



Tenant Participation Strategy 2022-2025

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce our Tenant Participation strategy for 2022-25

This strategy outlines how we will support our tenants, and our other service users, so that they can play an important role in improving the services that we deliver for them.

The Board and staff at Ore Valley Housing Association recognise that speaking to our tenants and service users is an essential part of shaping our services for the future, and we are committed to making sure that everyone has the opportunity to get involved in a way that is meaningful to them.

As always tenant participation is a two way process and we welcome your views and comments. If you have any good ideas about how to improve where you live or if you have ever wondered why we do things the way we do, let us know what you are thinking. Even the smallest idea can help us to improve our service so that we can make our homes and communities better for everyone.

If you would like to get more involved, please email housing@orevalleyha.org.uk or contact any member of our Housing Team on 01592 721917 and we will be more than happy to speak to you about how you can help us to shape and improve the services we provide for our tenants and others.



Colin McInnes
DCEO/Housing Manager

1st October 2022

Background

The Housing Scotland Act 2001 places a duty on social landlords (RSLs) to publish a tenant participation strategy for involving tenants in the services they receive, or any decisions that will affect them.

In summary we must:

- Show how we will keep our tenants informed
- Explain the issues that we will consult our tenants on
- Explain how we will take account of our tenant's views
- Provide information on the resources put in place to make the strategy work
- Maintain and publish a register of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)
- Respond to comments from tenants and RTOs
- Have regard, in our decision making to the views expressed by tenants and RTOs

Services that directly affect tenants are largely ones involving **customer service, housing maintenance** and **estate management**, and we recognise that any proposals that are likely to significantly change our service in these key areas are best done with the involvement of our tenants and other service users.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

It is important that whatever we do strengthens and supports our agreed vision, mission and values:

Our Vision

'For everyone to have the opportunity to live healthy fulfilling lives'

Our Mission

'Working to provide good quality homes and supporting communities'

Our Values

- **We will be a responsible and caring landlord**
- **We will be open and accountable for everything that we do**
- **We will be proactive and innovative in dealing with opportunities and problems**
- **We will be honest, approachable and reliable**
- **We will be respectful and give fair treatment to everyone**
- **We will listen to and learn from our customers and others**

Introduction

Ore Valley Housing Association recognises that tenant participation in all its forms has a vital role to play in helping us to develop and improve our services, and it is important that tenants and other service users find it easy to influence our decisions at a level that they feel comfortable with.

This strategy aims to set out how we will engage with our tenants and the communities they live in, so that they can actively take part in decisions to change or improve our service so that it continually meets their needs and expectations.

Where are we now?

Our current strengths relate to our community based approach and our relatively small estate management areas. Work has been undertaken to improve our newsletter and website; our communication options have been enhanced, with tenants and other service users having the ability to follow or contact us on facebook or via the live chat function on our website.

Tenants can also contact us, and access our services digitally using the online My Home Service that is available on our website. Over the lifespan of this strategy this is an area of communication and service delivery that we will be looking to develop and improve with support from our tenants and other services.

Weaknesses include the lack of local Registered Tenant Organisations for our tenants to become engaged with. We currently have no locally agreed targets for key service areas such as repairs, neighbour complaints or estate management. In general, our tenant participation activities have been driven by regulatory requirements and peer group benchmarking. Our tenants continue to report high levels of satisfaction with opportunities to participate in our decision making process, but we continue to have low tenant engagement in online surveys or activities involving tenant scrutiny, i.e. tenant forums focused on specific service delivery areas. Over the past few years, we have seen an increased number of community based activities being supported or delivered by Ore Valley Housing Association and we have sought to align our tenant engagement with these events.

What opportunities are now available to us to improve?

Tenant participation is a clear priority for the Scottish Housing Regulator and support is available from TPAS Scotland and other tenant organisations. We will work with tenants and staff to continually encourage partnership working while focusing on the delivery of this strategy. This also gives us an opportunity to identify and work with tenants who would like to establish a tenant group with our support, or with further support from The Fife Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (FFOTRA) if they would like to become a Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO).

We will continue to work jointly with other Fife based Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to adopt positive practice especially for initiatives that would benefit from a Fife wide approach.

Our previous strategies have identified the need to set up a Tenant Panel allowing for continued commitment and promotion of tenant participation initiatives that will enhance our ability to improve our governance structure by promoting more tenant involvement in our decision making process.

We now have a Tenant Engagement Officer in post that will allow us to focus on developing the opportunities identified from our tenant satisfaction survey and our getting to know you survey planned

for October 2022. Over the coming months our aim is to set up a Tenant Panel that will enable tenants and staff to work together to improve our overall performance and inform Board decisions that have a direct impact on our landlord services.

Following on with our recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey results, we will continue to work on our tenant participation activities and expand our knowledge bank to ensure a tenant focused approach to engagement is the basis for any existing or new opportunities that we undertake.

We continue to work with HouseMark Scotland allowing us to monitor and improve how we deliver Value for money specifically in the key areas relating to Customer Service, Tenant Participation and Tenant Engagement projects. Throughout this process it allows for a clearer approach on how we measure our performance in relation to opportunities for tenants to become more involved in scrutinising how we spend their rent money. This in turn will give tenants the opportunity to work with us to help set our priorities as we move forward beyond the timescale of this strategy.

What are the aims of this strategy:

This strategy aims to:

1. Fully comply with statutory and regulatory requirements relating to tenant participation
2. Achieve effective outcomes for our tenants as outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter
3. Make sure that our tenants are able to influence and scrutinise the services we provide
4. Offer a wide range of options for tenants to be involved in a way that suits them.

Our strategic priorities for 2022-25

Our priorities are to:

1. Re-start our tenant led Estate Management Group
2. Support and deliver tenant and community engagement activities post Covid.
3. Work with our tenants to develop and deliver our tenant and community engagement plan
4. Review service provision arrangements with FFOTRA and local RTOs
5. Update our training register with training opportunities for staff and tenants
6. Reduce and understand barriers that can affect positive participation with tenants
7. Develop a forum for staff and tenants to scrutinise performance and value for money

How will we achieve our strategic aims and priorities?

The following objectives outline how each of our strategic aims will be achieved:

- We will make sure that all tenants have the opportunity to have their voice heard by providing a wide range of communication methods.
- We will continue to provide and promote positive mechanisms that will enable staff at all levels to listen and respond to tenants who are communicating with us.

- We will work with tenants to understand a range of different methods of participation so that everyone has the opportunity to get involved at a level that they feel comfortable with.
- We will work with tenants to develop digital engagement opportunities so that this strategy can continue to be delivered in response to the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis.

Statement of Resources

A key requirement of this strategy is to assess the financial and staff resources needed to successfully promote and deliver tenant participation.

Ore Valley Housing Association is committed to making the best decisions, at the right time, in the right way, involving the right people. To do this well we recognise that team members need to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and be provided with guidance, development and support to ensure fairness and consistency in everything we do.

Our Customer Service Charter states our commitment to providing tenants with the best possible customer service and to ensuring all members of our community can access our services. Our standards, processes

and systems are constantly evolving to ensure that we meet our tenants' changing needs, allowing us to deliver the best service to our tenants and other service users, and tenant participation plays a key role in ensuring that we are doing this effectively.

Promoting tenant participation means that we will need to ensure that resources are available so that staff and interested tenants can receive appropriate training in this area.

Everyone has a role to play in relation to consulting and working with tenants and tenant groups. Our Tenant and Community Engagement Officer will oversee the delivery of our tenant participation strategy, but we aim to promote the view that good tenant participation is the responsibility of all team members and should be at the forefront of everything we do.

The staff most involved in working with tenants and tenants groups will be front line staff, housing management staff and managers who have decision making authority. The CEO and the Housing Manager will need to ensure that staff are properly trained and supported to work with tenants. Staff will also need to have appropriate delegated authority to make decisions and respond to comments and requests from tenants, as this is required.

An annual budget will be used to resource and support the following:

- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Online surveys
- Consultation events

- Quarterly newsletters
- Tenant Conferences
- Funding for tenants to attend Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) events
- Funding TPAS training for tenants, staff and board members
- Transportation or travel expenses to and from events
- Funding or grants to support RTOs or other tenant groups

Resource requirements will be continually reviewed to ensure that the aims and priorities of this strategy are being delivered.

Measurable outcomes

- We will increase the number of tenants actively involved in consultation and decision making
- We will increase the number of tenants using our digital services
- We will establish tenant sub-groups to monitor and report on measurable outcomes for the following key service areas:
 1. Information and Communication
 2. Customer Care
 3. Tenant Participation
 4. Repairs and Housing Quality
 5. Value for Money
 6. Your Neighbourhood
- We will identify and develop potential joint working opportunities with other Fife based RSLs
- We will develop forums for staff and tenants to scrutinise performance and value for money

How will we achieve these outcomes?

- We will promote all tenant participation activities on our website and social media
- We will introduce tenant sub-groups or focus groups
- We will promote local area based tenants groups or RTOs
- We will review the results of our Tenant Satisfaction Survey (2022)
- We will develop a 'Getting to Know You' Survey to gather attributable data to inform and improve service delivery decisions based on our tenants changing needs.
- We will organise Annual Tenant Conferences
- We will introduce devolved estate management budgets for local areas
- We will introduce Regular Estate walkabouts
- We will promote and develop our tenant consultation register
- We will introduce regular online/text surveys
- We will link tenant participation activities to digital inclusion projects for our tenants
- We will link tenant participation activities to consultation events
- We will promote TPAS training programmes for tenants and staff
- We will share ideas and resources with the other Fife based RSLs

When will we achieve these outcomes?

● Review service provision arrangements with FFOTRA and local RTOs	2023	
● Introduce Tenant focus groups (4-8 tenants)	2023	
● Introduce area based estate management budgets	2023	
● Introduce Estate management walkabouts	2023	
● Consult with tenants about setting affordable rents and value for money	2022	
● Establish a training programme for interested tenants and staff	2023	
● Tenant Conference	2023	
● Identify Interested Tenant(s) to attend TPAS Conference		2023
● Identify outcomes from Tenant Satisfaction Survey results	2022	
● Develop Consultation Register (50 – 100 tenants)	2023	
● Establish an area based tenant group with interested tenants	2024	
● Set up a Tenant Scrutiny Panel (4 – 8 tenants)	2025	

The above action plan will be reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure that the aims and priorities of this strategy are being delivered.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and overcoming barriers to involvement

Ore Valley Housing Association is fully committed to equal opportunities and ensuring equality of treatment for all stakeholders, employees, customers and suppliers without discrimination or prejudice based on an individuals protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act as follows :-

- age
- disability
- gender identity¹
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Association will always seek to follow best practice in order to ensure that the above group needs are understood, considered and accommodated wherever possible.

Throughout our work, we will not discriminate against any person. We continue to support and encourage all tenants and service users to participate while still maintaining their right to privacy and confidentiality.

¹ The inclusion of gender identity as a characteristic goes beyond the confines of the Equalities Act which only recognises gender reassignment as a protected characteristic. This is referred to in our [Equality, Diversity & inclusion Policy](#).

Engaging with hard to reach groups and other service users

It is important that everyone has the opportunity to participate. We will address any boundaries that prevent this from happening as we understand that some groups are under-represented and this can cause inequality when using housing based services.

Particular attention needs to be paid to support traditionally excluded groups to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved in making important decisions about the service they receive.

The Housing Scotland Act 2014 also places a duty on RSLs to consult applicants as well as tenants about any changes to their allocation policies and careful consideration will need to be given to how we will work with the other RSL partners who are based in Fife to ensure that these traditionally excluded groups also have the same opportunity to be consulted.

Beyond the Strategy

This strategy will be referred to and updated as projects and engagement practices are reviewed on a regular basis. We will continue to liaise with RSL partners, RTOs, TPAS and all interested tenants throughout the time period of this strategy.

In all circumstances this strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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