
- Percentage of tenants responding to consultation
- Number of focus groups, topical groups and other group meetings
- Any registered tenant group applications/registrations made

The Action Plan at Appendix 1 will be reviewed based on tenant feedback when appropriate, following the conclusion of consultation and participation activities. Any tenant groups will be encouraged to create a timeline for their activities and for this to be reviewed regularly.

To find out more, speak to your Housing Officer or Paula McCann, Head of Housing Services.

## Appendix 1 – Action Plan

<b>Objective/Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Method of review</b>
CCWG meet quarterly as a minimum.	Quarterly	Head of Housing Services	Annual recap of activity. Monitor Attendance levels. Record reasons for any missed meetings.
CCWG & any other tenant group create an activity timeline which is reviewed regularly.	At end of focussed activity or annually	Tenants	Evaluation of each activity and timelines signed off by groups.
CCWG to review Tenant Participation Survey and update Action Plan as Appropriate	Within 1 <sup>st</sup> year of strategy	CCWG/Head of Housing Services	Review TP Survey Results, create Action Plan, Review during CCWG meetings.
Welfare Rights Newsletter Group continue to meet twice yearly.	Twice yearly	Welfare Rights Officer.	Annual recap of activity. Monitor Attendance levels. Record reasons for any missed meetings.
Action Plan reviewed when appropriate following participation activities & priorities/timelines updated based on tenant feedback. Checked annually to ensure on track for agreed actions.	Adhoc/Annually	Head of Housing Services	Documented evaluation of activities and note of annual review.
Review key communications (Annual Report, newsletters, performance info) to tenants & how to improve these. CCWG	One off participation activity	Head of Housing Services	Review input and changes made and publicise this.

and consultation register to participate.			
Enhance digital offering for participation activities.	Ongoing	Head of Housing Services/Senior Business Systems Officer	Record method of response and use data to inform future activities.
Record communication preferences to system and use these to communicate regarding participation activities.	Ongoing	All Staff	Record & analyse response rates and work with tenants to improve where required.
Improve Rent Consultation engagement/responses by using additional methods of participation (e.g. community drop-in)	Annually	Head of Housing Services/Housing Team	Evaluate response rates in comparison to previous years. Present to management committee.
Re-issue cost of living and tenant priority surveys in 2025.	Bi-annually	Head of Housing Services	Compare with previous surveys and review Action Plan based on findings.
Introduce improved satisfaction surveys for key transactional services such as repairs, waiting list applications and new tenant surveys. Content and format to be agreed by tenants (CCWG, consultation register, etc.)	Within strategy period	Management Team	Where existing process exists, compare response rates. Where implementing a new process, monitor responses over time and invite feedback for improvements. Satisfaction info to be presented to tenants groups and management committee.
Utilise newly updated consultation register for key policy reviews.	As required	Management Team	Consultation section of policy should identify key input from respondents.

Raise staff awareness and encourage their involvement in tenant participation as a key activity.	Ongoing	All	Evaluation of each activity & staff resource required. Evaluation of training/events attended by staff.
Promote setting up a registered tenant's group and support interested parties in their application.	If Required	Head of Housing Service/Head of Corporate Services	Review of number of applications received and if they progressed.
Promote membership of the Association	Ongoing	Head of Corporate Services	Review of number of applications received and if they progressed.
Analyse key data to proactively encourage engagement – e.g. estate management issues in particular location, send communication for estate walkabouts or street meeting.	Ongoing	Head of Housing Services	Note any adhoc activities and attendance when reviewing Action Plan.
Set dates annually for key events such as community litter pick and estate walkabouts and communicate these more widely to encourage participation.	Ongoing	Head of Assets/Depute Director	Monitor attendance and compare with previous activities.

## Appendix 2 – **Application of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)**

Before applying to become an RTO, the following criteria as set out by The Act must be satisfied:

### **1. Constitution**

The applicant must have a written constitution available for inspection by the public that sets out–

- (a)its objects and its area of operation;
- (b)its membership criteria and procedure for application for membership;
- (c)the operation of its committee;
- (d)its procedure for election of its committee and office bearers;
- (e)how its business is conducted, including delegation of powers;
- (f)how its decisions are reached;
- (g)how its funds are managed;
- (h)its procedures for meetings of members including the annual general meeting;
- (i)its procedure for amending its constitution;
- (j)its commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities; and
- (k)its commitment to the promotion of the housing and housing related interests of the tenants of the registering landlord.

### **2. Committee**

The applicant must have a committee, the members of which are elected at an annual general meeting of the applicant (after the first year) and members of the committee must be required to stand down after a period specified in the applicant's constitution.

- (2) The committee must consist of at least three members who may co-opt other members on to the committee during the course of a year; and
- (3) The committee procedures set out in the constitution of the applicant must require that the decisions of the committee are reached democratically.

### **3. Area of operation**

The applicant must operate within a defined area, and in which there is housing stock owned or managed by any local authority or registered social landlord with whom it is seeking to register.

### **4. Membership policy**

Membership of the applicant body must be open to all those tenants of the landlord to which application has been made who are tenants–

- (a) under a Scottish secure tenancy or a short Scottish secure tenancy; and
- (b) of a house situated within the applicant body's defined area of operation.

### **5. Accounting**

The applicant must maintain proper accounting records showing income and expenditure and a statement of assets and liabilities. Its constitution must require that an annual financial statement, audited by the landlord or by a qualified accountant should be prepared for presentation at its annual general meeting.

### **6. Consultation and representation**

The applicant must be able to demonstrate to the landlord its commitment to representing the interests of its members and its ability to represent the views of its members who are tenants of the landlord with whom it is seeking to register.

Any group which meets this criteria and wishes to be considered for registration, must apply to Hillhead Housing Association with note of the following information:

- a copy of the applicant's constitution;
- a list of its office bearers and the address to which correspondence with that applicant should be sent;
- details of other landlords with whom it has registered or is seeking to register; and
- a description of its area of operation.

Hillhead HA will assess any application fairly and consistently against the criteria set out in the Act. The prospective RTO should demonstrate it represents Hillhead HA's area of operation and is committed to representing the interests of the local community. RTOs should pro-actively seek the participation of hard to reach groups in their own organisation.

If the application for registration is accepted, Hillhead HA shall notify the applicant in writing of that fact and of the effective date of registration.

If the application for registration is refused, Hillhead HA shall notify the applicant in writing of the decision and the reasons for refusal. Refusals can be appealed to the Scottish Ministers.

Hillhead HA will support RTOs in terms of budgetary allowance set aside annually and required resources - for example, training, administration support and making premises available to hold meetings.

Hillhead HA is required to maintain a Register of all RTOs operating in the area and to have this available for public inspection at any time.

If Hillhead HA is satisfied that a body which is a RTO satisfies any of the below criteria, the landlord may remove it from the register:

- 1.** The landlord must be satisfied that the organisation removed from the register no longer satisfies the criteria for registration.
- 2.** The organisation must apply to a landlord to remove it from the register.
- 3.** It must appear to the landlord that the organisation has ceased to exist, or to operate.

Removal can be initiated by Hillhead HA whether or not the RTO applies for removal after giving written notice specifying the proposed reasons for and the proposed effective date of removal.

An RTO can also make a written application to Hillhead HA to be removed from the register.

Hillhead HA shall notify the RTO in writing of any decision to remove, or not to remove, that organisation from the register and of its right to appeal to the Scottish Ministers.