

To: Communities and Housing Policy Board

On: 16 August 2022

Report by: Director of Communities and Housing Services

Heading: Tenant Participation Strategy 2022 – Draft for Consultation

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval of the Board to undertake consultation on the Draft Tenant Participation Strategy (appendix 1) and to report the outcome and final Strategy to the Communities & Housing Board.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy Board:
- (i) Approves the Draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2022 and authorises the Director of Communities & Housing to undertake consultation and to submit a report in relation to the outcome of the consultation and the proposed final Strategy to the Communities & Housing Policy Board for approval.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Renfrewshire Council recognises that liaison and consultation with tenants and residents is a positive and vital Landlord function and to this end is fully committed to meeting its legal duties and regulatory standards in terms of tenant participation and engagement.

- 3.2 The 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act requires local authorities and registered social landlords to:
- prepare a strategy for promoting tenant participation which includes provision for obtaining and taking account of the views of tenants and tenant organisations and an assessment of the resources required to implement the strategy;
 - maintain a register of tenant organisations; and
 - notify tenants and tenant organisations of proposals which would have a significant effect on tenants (eg policies on housing management, repairs and maintenance), standards of service and tenant participation strategy.
- 3.3 The section on 'customer/landlord relationship' in the Scottish Social Housing Charter includes the following outcomes for all social landlords:
- *“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;*
 - *“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; and*
 - *“Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.”*
- 3.4 Current arrangements for tenant participation are based on the Customer Engagement Strategy approved in August 2010, with subsequent amendments approved in January 2011 and incremental additions over recent years.
- 3.5 At its meeting on 17 August 2021 the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board agreed that consultants should be appointed to review current arrangements for tenant participation and develop a new Tenant Participation Strategy.
- 3.6 In October 2021, following a procurement exercise, The Tenants Information Service (TIS) was appointed to undertake the review and develop a new Tenant Participation Strategy.
- 3.7 TIS established a steering group consisting of tenant representatives and Council officers to oversee the development of a new strategy. The document set out in Appendix 1 identifies key areas that the new strategy has incorporated and includes:
- A wider range of ways for tenants and residents to get involved at a local and Renfrewshire wide level;
 - Digital participation opportunities should be expanded to increase tenant involvement, to support the more traditional face-to-face methods;
 - Tenants need support and training to be able to get involved online;

- The requirement to get more groups of people involved to reflect the diverse communities across Renfrewshire, particularly young people;
- Local Tenants' and Residents' Associations need support to sustain and grow their membership;
- Support tenant involvement in the regeneration areas so that local communities have more of a say;
- The role of the Neighbourhood Forums and the Council Wide Forum should be reviewed; and
- Tenants' groups would like more opportunities to come together to network and work in partnership.

3.8 The Draft Strategy and accompanying Action Plan (appendix 1) sets out how these objectives will be achieved and it is proposed that an online period of consultation is carried out to allow tenants and elected members to offer their comments and opinions of the proposed strategy.

3.9 The intention will then be to return a Finalised Plan to the next meeting of the Communities & Housing Policy Board for approval and a commitment to review the Action Plan each year with progress reported to tenants and the Board annually.

4 Key features of the Draft Tenant Participation Strategy

4.1 The key objective of the strategy is that participation should be easy and accessible for everyone. To achieve this, the strategy is shaped around **four key commitments:**

- That tenants and residents are able to access/engage expanding digital participation opportunities;
- That tenants are listened to and their views are considered before decisions are reached;
- That it promotes real opportunities to participate in and influence housing services; and
- That participation is adequately resourced and supported.

4.2 Each of these commitments is supported with statements of intentions and actions to implement the strategy.

4.3 The past two years have seen changes in working with tenants' representatives. Meetings with tenants have continued online. The new strategy acknowledges this and is specifically aligned to the Council's Digital Strategy to ensure that the Service and tenants can maximise online consultation.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none arising directly from this report.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
 - **Our Renfrewshire is thriving** – effective tenant participation gives tenants the opportunity to influence decisions about housing services and gives the Council stronger links with local communities.
4. **Legal** – none
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** – to support tenants the new strategy will be aligned to the Council's Digital Strategy.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - the Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – none
9. **Procurement** – external consultants will be commissioned in line with the Council's requirements on the procurement of services.
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – N/A
13. **Climate Risk** – N/A

List of Background Papers

- (a) Report to the Housing and Community Safety Policy Board, 10 August 2010, 'Outcome of Consultation on draft Customer Engagement Strategy'
- (b) Report to the Housing and Community Safety Policy Board, 18 January 2011, 'Consultation with Tenant Groups'
- (c) Report to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board, 27 October 2020, 'Housing Customer Engagement Annual Report 2019/20'
- (d) Report to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board, 17 August 2021, 'Review of Tenant Participation'

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Renfrewshire Council
Tenant Participation Strategy (Draft)

Working together to improve services

2022-2027

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Our Action Plan

Foreword by the Director of Communities and Housing

Renfrewshire Council has a long history of working with tenants and residents to shape the services that we provide. In housing, we have many excellent examples of working with tenants and residents both through formal Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs), and through other engagement mechanisms such as our Neighbourhood Forums, Quality Circles, and Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

Over the last couple of years, the way we have provided services and engaged with tenants and residents, has had to adapt to take account of restrictions on face-to-face contact brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. New ways of keeping in touch and engaging have been developed, and this includes much more use of digital technology and new tools – including virtual meetings that have provided us with new, convenient, and innovative ways to connect.

The development of this new Tenant Participation Strategy takes account of the changing context we are working in and the opportunities that we now have to modernise and enhance our approach to customer engagement and which aligns with our Council Digital Strategy.

This five-year strategy will be pivotal in helping the Service engage with tenants and residents in the delivery of our strategic objectives, which include:

- Regeneration and renewal of housing areas
- Building new council housing
- Investing in improving the quality of our housing
- Improving housing services
- Meeting the challenges of climate change

We have developed this strategy following extensive consultation, discussion, and feedback and building on the years of experience we have of working with tenants and residents. We recognise that we must continue to improve how we engage with our stakeholders and to widen our engagement to reach all of our diverse range of customers, and to do this in ways in which suit their needs.

There are many opportunities for people to get involved and influence how our service develops in the coming years, and these are outlined in this strategy.

Meaningful and effective customer engagement is crucial to improving and developing the services we provide, and I would encourage anyone who has an interest in helping us shape and develop our services to do so.

Kind regards,

Mary Crearie

Director of Communities and Housing

Section 1 - Welcome

Welcome to Renfrewshire Council’s Tenant Participation Strategy. This strategy sets out the range of opportunities available to tenants and residents to get involved and to influence decisions about the housing services we deliver.

We have a long-standing commitment to involving tenants in shaping our housing services and this strategy builds upon the excellent partnership work that has been carried out by tenants and Renfrewshire Council.

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Involving tenants is at the heart of how Renfrewshire Council plans and delivers its housing services. We benefit hugely from the knowledge and contributions of tenants and residents in the delivery of excellence in our services. Their views are crucial to our work in planning ahead.

Derek Murray, Housing Services Manager, Renfrewshire Council

Renfrewshire Council’s values were central in developing this strategy, where more than 4,000 voices including our staff, local residents, partners, young people, and community members helped to identify the values that best describe what people can expect of us. These values have been formally adopted by Renfrewshire Council and will guide how we deliver services and make decisions every day.

Living our values

We are fair

We treat each other and everyone we deal with respectfully and work hard to build trust.

We are helpful

We care about getting things right and are always approachable.

We are great collaborators

We work as one team and with people who care about this place.

We value learning

That supports us to innovate, improve, and deliver better services.

Looking ahead

The work and commitment of tenant and resident volunteers is greatly valued across Renfrewshire. We realise the importance of taking tenants’ views into account before we develop and review our services and policies – this helps us to get things right!

In moving forward, we want to increase the number of tenants and residents that get involved to shape our future services. **This strategy sets out how we plan to expand participation opportunities over the next 5 years.**

Section 2 - Your key messages

In October 2021, the Council commissioned TIS (Tenants Information Service) to carry out a comprehensive review of tenant participation arrangements across Renfrewshire Council, and to develop a new Tenant Participation Strategy for the next five years.

TIS is the leading tenant participation organisation in Scotland, working with tenants and housing organisations to develop effective and innovative tenant participation practice.

A Working Group was established to work with TIS to undertake this review. The group had representation from the Tenant Scrutiny Panel; the Council's Housing Service; and members of local Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TARAs).

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The independent review highlighted that whilst tenant satisfaction results are high across Renfrewshire Council, the number of tenants who actively engage with the Council is low and this is a critical area to address in the new strategy. Covid lockdown has significantly changed the way we work. The Council has embraced working and communicating online and has seen a demand for online support and resources. A priority in going ahead is to develop more digital opportunities that will support the more traditional face-to-face engagement.

Ilene Campbell – Chief Executive, TIS

You said

A series of tenant and resident focus groups was held during 2021 to consider “*what needs to be in place to encourage more tenants and residents to get involved*”. Here is what the focus groups said:

There needs to be a wider range of ways for tenants and residents to get involved at a local and Renfrewshire wide level.

Digital participation opportunities should be expanded to increase tenant involvement, to support the more traditional face-to-face methods.

Tenants need support and training to be able to get involved online.

The Council needs to highlight the value and benefits of tenant participation and to share good practice examples.

We need to get more groups of people involved to reflect the diverse communities across Renfrewshire, particularly young people.

Local Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TARAs) need support to sustain and grow their membership.

We need to increase tenant involvement in the regeneration areas so that local communities have more of a say.

The role of the Neighbourhood Forums needs to be reviewed, to ensure local people have more of an input about environmental budgets.

The role of the Renfrewshire wide Council Forum needs to be reviewed.

Tenants' groups would like more opportunities to come together to network and work in partnership.

It would be useful to have more estate inspections and walkabouts, and this will encourage more tenants and service users to get involved.

The Council should ensure that all information provided is accessible, that tenants' and residents' views are considered before a decision is reached.

Tenants require feedback on the outcomes of every consultation exercise.

The grant scheme and budget for local Tenants' and Residents' groups needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is "fit for the future".

A training and support programme for housing officers needs to be in place to ensure a consistent approach to developing tenant participation.

A new Quality Circle should be set up to focus on estate management issues.

Tenants' groups need staff support to apply for grants and funding.

Section 3 - Legal rights to tenant participation

In Scotland, a legal framework for Tenant Participation was introduced in 2001, with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Tenants have the right to:

- Form independent representative associations.
- Access information about housing policies.
- Be consulted on issues that affect them.
- Participate in decisions that affect the services tenants receive and be given adequate time to fully consider proposals.

Our Council has duties to:

- Produce a Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Make sure that our Tenant Participation Strategy complies with equal opportunities requirements.
- Set up a register of tenant organisations, in line with Scottish Government guidance.
- Consider feedback made by individual tenants or tenants' groups.
- Inform tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) of proposals for housing management, standards of service and the Tenant Participation Strategy.

Social Housing Charter

In 2010, the first Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter) was introduced in the Scottish Parliament. The right to adequate housing is a human right in international law. The Charter supports this right by setting the standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve for their tenants and other customers by delivering good quality homes and services. The Charter came into effect in 2012 and was last reviewed in 2022.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The SHR is the independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Local Authority housing services in Scotland. The SHR is responsible for monitoring, assessing, and reporting on how well social landlords achieve the Charter's outcomes.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC): The Council is required to provide information each year to report on our performance against the Charter. Following the submission of the ARC report, the SHR then produces an independent report on our performance by the end of August each year. This report is available to the public on the SHR website and can be used to compare performance between landlords and against the national average.

Annual Performance Report: The Council is required each year to produce an Annual Performance Report to tenants to communicate the outcome of the SHR assessment and performance information.

Annual Assurance Statement: In October each year, we are also required to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the SHR. The Council needs to confirm to the SHR that it is complying with all regulatory requirements and standards. If it is not meeting these requirements, we must advise

the SHR and say what we are doing to address the issues. Once it has been approved, the Statement is signed and submitted to the SHR and then made available publicly on the Council's website.

More information on SHR responsibilities and landlord annual reports on the Charter can be found at [↘ www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk)

Tenant scrutiny

Housing organisations have been involving and consulting with their tenants for many years. But the Charter introduced a requirement for landlords to be more proactive in self-regulation and to involve tenants to analyse and challenge their performance and decision making through a process called tenant scrutiny.

Ensuring equal opportunities

The **Equality Act 2010** was a major landmark in re-enforcing and promoting equal opportunities in Scottish housing. The Act requires landlords to approach Tenant Participation in a manner that encourages equal opportunities and observes equal opportunity requirements laid out in the Act. The Charter also includes an outcome on equalities which states that social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- They support the right to adequate housing
- Every tenant and other customer have their individual needs and rights 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' responsibility for finding ways of understanding the rights and needs of different groups of tenants, for example victims/survivors of domestic abuse and delivering services that recognise and meet these.

↘ [Click here](#) to find out more about the Equality Act 2010.

The **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015** sets the National Standards for Community Engagement and the values that provide the basis for successful community engagement.

↘ [Click here](#) to find out more about the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Section 4 - What we want to achieve

Our vision is to increase the number of tenants and residents that are involved in shaping and influencing our housing services and to increase your satisfaction with all services provided.

We want to make participation easy and accessible for everyone. To achieve this, we have set this strategy around **four key commitments**:

- 1.** To ensure tenants and residents are well informed by expanding digital participation opportunities.
- 2.** To listen to tenants and make sure your views are considered before decisions are reached.
- 3.** To promote real opportunities to participate in and influence housing services.
- 4.** To provide resources and support for participation to empower you to get involved in the development and review of housing services.

In working with you, we commit to meeting the following good practice principles:

To have trust, respect, and partnership in the work that we do.
To share information, ideas, and power.
To listen to tenants before decisions are reached.
To recognise the independent role of tenants' and residents' groups.
To provide adequate time for responses.
To agree the agenda jointly with tenants.
To provide adequate resources, support, and training to encourage tenant involvement.
To report on the results of all consultations.
To ensure equal opportunities for everyone to get involved in a way that suits their needs.

Section 5 - What we will do

Our plan is to make participation easy and accessible for everyone. We aim to increase the number of tenants and residents that are involved in shaping and influencing our housing services and to increase your satisfaction with all services.

Priority 1

To ensure tenants and residents are well informed

Our objective:

Good communication is essential if tenants are to be in a position to influence housing services.

- We will ensure that tenants have access to all the information they need to make informed choices.
- We will listen to and take tenants' views into account before decisions are reached.

What we will do:

- Provide good quality information that meets the needs of tenants and residents.
- Provide information that will be easy to read and in plain language.
- Provide information in a range of formats to suit your needs (for example, large print, audio CD and in community languages).
- Use a range of communication methods (online and offline).
- Provide opportunities for tenants and residents to tell us the types of information they are interested in receiving.
- Ensure you can speak to a staff member if you need support to complete a survey or form
- Provide a range of ways for you to give your feedback.
- Always ensure that enough time is provided to give your views.
- Listen to tenant feedback before decisions about your housing services are reached.
- Guarantee that the results of consultations will be reported and kept under review.

How we will keep you well informed:

- Newsletters.
- Information leaflets.
- Tenant satisfaction surveys.
- Housing consultation register.
- Council's website.
- Meetings and open days.
- Council's social media (for example, Facebook and Twitter).
- By telephone, email, and text message.

Practice examples

The Charter report

Each year you will receive a report on how well Renfrewshire Council is doing to meet the standards set in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This gives you information about our performance and areas where we plan to improve upon.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Every 2 years the Council gets an independent Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out to find out your views on how we deliver your housing services. In the most recent survey 99% of tenants were very or fairly satisfied with the opportunities to participate.

Our Digital Vision

COVID-19 has significantly changed the way that we work and communicate. We have embraced working and communicating online and have seen a great demand for online support and resources. A priority going ahead is to develop more digital engagement opportunities that will support our more traditional face-to-face engagement.

In expanding digital opportunities, we are aware that a significant number of people do not or cannot access the internet due to challenging factors such as affordability, connectivity, lack of confidence and skills, and access to technology.

Our Tenant Participation Strategy will provide a unique blended approach to ensure technology is being adopted in a way that supports and enriches our traditional offline services. This will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy and in particular the Digital Citizen workstream. We will create opportunities to join our work up with Digital Citizen to avoid the duplication of work and resources and strengthen our efforts by working in partnership.

What we will do

- Build on using these new technologies to complement our traditional strengths, improve business performance, and support the delivery of services more efficiently and with more choice.
- Adopt and expand digital platforms to develop tenant participation that sits alongside the new Tenant Participation Strategy and links with the council Digital Strategy in particular the Digital Citizen workstream.
- Ensure we are represented on Citizen Voice which currently feeds into Digital Citizen and maximise opportunities for working together.
- Look to expand the use of video calling technologies, including Microsoft Teams and the "Near Me" application to increase tenant engagement.
- Support and enhance current interactive online communications with tenants, residents, and groups such as email, text, and explore good use of social media, online community engagement tools such as CONSUL, and smart phone apps
- Support tenants and residents to gain access to digital resources and information where possible.
- Review and expand training programmes to support tenants, staff, and Elected Members to have the new skills required for digital participation and moving towards a blended learning approach.
- Review the staff capacity and resources to deliver the new Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Continue contributing to the Digital Board, maximising opportunities for collaboration, and keeping pace with council digital strategy delivery plans.
- Embed digital engagement across Renfrewshire.

“

Digital platforms are essential for tenants to participate fully with their local council, providing greater accessibility and a flexibility of time and place which are crucial in this age of digital living, and this strategy fully supports digital in its vision.

Ross McNicol - Digital Participation Officer, Renfrewshire Council

Practice examples

Renfrewshire Council Digital Strategy

A key element of the Digital Citizen workstream of the Council's Digital Strategy is to empower tenants and residents to increase digital skills, confidence, and participation, and promote digital public services and digital partnership.

We are working in partnership with the Scottish Centre for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) to ensure digital inclusion in four phases:

Step 1 – Find out and report on what are the key local digital inclusion barriers, successes, and priorities.

Step 2 – Work in partnership with the public and third sector stakeholders to develop co-produced priorities and solutions through a network called *Citizen Voice*.

Step 3 - Prioritise and target service delivery to where we know digital exclusion exists i.e., older adults, social housing, BAME population, poverty, care experienced and disabled, etc.

Step 4 - Develop a way to evaluate and report on progress made, celebrate, and share success and learning back to key stakeholders.

Priority 2

To listen to tenants and make sure your views and priorities are considered before decisions are reached.

Our objective:

We will provide a range of ways for tenants and residents to give their views to shape housing services.

What we will do:

- Encourage and make it easy for tenants and residents to give their views.
- Increase the number of tenants and residents that we engage with.
- Provide a range of ways for tenants to give their views in a way that suits them.
- Listen to tenant feedback before decisions about housing services are reached.

- Develop new methods of engagement with groups who often do not get involved, such as young people.
- Guarantee that the results of consultations are reported and kept under review.

How we will do this:

- Tenant satisfaction surveys.
- Complaint and compliment feedback.
- Annual rent consultation.
- Feedback on service delivery.
- Consultation on changes to housing service delivery and policies.
- Consultation in regeneration areas.
- Meetings and open days.

We are committed to hearing tenants' views before we make decisions. Here are some examples of consultation methods the Council use.

Rent consultation

Each year we consult tenants on the rent proposal and take feedback into account in setting our rents.

Digital Participation Officer

A Digital Participation Officer has been working with homeless applicants living in temporary accommodation and sheltered housing tenants to support them to develop essential digital skills. **Better Futures, a new web-based tool** has been introduced for tenants in sheltered housing, to enable housing support service users' needs to be recorded over a period of time."

Housing Support Service

A new **Development Officer** has been appointed to contribute to the development of services and implementation and monitoring of change across Housing Support Services. The **Housing Support Service** publishes a six-monthly newsletter which is distributed to all Council tenants who receive Housing Support.

Private rented

Private Sector Officers from the Owners Services team provide support to private owners, landlords and tenants in the private rented sector. The Council engaged with over 1,851 owners during the year to consult on and organise repairs in common blocks.

Neighbourhood Renewal Groups

There are plans to set up Neighbourhood Renewal Groups in each of the eight regeneration areas, which among other things would consult tenants and residents on the plans for their areas.

“

The Renfrewshire Tenant Scrutiny Panel has produced tangible results in helping to improve housing services since its inception nine years ago. We work with staff to deliver results which hopefully are beneficial to everyone. All our reports and recommendations are independently compiled and written by the panel members.

Chris Gilzean, Tenant Scrutiny Panel

“

I have been involved in the Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TARA) for a number of years. There are 16 active associations, and most groups meet on a monthly basis to deal with local issues that affect our neighbourhoods. We meet with the police, community wardens and elected members and deal issues from play parks, anti-social behaviour, neighbour disputes to updating residents on issues arising in Renfrewshire. The role is very varied and interesting, and we work to make our communities better places to live.

Shirley McLean, TARA member

“

I am involved in the Quality Circle in the High- Rise flats. We are a group of tenants and residents living in the High-Rise Flats, who go round with housing staff to review how services are working and improve the lives of those who live in them.

Margaret Dymond, Quality Circle Member

Priority 3

To promote real opportunities to participate and influence housing services

Our objective:

We are committed to working with and supporting tenants' groups to identify and deal with problems and improve our housing service delivery.

What we will do:

- Provide a range of tenant participation opportunities to suit the needs of all tenants.
- Increase the number of tenants and residents who participate.

- Continue to recognise the independent role of tenants' and residents' and scrutiny groups.
- Continue to work with and support TARAs across Renfrewshire.
- Replace the Enhanced Registration Scheme with one registration scheme that fulfils legislative requirements and encourages group "sign up".
- Increase the number of young people who get involved.
- Review the role and remit of the Council Wide Tenants' Forum and Neighbourhood Forums.
- Develop partnership working with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel.
- Expand the work of the Quality Circles.
- Provide opportunities for tenants' groups to meet and work together.

Practice Examples:

Our Council has a long-standing commitment to tenant participation and value the work of tenant and resident volunteers. We have a wide range of groups who work to make a difference in their local communities.

Tenants' and Residents' Groups (TARAs)

There are around 16 tenants' and residents' groups (TARAs) in Renfrewshire. These groups are made up of local tenants and residents who work to ensure tenants' views and priorities are considered by the Council.

Council Wide Tenants' Forum

This forum is open to local tenants' and residents' groups and meets once a year to discuss issues such as energy efficiency, housing service reviews, Tenant Scrutiny Panel activities and consultation on the annual rent increase.

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Panel is made up of local tenants, who independently review housing services to ensure tenants' and residents' perspectives are considered.

Neighbourhood Forums

The Neighbourhood Forums meet to address local areas issues and for tenants to influence the local environmental budget.

Quality Circles

There are two Customer Scrutiny Quality Circles, one that focuses on multi-storey blocks and the other on sheltered housing complexes. The groups meet four times a year and have tenants and residents on them.

Priority 4

To provide resources and support to empower tenants and residents to influence decisions about housing services.

Our objective:

We recognise that successful tenant participation requires to be adequately resourced and supported. We will empower local communities to help shape our services

What we will do:

- Provide a Tenant Participation budget specifically for tenant participation and tenant scrutiny.
- Have this budget reviewed each year by tenant representatives and the Council to ensure it is “fit for purpose”.
- Fund and support all tenant and scrutiny groups to participate fully.
- Provide training to ensure tenants and residents have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to participate.
- Ensure that tenant participation is a key part of all staff’s role, and that staff are trained and supported to ensure that tenant participation is an integral part of service delivery.
- Continue to have a dedicated tenant participation team to support Tenant Participation raising awareness of good practice with other housing colleagues.
- Recognise the role of volunteers in supporting the development of Tenant Participation.
- Ensure tenants have access to independent support and training opportunities.
- Have a training programme in place to support tenants, staff, and Elected Members to have the new skills required to deliver the new Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Review the staff capacity and resources to deliver the new Tenant Participation Strategy.

Section 6 – How we will measure success

A monitoring group consisting of tenants and housing staff will be set up. This group will meet at least four times each year and will be responsible for ensuring the strategy is effectively implemented and outcomes are monitored. An Action Plan will be reviewed annually.

This group will produce a report each year to report to Elected Members and tenants’ groups on progress being made.

Renfrewshire Tenant Participation Action Plan – August 2022 to March 2024

Priority	Actions	How will we do this	Lead	Timescale
<p>To ensure tenants and residents are well informed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will provide good quality information that meets the needs of tenants and service users ○ All information will be easy to read and in Plain English ○ We will provide information in a range of formats to suit your needs (for example, large print, audio CD and in community languages) if requested ○ A range of communication methods (online and offline) will be provided ○ We will find out from tenants what types of information they are interested in receiving ○ We will ensure there are opportunities to speak to staff if you need support to complete a survey or form ○ We will provide a range of ways for you to give your feedback ○ We will always ensure that enough time is provided to give your views ○ We will listen to tenant feedback before decisions ○ We guarantee that the results of consultations will be reported and kept under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In consultation with tenants and service managers, produce at least two issues of the People’s News each year. ✓ In consultation with tenants, publish Renfrewshire Council’s Tenants’ Report on the Charter. ✓ All information will be published in a range of formats and platforms to widen access to information. 	<p>Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer</p>	<p>Review June 2023</p>

Priority	Actions	How will we do this	Lead	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will share good practice and publicise the benefits of tenant participation. 			
<p>We will develop our digital participation opportunities and embed digital engagement across Renfrewshire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will build on utilising digital technologies to complement our traditional strengths, improve business performance, and support the delivery of services more efficiently and with more choice ○ We will align with the digital strategy to develop tenant participation that sits alongside the new Tenant Participation Strategy ○ We will look at strategies to deliver and ensure digital inclusion ○ We will expand the use of digital applications to maximise tenant engagement ○ We will continue to improve our interactive online communications with tenants, residents, and groups through better use of social media, email, text messaging and smart phone apps ○ We will ensure that Tenant Participation is adequately resourced ○ We will enable tenants and residents to become digitally confident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will make use of suitable digital platforms to increase and improve participation, such as Near Me, Microsoft Teams and Consul. ✓ Support will be provided to tenants and residents to gain access to digital resources and information. ✓ Training will be available to support digital participation through the use of existing resources and Council partners where possible. 	<p>Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer (Digital Participation Officer)</p>	<p>Review December 2023</p>

Priority	Actions	How will we do this	Lead	Timescale
<p>To listen to tenants and consider their views before decisions are reached and promote real opportunities to participate and influence housing services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will provide a range of ways to gather the views of tenants and residents ○ We will aim to increase the number of tenants and residents that we engage with ○ We will listen to tenant feedback before decisions about housing services are reached ○ New methods of engagement with groups who often do not get involved, such as young people, will be developed ○ We guarantee that the results of consultations will be reported and kept under review ○ We will develop a Renfrewshire “Tenant Approved” stamp for publications to tenants. ○ We will provide a range of ways to encourage tenants and residents to participate fully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Commission and report on Tenant Satisfaction Survey results, taking account of comments to improve services ✓ Continue to undertake Rent Consultation Surveys prior to any proposed rent increases ✓ Continue to carry out tenant satisfaction surveys for key services areas and undertake service improvements where identified from feedback, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Standard of temporary Accommodation ✓ Repairs Satisfaction ✓ Quality of home satisfaction ✓ Owners’ survey ✓ New build satisfaction ✓ We will make use of digital platforms to maximise how we gather tenants’ views, e.g., Survey 123. 	<p>Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer</p>	<p>Review June 2023</p>

Priority	Actions	How will we do this	Lead	Timescale
Increasing Tenant Participation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will identify the gaps in the groups or communities who currently do not participate and prepare a strategy to address these gaps. ○ We will focus support work to increase the number of young people who get involved in housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Publicise the benefits of tenant participation in Peoples News. ✓ We will develop and maintain a bank of interested tenants for feedback on service matters. ✓ We will work with tenants and other stakeholders to develop methods to involve usually 'excluded' groups. 	Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer	Review December 2023
Local Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will conduct annual 'health check' of TARAs across Renfrewshire to identify their training and support needs ○ We will support a recruitment campaign for TARAs. ○ We will make use of digital platforms to increase and improve communication between groups. ○ We will provide opportunities for groups to come together to share views and ideas. ○ We will gather and share good practice case studies to highlight the impact of tenant participation. ○ We will replace the Enhanced Registration Scheme with one registration scheme that fulfils legislative requirements and encourages group "sign up." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A 'health check' will be devised to help TARAs. ✓ We will continue to provide ongoing support for TARAs. ✓ We will work with tenants and stakeholders to simplify the Enhanced Registration Scheme. ✓ Use and promote digital platforms, when possible, to improve communications. 	Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer	Review December 2023

Priority	Actions	How will we do this	Lead	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will provide Officer support to seek and apply for funding. 			
<p>Council wide Tenants’ Forum and the role of the local Neighbourhood Forums</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will merge the work of the Council Wide Forum with the Neighbourhood Forums ○ We will review the role and remit of the Forums regarding the number, format, and agenda for meetings to make this format more effective. ○ We will review how the Forum links with the work of other tenants’ groups. ○ We will ensure tenants are involved in the agenda setting process. ○ We will support the Forum to develop Terms of Reference for the Forum so that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of its role and remit, accountability, links with other groups and reporting arrangements. ○ We will work with tenants to review the role of the forums and agree Terms of Reference which clarifies their role, remit, links with other groups and reporting arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will look to establish two Council Wide Forums per year, one of which will be devoted to Neighbourhood Forum business. ✓ We will make use of digital platforms to host the CWF for blended meetings. ✓ Review the Neighbourhood Forum process and how it can work with the Council Wide Forum. 	<p>Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer</p>	<p>Review December 2023</p>

Priority	Actions	How will we do this	Lead	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will look to introduce a participatory budgeting approach for the Neighbourhood Forums. 			
Tenant Scrutiny Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Panel will develop an Annual Workplan of its work areas to support it to forward plan. ○ We will work with tenant representatives to produce a scrutiny framework that details the roles and relationships of all stakeholders involved in scrutiny. ○ We will provide training for tenants, staff, and Elected Members on the role of tenant scrutiny where required. ○ We will support more opportunities to do onsite inspections as part of its scrutiny work. ○ We will arrange training to be provided to the Panel on the role of the Assurance Statement so they can participate fully. ○ We will arrange meetings with the Panel to discuss the draft Annual Assurance Statement to seek tenant feedback on this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote and develop the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promoting benefits of scrutiny ● Attracting new members ● Delivering training ● Supporting Scrutiny Panel 	Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer	Review December 2023
Expand the Quality Circles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will establish a new Quality Circle focusing on estate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote and develop Quality Circles in other service areas by: 	Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer	Review December 2023

Priority	Actions	How will we do this	Lead	Timescale
	management issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish a new quality circle for estate management. ✓ Deliver training ✓ Support existing Quality Circles 		
Participation in regeneration areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will use this strategy as a cornerstone to develop more tenant involvement in regeneration. ○ We will have a tenant training and support programme in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will continue to support the Neighbourhood renewal Groups 	Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer/Housing Regeneration Manager	Review June 2023
To provide resources and support to empower tenants and residents to influence decisions about housing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will provide a Tenant Participation budget specifically for tenant participation and tenant scrutiny ○ We will review the grant scheme required for TARAs. ○ This budget will be reviewed each year by tenant representatives and the Council to ensure it is “fit for purpose” ○ We will fund and support all tenant and scrutiny groups to participate fully ○ We will provide training to ensure tenants and residents have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to support existing Tenants’ & Residents’ Associations and assist in establishing new Tenants’ & Residents’ Associations where there are none and there is a demand for such representation ✓ Continue to support RTOs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer advice and assist to associations with the annual RTO registration procedure - Visit each enhanced registered association to offer support, advice and assistance ✓ Offer grant funding to enhanced RTOs (start-up, annual & one-off) 	Housing Services Improvement Officer/ Development Officer	Review June 2023

Priority	Actions	How will we do this	Lead	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will ensure that tenant participation is a key part of all staff's role, and that staff are trained and supported to ensure that tenant participation is a key part of our values ○ We recognise the role of volunteers in supporting the development of Tenant Participation ○ Tenants will have access to independent support and training opportunities if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to encourage groups to participate in external / national events ✓ We will work with tenants to review tenant participation budget matters 		