



Perth & Kinross Council

Tenant Participation Strategy 2010-2013

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This is the Tenant Participation Strategy, produced by Perth & Kinross Council in co-operation with tenants, tenants' groups, and other key stakeholders. This strategy reflects Perth & Kinross Council's commitment to developing effective consultation and participation. Nationally there is a decline in traditional approaches to tenant participation and this is reflected here, in Perth and Kinross. We know we need to modernise the ways in which we engage and involve our tenants and residents. We want to ensure that we listen to what our tenants and other key stakeholders tell us would be the best way forward for Tenant Participation in the future. The result of this could be a change of priorities for tenant involvement and the resources available. However this does not affect the principles and standards that inform and drive best practice in Tenant Participation and we will continue to work towards them.

1.2 Purpose of strategy

The Tenant Participation Strategy sets out how the Council will promote the involvement of its tenants in local decision making processes regarding housing policies, housing conditions and housing-related services. Perth & Kinross Council is committed to working with whole communities and this means that all local residents as well as Council tenants have a crucial role to play. However, there are some fundamental issues such as rents, housing repairs and internal home improvements which are only of direct relevance to council tenants.

This strategy sets out how the Council intends to support and enable tenant participation. It:

- Describes what we want to achieve and how we will do that for the period 2010-2013.
- Outlines the resources available to support tenant participation.
- Sets out our priorities for tenant involvement for 2010-2013.
- Provides a focus for individual tenants, tenants groups, Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs), residents and other community groups who wish to work with Perth & Kinross Council to improve services.
- Shows how we will assess our progress and measure the impact of the strategy.

1.3 How can you have your say on the strategy?

You can write with your comments to:

Suzie Burt
Team Leader performance

Perth & Kinross Council
Housing & Community Care
5 Whitefriars Crescent
Perth PH2 0PA

By email to: TenantParticipation@pkc.gov.uk

Or by telephone on 01738 476771

1.4 Is the strategy available in other formats?

It is available in Braille, MOON, large print, on audio CD and in some community languages, upon request. Please use the contact details above for further information or copies.

1.5 Strategy appendices

The appendices of this strategy include guidance notes on registration of tenants groups, the area housing office structure and contacts for Housing & Community Care, a list of tenants and residents groups in Perth and Kinross, information on customer complaints procedures, a list of additional sources of assistance, Tenant Satisfaction Survey and the Business Plan of the Perth and Kinross Tenants' & Residents' Federation. Appendices are available upon request from the contact details above.

1.6 Links to other relevant publications

Section 53 (1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out the statutory requirement for all social landlords, including councils, to develop a Tenant Participation Strategy. The Act also requires all registered social landlords to consult with tenants on a range of major housing issues that affect them.

These include:

- This Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Housing management, repairs and maintenance policies.
- Standards of service to be provided in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance.
- Any proposal to change landlord.
- Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy.
- Perth and Kinross Homelessness Strategy.

This strategy is consistent with the aims of other Perth and Kinross plans and strategies such as the:

- Perth & Kinross Council Community Plan 2006-2020.
- Perth & Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2007-2010.
- Perth and Kinross Single Outcome Agreement 2008-2011.

- Perth & Kinross Council Community Engagement Strategy 2007-2010.
- Housing & Community Care's Business Management and Improvement Plan 2009-2012.

In addition, this strategy complements the priorities of other agencies' publications such as:

- Perth and Kinross Tenants' & Residents' Federation Business Plan.
- Scottish Government's National Strategy for Tenant Participation, 'Partners in Participation' 1999.
- Scottish Government's 'National Standards for Community Engagement'.
- Scottish Housing Regulators' Performance Standards.

1.7 Equalities

In recent years a range of legislation and policy developments have required public bodies to ensure that they deliver their services in a way which promotes equality and isn't discriminatory. All public bodies have been required to produce equality schemes.

The planning and delivery of: good quality housing; appropriate information; advice, and care and support services in Perth and Kinross embraces the principle of equal opportunities.

Through the funding received from Perth & Kinross Council, Perth and Kinross Tenants' & Residents' Federation strives to remove barriers from participation. It can provide tenants and residents with:

- Travel expenses
- Disabled transport provision
- Carer's allowance to help towards paying someone else to provide care while the tenant attends a meeting
- Information in alternative formats or languages
- Accessible venues for events
- A hearing loop system at meetings and events for people who use hearing aids
- A variety of meeting times.

Housing & Community Care has an Equalities Action Plan which aims to ensure that all services and policies, including this strategy and related actions, take positive steps towards the equalities agenda. This means that the Council will strive to encourage equal access to services, responding to the different needs and service requirements of people regardless of sex, race, colour, disability, age, nationality, marital status, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment.

1.8 Consultation in preparation of this strategy

Since publication of the previous Tenant Participation Strategy in 2004, Perth & Kinross Council has undertaken a range of consultations and has provided information via public events and through distributing tenant-focused publications. This strategy was then developed by a Steering Group made up of tenants' representatives and relevant Council staff from Housing & Community Care. The Steering Group drew extensively on research and consultation that the Council had undertaken or commissioned regarding tenants' views on tenant participation and information sharing. These are shown below.

1.8.1 Tenant Satisfaction Survey (2006)

A tenant satisfaction survey was conducted in 2006 through face-to-face interviews with 800 tenants. The main objectives of the survey were to assess tenants' experiences of housing services and how satisfied they were with those services. The Executive Summary of the research is attached as Appendix 7.

The survey revealed that tenants were generally well satisfied with housing services and also with the range of information that the Council provided. However, it also revealed that 72% of tenants said that they were not interested in being involved in the decision-making processes regarding their housing. The main reasons given for not attending tenant meetings were: "don't have any problems"; "don't have time/ too busy", and "the meetings are held at unsuitable times for me".

The survey highlighted that individual tenants had different preferences for how they wanted to be kept informed, and this depended partly on what information was being given - personal letters were preferred when the matter affected the householders personally and directly (e.g. arrangements for making improvements to the property).

Other preferred methods for receiving information were: 'On the House' magazine for Council tenants, and the wider Council magazine 'Perth & Kinross News'. However, these publications may not be read by everybody.

1.8.2 Staff consultation

A range of front-line staff were consulted in a focus-group format. Results revealed that housing staff believed that there were aspects of the participation and information-sharing processes that should be improved.

Suggestions included:

- Staff needed more training/ information to be able to deal with the sorts of queries that came up at tenants meetings; and also to understand how the associations and Residents' and Tenants' Organisations work.
- Specific financial resources to support engagement and participation would be helpful.
- Both tenants and staff need to have clear understanding and realistic expectations about what tenant participation is for and what it can achieve.
- Meetings with tenants need to be managed more skilfully to ensure they remain of interest to the whole group.

1.8.3 Tenant and resident consultation

Further consultation took place with individual tenants, representatives from tenant associations, and Perth and Kinross Tenants' & Residents' Federation. This aimed to find out what tenants thought about:

- How the Council could improve the way it shares information on proposals for service development and/ or change.
- How the Council could better target information to the wider community.
- Tenants and residents were asked to consider the following issues:
- Improving access to information sources.
- Role of Registered Tenants' Organisations (RTOs).
- How to get more people involved in participation issues.

Tenants and residents identified a number of things the Council could do to help them:

- Use more and different methods of contacting residents and tenants.
- Aim to ensure that residents get as much relevant information as tenants.
- Provide more feedback to tenants and tenants' organisations for example from working groups tenants are involved in.
- Show how tenants' and residents' views have been incorporated into service development.

- Assist RTOs to attract new, especially younger, members.
- Assist with provision of support and training for committees.
- Enable larger and more experienced RTOs to help smaller associations.
- Provide opportunities for participation around more locality based issues.

2. What is our vision?

Housing & Community Care is committed to the council's overall aim of:

‘...a confident and ambitious Perth and Kinross with a strong identity and clear outcomes that everyone works together to achieve. Our area will be vibrant and successful: a safe, secure and healthy environment, and a place where people and communities are nurtured and supported.’

In relation to tenant participation the vision is to:

‘Make Perth and Kinross a place where tenants can influence the decision making process through a range of involvement opportunities, working in partnership with the Council, to deliver housing and related services that meet their needs.’

Housing & Community Care will work to achieve this by contributing to Perth & Kinross Council’s five Corporate Objectives. These are:

- A safe secure and welcoming environment.
- Healthy caring communities.
- A prosperous sustainable and inclusive economy
- Educated, responsible and informed citizens
- Confident, active and inclusive communities

This strategy will also support the delivery of Perth & Kinross Council’s Single Outcome Agreement by meeting the following outcomes:

- National Outcome 10: We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

- National Outcome 15: Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

In particular this strategy contributes to Perth & Kinross Council local outcomes:

- Number 11: Our communities will be vibrant and active.
- Number 12: Our communities will have access to the key services that they need.

In addition this strategy reflects the vision of the Local Housing Strategy which is to:

'Make Perth and Kinross a place where everyone will have access to good quality housing that they can afford that is in a safe and pleasant environment. People will have access to services that will enable them to live independently within and participate in the communities in which they live.'

Further this strategy contributes to the overall aims of the Local Housing Strategy which are:

- **Addressing housing requirements** to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of houses in the size and type people need, in the areas they require to live and that they can afford.
- Developing appropriate housing and related services for **sustainable and mixed communities**
- **Improving stock conditions and energy efficiency** helping to minimise fuel poverty.
- **Assisting people with particular needs** to ensure there is a range of house sizes and types available with appropriate support to meet individual requirements.

3. What are our principles?

Our principles reflect those of the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Participation, 'Partners in Participation'. These include:

- Create a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, elected members, and housing officers at all levels, working together towards improving housing conditions and housing services.
- Ensure tenant participation is a continuous process.

- Enable a joint process of agenda setting and information sharing.
- Enable processes of decision making that are open, clear and accountable.
- Recognise that tenant representatives should be given enough time to consider the issues properly and work out a common view in advance of meeting Council representatives.
- Recognise the independence of tenants' organisations.
- Good working relationships evolve gradually and are flexible to adapt to local circumstances.
- Recognise that tenants' organisations require adequate resources for organisation, training and support.
- Tailor tenant participation in remote areas to suit the particular needs of tenants in these communities.
- Provide all tenants with an equal opportunity to contribute, removing barriers to effective participation.

4. What are our aims and how will we achieve them?

Our overall aim is to enable tenants and residents to have real opportunities to become involved in the decision making processes of Housing & Community Care.

Our specific aims are to:

- Offer a range of ways for all tenants to become involved both collectively and on an individual basis.
- Ensure all tenants are encouraged and adequately resourced to fully engage in the participation process and be involved in decisions which effect them.
- Continuously develop ways of improving communication and information sharing to meet the needs of all tenants.
- Develop and support tenant participation across Perth and Kinross.

In order to achieve our main aims our Tenant Participation Strategy will need to achieve the following key outcomes:

1. There will be a range of opportunities developed which reflect local circumstances and allow all tenants to participate effectively.
2. All tenants and staff will be given access to adequate levels of training and support that will enable them to participate more effectively.
3. We will provide relevant, accurate, timely and accessible information to meet the needs of all tenants.
4. We will work with all tenants and residents, Perth and Kinross Tenants' & Residents' Federation and our partners to review how we support and develop tenant participation in Perth and Kinross.
5. We will regularly monitor and review this strategy to ensure it continues to be effective.

5. Existing resources and support

Perth & Kinross Council's commitment to Tenant Participation is demonstrated through grant aid and funding support to Perth and Kinross Tenants' & Residents' Federation. This funding is used by the Federation to resource, develop and facilitate tenant participation on behalf of and in partnership with Perth & Kinross Council. Together Perth and Kinross Tenants' & Residents' Federation and Housing & Community Care staff have worked to offer and deliver the following opportunities:

- Tenants are given the opportunity and funding to attend joint development events and local and national conferences.
- Access to training events and information including joint training with housing staff.
- Support from council staff, including attendance at meetings, where appropriate.
- Guidance and support to all groups to enable them to become RTOs.
- Annual 'Open House' information event.
- Information and consultation Road Shows
- Information on Perth & Kinross Council (www.pkc.gov.uk) website.
- Regular information to groups and sheltered housing complexes.

- Individuals, tenant associations and RTOs are consulted about local and individual issues (e.g. repairs and improvements).
- Specific consultation events with local groups about local issues.
- Local public meetings.
- Twice yearly 'On the House' newsletter.
- Tenants' Calendar.

6. Budget

The tenant participation budget for Perth and Kinross is £131,331.00 in 2010/11 and will be spent in grant aid to the Federation, supporting engagement activities and developing Resident Academies. Resources for future years of the strategy will be confirmed following joint work with tenants, RTOs, the Federation and other relevant stakeholders.

7. What progress have we made?

Positive progress made to improve and develop participation and tenant involvement has included:

- Working together with tenants, residents, staff and elected members to plan the annual tenant conference and contribute to discussions about policy developments on the day.
- Producing tenant newsletter informing tenants of their right to be heard and promoting participation opportunities.
- Producing an information pack on how to become a registered tenant organisation.
- Updating our register of tenants and residents groups.
- Developing our consultation database to help maximise the numbers of tenants becoming involved.
- Undertaking extensive community consultation on a range of major housing issues such as developing our Local Housing Strategy and Rent Restructuring.

8. What standards can tenants expect?

This section summarises the standards of service that tenants can expect from us. We will:

- Provide support and information on setting up and running a tenants' and residents' group, including attending meetings when requested and appropriate.
- Provide information, support and advice on housing related issues to individual tenants and tenants groups.
- Ensure we provide information in an easy to understand way and in accessible formats.
- Facilitate and arrange training and development events to meet the joint needs of tenants and staff.
- Maintain a register of tenant groups and provide advice and support to groups on achieving registration status.
- Recognise the autonomy of tenants groups.
- Ensure tenants have access to decision-making meetings and that they are provided with information and reports about the contents of that meeting ahead of time to allow tenant representatives to consult with other tenants and agree a shared response/ view to present to the meeting.

11. Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy

The Tenant Participation Strategy will be a working document subject to continuous review to ensure it is meeting objectives and achieving targets. A range of methods will be used to monitor the strategy, these will include:

- A joint Tenant Participation Strategy Monitoring and Implementation Group will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the strategy on an ongoing basis. This group will meet at least once every three months to ensure that the aims and objectives of the strategy are being achieved. Group members will include staff, elected members, representatives of tenants' and residents' organisations and other stakeholders. The group will also be responsible for developing further opportunities for participation, consultation and communicating with tenants.
- Progress on implementing and monitoring the strategy will be reviewed annually and reported in an Annual Strategy Review to the relevant Council committee.

The Annual Strategy Review will consider a range of information and feedback options exploring:

- How participation took place (i.e. what methods of participation were used; what and how were the issues/ topics identified)?
- What arrangements were made to encourage participation and maximise accessibility?
- How were tenants' views represented in the outcome of any participation?
- How were the results of participation fed back to participants?
- What timescales were allowed for effective participation to take place?
- The cost of developing effective tenant participation.
- Did tenants receive adequate information, support and resources to allow them to participate effectively?
- How satisfied are tenants with the participation process and the range of opportunities available to them? How would tenants like the process to be improved?

To outline proposals for participation over the course of the strategy a number of key targets, progress indicators and anticipated outcomes have been identified.

These are shown in the following tables and will be used as a basis for measuring tenant involvement activities. These targets will be monitored and reviewed throughout the life of the strategy. By monitoring these key actions we will ensure that the strategy is implemented effectively.

Section 12 Action Plan

Key Outcome 1

There will be a range of opportunities developed for tenants to participate effectively that reflect local circumstances

Action Ref No.	Specific Action	Timescale	Output	Evidence
1	Neighbourhood Forum Events will co-ordinated by local area housing teams	March 2010 onwards	2 Neighbourhood Forum Events will be co-ordinated by each Local Area Housing Teams across their geographic areas	Number of events delivered Number of people who attended Feedback from local events Customer satisfaction with services VOiCE (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement) records
2	Thematic Forums will be supported by H&CC Staff	March 2010 onwards	Development of Thematic Forums as identified to support tenant participation and involvement	Identification of thematic groups Number activities /meetings arranged VOiCE (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement) records
3	Develop short life working groups for particular consultation exercises	As appropriate	Formation of appropriate consultation planning groups Production of action plans	Group roles & remits Notes of meetings/ minutes Action plans Event programme, feedback report and next steps Consultation responses

Action Ref No.	Specific Action	Timescale	Output	Evidence
			<p>Quick response questionnaires</p> <p>Hold engagement events in response to arising issues</p>	Copies of publicity material
4	Report on and celebrate successes	Appropriate as and when publicising meetings and press releases	<p>Produce publicity material, briefing notes and newsletters demonstrating the effectiveness of tenants' contributions</p> <p>Communications plan</p>	<p>Editorial Group for On the House magazine</p> <p>Publicity material, briefing notes and newsletters</p>
5	Develop with tenants and staff a mutually agreed code of practice for participation and involvement	March 2010	Develop an agreed code of practice	Code of practice published

Action Ref No.	Specific Action	Timescale	Output	Evidence
6	Developing joint working with other council services and Registered Social Landlords	Work with established groups is ongoing	Development of joint working groups	No. of meetings/ minutes Reports VOiCE (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement) records
7	Maintain a register of tenants groups.	Updated quarterly	RTO register	No. of RTOs
8	Maintain a consultation data base	As appropriate	Consultation data base	No on data base

Key Outcome 2

Tenants and staff will gain access to adequate levels of training and support that will enable them to participate more effectively

Action Ref No.	Specific Action	Timescale	Output	Evidence
9	Providing access to training, information and advice to all tenants on participation.	Ongoing from March 2010	Audit of training need Training sessions held Pre meetings and post meetings	Attendance. Evaluation. Training programme development. Evaluation sheets
10	Development of Resident Academies	Ongoing from March 2010 Ongoing from March 2010	Accredited and non accredited learning programmes delivered across Perth and Kinross Development of Resident Quality Inspectors	No of Learning Programmes No of Participants No attaining accreditation Evaluation No's of Inspectors No's of Inspections undertaken Feedback from Inspectors
11	Support staff to increase community engagement capacity	Ongoing	Facilitate training sessions, workshops and working groups	Notes of meetings Number of training events Number of Participants Reports from training sessions Team plans incorporating engagement outputs

Action Ref No.	Specific Action	Timescale	Output	Evidence
12	Fund tenant groups	Annually	Groups funded to cover operational costs	Applications received Grants awarded
13	Council officers will attend appropriate meetings	On request	Tenants and tenant groups will receive support	Record of meetings

Key Outcome 3

We will provide relevant, accurate, timely and accessible information to meet the needs of all our tenants.

Action Ref No	Specific Action	Timescale	Output	Evidence
14	Report on and celebrate successes	Appropriate as and when publicising meetings and press releases	Produce publicity material, briefing notes and newsletters demonstrating the effectiveness of tenants' contributions	Editorial Group for On the House magazine Publicity material, briefing notes and newsletters
15	Provide relevant and accessible information on services and standards	All tenants will be advised three times a year through on the house and the Tenants' Calendar. Other information will be given as appropriate	On the House & Calendar Annual Open House event and support materials Briefing sessions Neighbourhood Forum Events Develop tenant information PKC Website Tenant Participation Updates Letters to individuals	Magazine and Tenants' calendar Minutes of Planning Groups Programme of events Communication action plans Event Reports & Supporting Information Improvement Programme summary for Registered Tenant Organisations Performance Information Reports Tenant Participation Updates Letters to tenants eg Rent Restructuring; Rent Increase, Improvement Service

Key Outcome 4

We will work with all tenants and residents, Perth and Kinross Tenants' & Residents' Federation and our partners to review how we support and develop tenant participation in Perth and Kinross.

Action Ref No	Specific Action	Timescale	Output	Evidence
16	Review future federation support requirements	March 2010 onwards	Establish joint review group with the Council and other stakeholders Consider future options Report to and consult Federation membership and PKC Support the development of The Federation Business Plan 2010-13	Working group role and remit Consultation results Committee report The Federation Business Plan 2010-13 Presented to Committee
17	Develop Forum Network	June 2010 onwards	Agree role and remit for the Forum Network Hold quarterly Forum Network Meetings	Notes of meetings Number of Forum Network Members Network News produced

Key Outcome 5

We will regularly monitor and review this strategy to ensure it continues to be effective

Action Ref No	Specific Action	Timescale	Output	Evidence
18	Establish Joint Tenant Participation Strategy Monitoring and Implementation Group	Convene March 2010	Setting up a joint implementation, monitoring and review group with tenants, elected members and other stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the strategy. Monitoring will take place to evaluate inputs, outputs and outcomes	Minutes of meeting Reports Consultation action plans
19	Reviewing the strategy annually to ensure we are meeting our objectives and to set new targets	Report annually in April	Annual strategy review	Annual strategy review reported to relevant Council committee
20	Review of tenant satisfaction with participation structures	Annually	Federation survey membership feedback Monitoring of local tenant association action plans Feedback from Forum Network	Report Targets achieved Report

Appendices

The following Appendices are available on request from Diana Finnie, Tenant Participation Admin, 5 Whitefriars Cresecent , Perth PH2 0PA
Telephone 01738 476165 or by email to: TenantParticipation@pkc.gov.uk

- Appendix 1 – Guidance notes on registration of tenant groups**
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