SURE Team Fourth Scrutiny Report

Review of PKC's Tenant Participation Strategy 2014-2017 for Council Tenants

Presented to PKC's Housing Management Team

On Monday, 20th February 2017

By the

SURE Team

Foreword

Perth and Kinross Council's (PKC) Housing Service has been working with their tenants and service users to develop their approach to scrutiny for two reasons: firstly, to ensure that housing services are delivered to a high standard and secondly, to place tenants and service users as customers at the heart of the business.

A staff/tenant working group, the Scrutiny Implementation Group, developed terms of reference for the Service User Review and Evaluation (SURE) Team in 2014. These are to:

- Take an independent view of Perth & Kinross Council's Housing Service performance.

- Prioritise and oversee service users' review and evaluation activities.

- Collect and examine evidence to enable housing services to be reviewed and evaluated.

- Report recommendations to senior management, Convenor, Vice Convenor and Committee as appropriate.

- Monitor and review agreed annual action plans.

- Tell other service users what the SURE Team is doing and encourage them to get involved.

- Validate the Annual Performance Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

To ensure independence, the Council agreed that the SURE Team will be supported by an Independent Advisor (IA), with Council staff having a liaison role to enable their activities. PS Consultants was appointed by the SURE Team as the IA for 12 months in August 2014. With the agreement of the SURE Team, the Council has extended the IA contract twice, each for another 12 months to run until 31st August 2017, when the contract will be reviewed and if agreed re-tendered.

SURE Team members are:

Liz Dewar (Chair for this scrutiny exercise)

Christina Stewart

Derek Wilkie

Katrina Whyte

Drummond Faichney

Drummond Faichney was not involved in the detailed evidence gathering and discussions which form the basis of this fourth scrutiny exercise for health reasons, but he continues to be a valued member of the SURE Team.

CONTENTS

We **thank all staff for their time and patience** in providing information to our questions for this scrutiny, the Customer Engagement Team for administrative support, including the bookings of rooms, refreshments and help with our research to enable us to complete this scrutiny.

Review of PKC's Tenant Participation Strategy 2014-2017 for Council Tenants

Section 1: Introduction and Approach

1.1   Introduction

Tenant Participation in Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) is our fourth full scrutiny exercise. It is, however the first one where we, the SURE Team, are both the scrutineers and part of what is being scrutinised. So we have not found it as easy to be as objective about this scrutiny topic as in previous work for two reasons:

a. Tenant scrutiny is now a firmly established part of the PKC's system of tenant participation carried out mainly through our work as the SURE Team, and

b. This particular scrutiny differs in that it is intended to lead directly to the production of a new 3 year Tenant Participation Strategy (2017-20) to be written (at least in draft form) by us, the SURE Team.

Even so we have followed what has become our template for tackling scrutiny work in respect of setting out the context, the approach, the evidence we gathered, analysis, conclusions and our recommendations.

This report has five sections:

Section 1 - Sets out the **Introduction** and our **Approach**

Section 2 - Summarises some of the **general issues around tenant participation**

Section 3 – Sets out the **current structure of tenant participation** in Perth and Kinross and the **results from our evidence**

Section 4 -   Takes **our ideas forwards,** based on the evidence we have gathered, as issues we think should be considered in the Council's next Tenant Participation (TP) Strategy

Section 5 - Draws together our main **conclusions and recommendations**.

1.2   Our Approach

The Council's 3 year Tenant Participation (TP) Strategy was approved by the Housing and Health Committee on 14 March 2014. We chose TP for this scrutiny because:

a. The TP Strategy is due for review and updating by the Council

b. We wanted to know how effective the TP Strategy has been and what it has achieved in the last 3 years

c. As tenants active within the Council's current TP Strategy, as SURE Team members, through our involvement in other district-wide strategic TP activities, and in our local communities, we wanted to help shape the Council's next TP Strategy from 2017-2020

d. The Housing Management Service was restructured in October 2015 around four areas teams supported by central specialist services, which includes the Customer and Community Engagement team that is responsible for TP. We asked ourselves whether the future TP Strategy should be designed to reflect the new housing management structure, and if so, what would TP look like?

e. We hope that the next TP Strategy will continue to find ways to encourage more tenants to become involved with their landlord to improve the Housing Service.

1.3   Our Method

We decided to take **an overview approach**. We looked at the TP activities that are being delivered across the PKC area supported by the Council's centrally based specialist Customer and Community Engagement staff team, and, at the various local TP activities that are happening in the four Locality or Housing Management Areas.

We collected information and evidence during October- December 2016. We completed this scrutiny as set out in the timetable in Appendix 1.

We:

a. Examined the Council's current and previous TP Strategy and related information as listed in Appendix 2; we considered the range of TP activities or the 'menu' that are offered to tenants (Appendix 3); the staff and non-staff resources that are available to support TP (Appendix 4); we talked about the changing context in which TP has taken place during the last six years; and we referred back to our own assessment of the performance of the Housing Service under the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR's) Housing Charter Outcome 3 which relates to Tenant Participation (Appendix 9)

b. Looked at the TP Strategies of other Council's: Aberdeen City (not dated, but the timetable refers to actions in 2011 and 2012); Aberdeenshire Council (2009-2012) and North Ayrshire Council's Customer Engagement Strategy to compare their approach to that of PKC in developing their TP programmes as council landlords

c. Interviewed three staff in the Customer and Community Engagement team and Area Co-Ordinators from three of the four Housing Management Areas using the questions listed in Appendices 5 and 6 respectively

d. We carried out our own SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities) analysis to assess both the TP activities that are delivered and the resources that allow this to happen

(Appendix 7). We used this as the basis for interviews with the Tenant and Community Worker and with the Customer and Community Engagement Team Leader

e. We were given a spreadsheet listing the TP activities that had taken place from 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2016. It was compiled for us by the Tenant and Community Engagement Worker using staff diaries from the Customer and Community Engagement team and other information. We were told it should include at least 90% of all TP activities that were delivered in that 18 month period. We grouped the TP activities listed into eight separate categories. We have summarised our findings in Appendix 8 to identify the outputs resulting from the Council's menu of TP opportunities and to put a value on them. We have made the data and analysis available in a separate spreadsheet

f. As a Team we talked about the information and evidence we collected to draw out our findings, conclusions and recommendations in this Report and to prepare our presentation to the Housing Management Team.

Section 2: An Overview of Tenant Participation

2.1. Tenant Participation: what do we mean by it?

We are aware that there has been much debate over the years about how to define and understand the nature of 'tenant participation'. The term itself probably has its origins in the 1950's. Subsequently, there have been many attempts to re-brand it.

In some cases this meant substituting **'involvement'** for 'participation'. In others, and more recently, the more radical term **'empowerment'** has sometimes been used instead of participation, as has the slightly less radical **'engagement'**.

Some landlords have preferred to replace the word 'tenant' with **'resident'** to better express its application to what (as a result of Right-to-Buy) have become multi-tenure social housing areas. Others, and particularly Housing Associations', have chosen to use the word **'customer'** to emphasise the nature of the consumer / supplier relationship that exists between tenant and landlord. We think the term 'customer' seems to narrow down the potential scope of the discussion and participation, into a more limited expression of choice or preference.

'Tenant participation' is still the best term to use so long as the activities of what we have defined as 'tenant participation' are predominantly funded by the HRA (and thus in large part by the rents of council tenants). We agree that the pre-fix 'Tenant' is the right one. This does not mean that those processes should exclude the broader class of residents (freeholders and any leaseholder). On the contrary, we recognise that in much of the work council tenants will be involved in within local communities will benefit greatly from the participation of those residents. We are clear that where actions and interventions are mainly resourced by the HRA then council tenants should be in the lead. The term 'tenant participation' is the correct general heading to classify these activities (Recommendation 1).

The current PKC Tenant Participation Strategy does not give a formal definition of tenant participation but (under the heading 'Our Vision and Aims') it does give a clear statement of what tenant participation should achieve, and we endorse it:

" **Supporting people to get involved in matters that are important to them and their neighbourhoods, building relationships with staff, and building bridges in communities**" (PKC TP Strategy, 2014 S2.1).

Our definition is that tenant participation properly refers to: ***the processes and structures by means of which all PKC tenants and service users have the opportunity to influence both the setting of policies for council housing services and the nature of service delivery for council housing and, with other residents, be involved in estate, neighbourhood and community issues.*** (Recommendation 2)

The objectives or outcomes of PKC's system of tenant participation will be very much those already described above in the TP Vision statement: real opportunities to shape the communities in which people live; building links with PKC staff; and creating self-help and support networks in those communities.

2.2.   The Legislative & Regulatory Background to TP

The most relevant legislative and regulatory requirements in respect of tenant participation are the:

- **2001 Housing Scotland Act** (and the 2002 SEDD circular 7/2002 consequent upon the Act);
- **2012 Scottish Social Housing Charter** (consequent upon the 2010 Housing (Scotland) Act; and,
- **2015 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill** (passed in 2014 but only receiving Royal Assent in 2015).

2.2.1   The 2001 Act and SEDD circular 7/2002

The requirements for tenant participation in the 2001 Housing Act were strongly influenced by the provisions of the National Strategy for Tenant Participation (**'Partners in Participation'**) that had been published in 1999. The SEDD Circular 7/2002 provided guidance on the implementation of Part 2 (Chapter 3) of the 2001 Act, in which those requirements were set out.

Section 53 of the Act set out two principal duties on social landlord to:

- **Prepare a tenant participation strategy** aimed at achieving continuous improvement in services consistent with best value principles which would be prepared and developed in consultation with tenants, and
- Give what were called 'tenant associations' a formal status as **'Registered Tenant Organisations' (RTOs)** and required landlord to **set up and maintain a register** of such RTOs.

Section 54 of the Act gave guidance on how tenants generally, and RTO's in particular, were to be consulted on: policies in relation to management, maintenance, and repair of council homes; service standards; the tenant participation strategy; and propose disposals of land or other assets.

Section 55 set out requirements in respect of tenant management agreements between a landlord and a Tenant Management Co-operative.

We have noted that the provisions in the 2001 Act very much reflected the thinking of the 1990's to the effect that tenant participation was essentially about the operation of formal systems and structures. The requirements around RTOs were the most important examples of this. As we note in other places in this report, the more modern approach puts much more emphasis on flexible, less formal methods of participation. This has been called a 'menu' approach to tenant participation. (Recommendation 3)

2.2.2   The 2012 Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC)

The SSHC, whose provisions are monitored by the Scottish Social Housing Regulator (SSHR), contains only one 'outcome' measure for Tenant Participation amongst its suite of 16 outcomes. This single outcome is **Charter Outcome 3**. It requires that:

'Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with,'

which we see as being consistent with the 'menu' approach.

'This outcome describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants and other customers to become more capable of involvement' (SSHC 2012 p6)

From our experience in the last two years of assessing the overall performance of the Council's Housing Service in respect of all 16 Charter Outcomes, we have graded PKC's performance for the last two years (2014/15 and 2015/16) in respect of Charter 3 Tenant Participation as 'green'. We defined this as showing progress in terms of the achievements realised in both years with the setting out of a clear forward plan for the next twelve months. (Appendix 9)

2.2.3 The 2015 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act - CESA

The most recent piece of relevant legislation affecting tenant participation is the Community Empowerment Act 2015 which we think has **the potential to be the most radical legislative framework that will intersect with tenant participation systems and structures.**

In essence the CESA '**sets out a plan for empowering the people of Scotland**. This means that everyone can get involved and help make important decisions' (Scottish Govt. Policy Memorandum 2014 p 2).

There are **four sections** that we think are relevant to tenants (working collectively) in their local communities. Each sets out **rights** (not just requests) for individual and groups working in their communities to influence decisions in respect of land, buildings and policies that shape their neighbourhoods. These are:

Part 2 Community Planning

Part 3 Participation Requests

Part 3 Community Rights to Land

Part 4 Asset Transfer Requests

These potentially fit well with a much greater emphasis on delivering tenant participation in local communities (and by local housing teams) which form Recommendation 4, and the recent restructuring of Housing Management service delivery into four Locality or Area teams.

2.3   The Numbers Game

It is undoubtedly true that most landlords, and many tenant activists, worry about the number of tenants who are actually prepared to participate with their landlord in the housing management decision making process.

But, in addressing this issue we think that three inter-related issues tend to get rather mixed up with each other. They need to be separated from each other if we are to address them properly. These three are:

2.3.1 How many tenants participate?

As described above, we know that most landlords worry about the absolute number (or percentage) of their tenants that they succeed in involving on a regular basis through specifically identified 'tenant participation' activities. When the number, or percentages are thought to be 'low' (which they often are), it tends to raise questions about the value for money represented by expenditure on TP.

The first problem here is that there are no established or generally accepted quantitative yardsticks to tell landlords what would constitute a 'good' number in this regard. Landlords simply have to develop their own specific criteria to make those judgements, and these will clearly vary from landlord to landlord.

Second, the judgements that are made about numbers often owe more to a landlord's PR requirements than they do to any objective criteria. So the headline '175 tenants attend our Annual Conference!' has a much more positive ring than '1.75% of our tenants attend our Annual Conference!' (assuming the landlord has 10,000 tenants). So landlords tend to make their judgements about the value for money of TP on the basis of absolute numbers (where these seem impressive) rather than percentages.

Yet we know from past national surveys that the proportion of social housing tenants who express *any* interest in getting involved at any level with their landlord is relatively low. Surveys by the Scottish Government, and what was then the TSA in England, carried out in 2008 and 2009 showed similar figures i.e. **40% only of tenants said they wanted involvement of some kind with their landlord.** For PKC this would translate to **approximately 3,000 households** (with an average of one tenant per household) who fell into that category, although the actual number would be increased by the presence of joint tenancies. But it does indicate that the total number of tenancies is not a realistic guide to any evaluation of the take-up of participation opportunities (which should realistically be around 40% of the total number of tenancies).

We do believe that the absolute numbers and percentages of tenants who get involved are relevant considerations. The more that are involved directly, the less pressure on those activists to act as the major communicant of information and ideas back to their communities. Indeed, we have been concerned ourselves to boost our own numbers on the SURE Team. The Council has to assess this being realistic about the number of tenants who might be willing to engage with the landlord to improve service delivery. We think that an equal emphasis should be placed on the *outcomes* of participation and its achievements irrespective of the actual numbers of tenants involved in it. In monitoring and assessing performance the Council should ask: 'Has it demonstrably helped improve policy development and service delivery?' (Recommendation 5)

2.3.2 Apathy

The term that is most often used to characterise the reluctance of more than a small number or percentage of tenants to get involved is 'apathy'. As commonly used it signifies a lack of interest, or a complete dis-interest. The causes of such 'apathy' are generally held to be laziness, selfishness, or simply ignorance on the part of the 'apathetic'. In other words, apathy is held to be a personal failing.

It is also true that many tenants do not know how the system is meant to work: who tenants should talk to; what is the scope of the Housing Department's responsibility?; where the Housing Service has

to work with other Council departments and/or external agencies; what role and extent of influence Councillors do have?

Most tenants have busy lives, with many different commitments. Some face many different pressures which impact on their ability to cope. Taking part in collective activities, meeting and talking with other tenants and residents is not something many people nowadays place a priority on, or want to do, unless it is about issues that are of direct concern to themselves, their home or their families.

Some tenants do not have the time, the interest or inclination to become an involved tenant. Apathy can also be an outcome as well as a cause. That is: we think that what comes to be classed as 'apathy' may actually be the **result** of a perception by some tenants that getting involved achieves nothing because 'the council doesn't listen' or 'nothing ever changes'. As SURE Team members we have heard this said. Whether these perceptions are accurate or not is not the point, once they become fixed in people's minds they become the reality for them.

The Council's strategies for 'combatting apathy' have to recognise that non-engagement may be a perfectly logical response for some tenants. The strategies used should not simply be about trying to overcome laziness, selfishness or whatever other personal failing 'apathetic' tenants are thought to have. The Council has to set out what tenants can and can't influence as a result of the various types of TP activities in its menu. The Housing Service has to be willing to listen to and to respond to that feedback, whether it is to agree or disagree. By giving feedback and reasons tenants then know that their input has been considered and that they are being informed by the Council of the outcome and where appropriate of what the next steps are. (Recommendation 6)

2.3.3 Representativeness

Another consequence of a concern with the number who get involved is that landlord then begins to worry about the social and demographic composition of the relatively small number / percentages who do participate. The question most asked of this group of TP activists is: 'Are they representative?' We think this is a mis-placed concern, for three reasons:

- First, the test of 'representativeness' being applied is, implicitly at least, that of *statistical* representativeness as it is used in survey research. Here, researchers construct a sampling frame which contains cells that represent an agreed set of socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, length of residence, etc.) and look to populate that frame with the same proportions of people that are found in the whole population from which the sample is drawn. So if, say, 8% of people in the population as a whole have a certain socio-demographic characteristic then the researcher will look to construct a sampling fame in which 8% of people in the sample also have those characteristics. Now it is clear that tenants activists (i.e. those who are regularly involved in tenant participation activities) are, by definition, a *self*-assembled group. That is, it is made up of those who volunteer to be involved and the chances of that group matching the socio-demographic characteristics of tenants as a whole is very small So this group is almost bound never to be representative in that statistical sense

- Second, it is also true that landlords rarely attempt to assemble 'representative' tenant participants with any degree of precision. What often happens is that they realise that certain socio-demographic groups are almost entirely absent from amongst those who do take up tenant

participation activities and so they look to recruit 'more' young people, people from BME communities, or people with disabilities, etc., but without any clear yardstick to tell them when 'more' means 'enough' or 'adequate'. Just getting 'more' such people involved is usually judged to be a success

- Third, we think that this concern with 'representativeness' deflects attention from the real role of tenant activists which is to give *a* tenant perspective, not to pretend to give **the** tenant perspective. In any case, the only true sense in which one could identify 'the' tenant perspective is if every tenant has given their views (by whatever means) on council housing issues - an entirely hypothetical world for any social landlord, except those with a handful of homes.

So, for us, the measure of the worth of tenant participation is the extent to which it gives a landlord a tenant perspective on its work that it would not otherwise have, and which clearly contributes to making the service better than it would have been without that tenant input. (Recommendation 7)

2.4.   Formal and Informal Methods of Tenant Participation

As we noted above, the 2001 Act, with its emphasis on the role of tenant *organisations* and on the adoption of formal Tenant Participation Strategies reflected the thinking on tenant participation of the 1990s. What this approach sought to do was to remedy what was perceived to be a weakness in the way that landlords had conventionally facilitated tenant participation i.e. they had treated it as a largely **discretionary** exercise.

The rationale here was that whilst many landlords did clearly want to see robust tenant participation procedures as part of their operation, the ability of the landlord to determine how this would work cut across a more general right of tenants to self-determination. So, for example, if tenants formed local organisations to argue for their interests landlord could choose not simply how, but whether they were even prepared, to respond in a positive way.

So the Act legislated for the right of tenants to form such organisations (RTOs) and put a requirement on landlords not simply to recognise and respond to them, but also gave the RTOs rights, in consultation, in relation to their landlord. In the same vein, the requirement for landlords to develop formal Tenant Participation Strategies in consultation with their tenants meant that tenants could now have a direct say in agreeing the overall objectives and methods of tenant participation within their landlord's sphere of operations.

This, then, was a view of tenant participation as very much bound up with the establishment and operation of formal organisations and formal procedures. The problem was that just as this approach was being introduced national UK thinking on public participation generally was changing. With the Scottish Government in its infancy the policy influence of national UK bodies, such as the Audit Commission, was considerable in the early part of this century. What the Audit Commission in particular was keen to see was the development of *informal* methods of participation, including tenant participation, in some cases to augment formal methods and in others to replace them.

Their reasoning was that formal methods tended to discriminate against, for example, BME communities, the disabled, those whose first language was not English, the less literate, and so on.

These groups, it was argued, could not easily take up the opportunities for participation and thus participation systems built on those principles were almost bound to exclude people from those groups.

The thinking in tenant participation, particularly in England, then began to turn to the development of what became known as the '*menu'* approach. This simply meant that landlord should develop a wide range of opportunity mechanisms that did not require tenants to be members of formal organisations, or indeed to have any contact with them. It meant landlords devising more *individual* methods of participation as opposed to the more *collective* methods implied in the formal approach.

Housing associations across the UK, which had usually had much less formal TP structures then council landlords in any case, found this approach particularly congenial. Council landlords, including those in Scotland, on the other hand found it far more difficult to strike a balance between the formal systems, which they were required to build following the 2001 Act, and the informal 'menu' systems which this new approach advocated.

To complicate matters, and based on our conversations with tenants from other areas in Scotland that we have as SURE Team members when we attend networking events, we know that many landlords are now struggling to sustain their RTO structures. The number of involved tenants is dropping as are the absolute number of RTOs themselves.

We recognise, then, that there is often a tension between the maintenance of formal structures, of which such things as RTOs, our SURE Team, the PKC Quality Panel are examples, and the need to have involvement mechanisms at the local (often individual) level.

Striking the right balance between strategic (centrally delivered) and local collective opportunities for Tenant Participation is an issue which the next PKC Tenant Participation Strategy will have to acknowledge and resolve. (Recommendation 8)

2.5.   Resources for Tenant Participation

It is also generally accepted that a proper system of tenant participation cannot exist without a dedicated budget to support it. Most landlords have such budgets. There is no guidance on how much should be spent or what should be included.

There are benchmarking data on such budgets within Scottish landlords. But, and we have said this in our previous scrutiny reports, we are not yet convinced that they provide a reliable resource for an evaluation such as this. The problem lies in the way such budgets are constructed.

The most common budgetary items in TP budgets are:

- Design, print, and distribution costs (e.g. for tenant newsletters/ handbooks)
- Conferences and Training
- Reimbursement of tenant expenses: travel and caring
- Consultancy support in some cases
- Venue , Catering, and Transport
- IT equipment
- Grants to tenant/community organisations

- Office costs (usually where there is a Tenant Federation or similar)
- Staff costs (where allocated to a TP budget)

In terms of benchmarking these costs (and expressing them as spend per property) the problem is that there are so many different practices involved. Most landlords see the TP Budget as involving non-staff costs items. But some clearly roll some elements of staff costs into them. Some charge all their print and distribution costs to the TP budgets, but others charge on a portion to that budget (e.g. where 'tenant participation' material is included with a more general landlord mail-out. Some include the total of the grants they give to local groups in their TP budgets whilst others account for these in other (e.g. community development) budgets. Finally, some landlords include spend on cultural and leisure activities (gardening clubs, DIY courses, etc) within TP budgets and others don't.

But however the budgets are constructed they are essentially about *costs* i.e. what a landlord spends to support its TP activities. There seems to be little attention to what **value** is **contributed** by the activities of involved tenants which these costs support.

We think that budgets should be seen as involving both **inputs** (i.e. the costs incurred by the landlord) and **outputs** (the value created by tenant participation. (Recommendation 9)

Section 3 – Our Evidence

3.1. Review of TP Strategy 2014-17

3.1.1 The Council's current 3 year TP Strategy was:

a. Developed in partnership with tenants and service users with the aim of 'Supporting people to get involved in matters that are important to them and their neighbours, building relationships with staff and building bridges in communities'

b. Based on accreditation by The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) of PKC's TP activities to update the previous 3 year TP Strategy recognising that "the Council has developed an inclusive and representative approach to involving tenants which allows choice and flexibility, influence at both strategic (PKC wide) and local levels, and opportunities to appeal to tenants of different age groups and interests."

c. About continuing the shift in approach due to the decline in interest from tenants wanting to be part of traditional tenant group structures (the Federation and RTOs) and from working primarily with tenant representatives to directly engaging with tenants. The TP Strategy continues partnership working with individual RTOs and local tenant and resident groups to achieve local initiatives / improvements. Recently more effective working relationships have been established with the Gypsy community living on the Council's static site. The Thematic Forums have been used to develop new strategic working relationships eg with the 'Homeless Voice', 'Us and the Housing', and the Older Persons Forum designed to appeal to specific sections of the community: homeless people, tenants with learning difficulties and older residents respectively to identify their issues and to address their concerns. The TP Forum has successfully been used to initiate discussion and obtain feedback on aspects of housing service delivery

d. Praised by TPAS for increasing the opportunities for tenants to shape and influence service delivery arising from the setting up of: the Resident Academy, the SURE Team, Mystery Shopping, The Quality Panel as four new initiatives; for seeking to pilot new ways of communicating with tenants; to support the involvement of people following on from their learning and up-skilling both in district-wide strategic matters and to improve local neighbourhoods and communities, and to build relationships with area housing staff, senior housing managers and elected members

e. Designed to meet the priorities of: invest in more learning opportunities for people; explore the use of social media and the continued use of texting; increased opportunities for people to be involved in decisions which affect their neighbourhoods; and to continue to develop and implement housing scrutiny activities

3.1.2 The current Strategy recognises that TP is a continually evolving process which has to adapt to changes in demand, service delivery priorities, working practices, interests and perceptions. **It is clear that considerable progress and achievements have been made over the last 3 years**. New ground has been broken through the pioneering type of initiatives that have been introduced, sometimes as a direct outcome of tenant learning and personal development, certainly at the strategic level. Whilst we

recognise these significant achievements, the next 3 year TP Strategy has to continue this progress by offering new and relevant TP opportunities with a greater focus on tenant participation at the level of the four management areas (although with target setting by the PKC Customer Engagement Team).

3.1.3 As TPAS said in its Evaluation Report of 9 December 2013:
"It might still not be clear to tenants how all the various TP structures and activities fit together to make up the Council's TP Strategy." We think this is still the case.

We know that the Council's magazine 'On the House', TP Updates, information online and on the Web site including the 'You Said... We Did' updates, texting, letters, mail shots and invitations are all used to raise awareness and to encourage tenants to take part. No communication system is perfect. Some tenants will only respond if the invitation to get involved strikes a chord with them at that particular moment in time. It might be worth the Editorial Group and or the Quality Panel reviewing the Council's TP information again to try to ensure communication is appropriate and timely in respect of the TP opportunities that will be promoted in the next 3 year Strategy. For each TP opportunity, the Housing Service should explain to tenants the purpose of their involvement, what type change it might lead to, and define the limits of tenant involvement.

3.2. The TP Budget - Staff and non-staff costs

The Council makes a staff and non-staff cost budget (Appendix 4) available to manage, develop and deliver TP activities and to service the various TP structures. In 2014/15 the non-staff cost budget was around £101,600. In 2015/16 this has fallen to £91,800. This is an average a fall from £13.83 per household to £12.31, based on 7,457 households in April 2016.

This non -staff budget is supplemented by support from the Customer and Community Engagement staff team based around 6 specialist post- holders (providing the equivalent of approximately 4 full time posts), service specific advice from other Senior Managers to facilitate participation initiatives eg The Rent Restructure Review, and from housing staff in the four Housing Management Area Teams and, as required, other council staff teams eg the Safer Communities Team support some community based initiatives, or staff from external agencies may be involved.

The TP budget has also paid for external consultancy advice and support to enable specific TP initiatives to be delivered: The IA support for each of the SURE Team, the Rent- Restructure Project, and the Mystery Shopping. We believe the TP Budget has been used successfully to initiate new TP activities. These in turn have impacted positively on housing service improvement.

3.3. Our Witness Evidence

As SURE Team members we interviewed:

a. Three members of the TP Team about their specialist work respectively in helping to achieve with the homeless, through the piloting of the new digital inclusion project, and tenant training/capacity development. These initiatives have achieved many diverse learning outcomes: to prepare the way for tenants to cope better in their own lives; to support them to sustain a tenancy; to have their say by engaging with the Council as the landlord; and by becoming

involved in new strategic initiatives eg the SURE Team, Mystery Shopping or the Estate Based Initiatives (EBIs) in the Localities.

We discussed the potential of these types of initiatives to develop individual life skills for tenants and to apply the learning to improve housing services or neighbourhoods. The drive and commitment of the staff in the central Customer and Community Engagement Team are apparent. The wider community engagement remit and network of contacts of the Team Leader could help take TP activities forwards linked into the Council's evolving agenda around delivering community planning and locality working. (Recommendation 12)

b. Three Area Co-Ordinators to identify the type of TP involvement and the capacity of the Locality Team staff to further support the development and delivery of TP activities within their Locality Area. There is no budget for TP locally. If opportunities are identified, local Housing Officers would bid for funding from the central support services, including to the Customer Engagement Team from the TP budget which has provision of up to £1,000 for RTO's and local groups to get involved in initiatives to improve their area.

This obviously takes time. Staff may need training and support. We wondered whether this could be achieved by short term and/or part time secondment from the Customer and Community Engagement team to train and advise area staff to successfully engage tenants in TP in their area. This might be to get a pilot or a pioneering local initiative up and running, based around the next generation of Estate Based Initiatives, or linked to new opportunities that might stem from the implementation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015 Act.

3.4 Analysis of TP Contact (April 2015-September 2016)

3.4.1 Introduction

One of the things we were keen to look at was the range of TP events during the year to get a feel for the amount of contact between PKC staff and PKC customers (and we have used 'customers' here, and not our preferred 'tenants, because a significant proportion of that contact proved to be with homeless people – not all of whom go on to become council tenants).

Diana Finnie from the Customer and Community Engagement team did a heroic job in pulling together a comprehensive list of all TP activities for the 18 month period from 1st April 2015 to 30th September 2016 from the diaries of the staff in the central Customer and Community Engagement Team. The complete list is split into 3 periods of time during 2015/16 and includes the first six months (April - September) of 2016.

We believe this information accounts for **around 90% of all of the TP activities** that were carried out with council tenants and service users during April 2015-September 2016. If it does under-estimate any TP activities, these are most likely to be in the Locality Teams and carried out without any involvement from staff in the Customer and Community Engagement team.

3.4.2 Purpose

We wanted to do this exercise for two reasons:

- Firstly, we are aware that a cursory glance at the numbers (and certainly the percentages) attending any individual event suggests that attendance is often low. If that is seen as the test of the value of such activities, they will not generally be regarded as successful. In our view, a better test involves looking at the **total number of contact hours that are generated by TP activities,** and

- Secondly to enable us to break down the general heading of Tenant Participation into its main components to look at **the balance** between and amongst them.

3.4.3 Our Categorisation of the Council's TP Activity Programme

We have classed the totality of TP activities into eight categories as follows:

No	Category	Scope of Activity
1.	**Homeless**	The **'Homeless'** category is delivered by the Community Engagement Worker outside of the formal allocations / lettings process. It is the support element provided by PKC for homeless people living in council accommodation to support a significant proportion of them to be able to go on to access and to hopefully sustain a tenancy of their own. This type of work is most successful when it involves this specific client group only. Whilst numbers remain fairly consistent during the 18 month period, we do not know how many people in total came into and through this 'transitionary period of support'
2	**Strategic**	All the TP activities at district-wide level in which tenants are involved: the work of the Housing Quality Panel, tenants reading the Housing Committee Reports, PKC Tenant Conferences, the TP Forum are included here. For ease of analysis we have separately calculated the work of the 'SURE Team' and 'Rent Re-structuring Review'. We do however combine all three components of these district-wide strategic TP activities in our commentary to then assess the balance of TP activity delivered at PKC wide and at area levels
3	**SURE Team**	Tenant-led scrutiny of Housing Service delivery and performance. It has been carried out since August 2014 by trained tenants and service users, advised by an Independent Adviser, PS Consultants an external consultant. The SURE Team has successfully completed 3 individual scrutiny exercises and has assessed the overall performance of the Housing Service in 2014/15 and 2015/16. All evidence, findings and recommendations are presented directly to the Service's Housing Management Team for consideration and action.
4	**Rent-restructure Review**	A specific task which involves tenants working with the Housing Service, specialist consultants supported by an Independent Adviser to discuss and develop future proposals which once finalised will be adopted PKC wide. This task also has an outreach (local) element to it, delivered through the Independent Adviser to widen participation and engagement in this very important landlord function.
5	**Local Initiatives**	The category of 'Local Initiatives' involves a range of TP actions at the local neighbourhood level: area specific RTO's, resident group meetings, Estate Walkabouts, Estate Based Initiatives etc
6	**Training**	The 'Training' category covers that range of events whereby tenants access

		training to support their involvement as tenants with their landlord, including the Academy training. It seeks to up-skill, to enhance life skills and to prepare them for joint working, with other tenants and staff on both strategic and local TP initiatives
7	**Disabled**	Relates to the 'Us and the Housing Group' involvement with tenants who have disabilities, including learning difficulties
8	**Social networks**	These are local activities to bring people together- often older residents - to reduce isolation eg The Dalreoch Friendship Group. Social TP activity seems to be more in demand with the Customer and Community staff team arranging local Tea dances by popular request

3.4.4 Our findings

The TP calendar is attached as a separate spread sheet to this Report. The information in respect of the overall totals is summarised in the table below, on the graphic slide and bar chart in Appendix 8:

Overall PKC 18 Month TP Calendar	Total Number
Total meetings for all TP activities listed	530 meetings
Total Meeting Hours (duration) of these TP activities	1,199 hours
Total number of tenants or participants (attendances)	4,062
Total time spent by participants or 'TP contact hours' generated	8,970

The total recorded hours spent over 18 months on all these TP activities during April 15 – September 2016 by the Council's Housing Service were 1,199 hours, delivered in 530 meetings, held in 45 venues across the district, involving a total of 4,062 attendances and generating a total of 8,970 contact hours by participants in taking part. It is possible that these totals reflect only 90% of all TP activity in this period. If true, on a pro-rata basis, this would suggest an actual total of up to 9,867 contact hours over these 18 months.

The summary table and the bar chart in Appendix 8 show the breakdown of this information into the 8 TP activity groups we used to help us analyse the data across the 18 month period. From this we know that:

a. **The total number of TP contact hours** with tenants and service users was **8,970.** Assuming an 8 hour day this equates to **1,121 days** (or the equivalent of just over **3 years**). If this time is equated to full time council employees, assuming 38 hours per week over 46 working weeks to deduct an average of 6 weeks holiday (1,748 hours per year) this would equate to **the equivalent of 5.1 additional full time employees**

b. The largest individual category of TP activity was with the '**Homeless**'. This was delivered with an average of 7 attendees per meeting but through a programme of 246 meetings. This equates to 46% of all TP meetings held in the 18 month period; it comprises 494 actual hours. In this time the Council's support of homeless people generated 3,398 or **38%** of all TP contact hours.

c. The second largest category was '**Local Initiatives'** which made up 2,056 or **23%** of all contact hours (and this is the category that may be underestimated by the data). On average 10 tenants attended the 110 meetings recorded. We know that the EBI programme and Estate Walkabouts partly account for this. It also shows that other local TP activities and community projects have been operating in local communities even though those may not have had much public recognition. If the social networking or friendship TP activities are added in because they are delivered locally, this would increase **Area TP to 25% of all contact hours.** It would also increase the average attendance as many of the Tea Dances are popular. The social networking activities attract an average attendance of 22 per session.

d. When we **aggregated our 3 district-wide TP categories together** (i.e. by combining 'Strategic', 'SURE Team', and 'Rent Restructuring') we found that collectively these made up 1,919 or approximately **22%** of all TP contact hours. This is slightly less contact hours than generated by 'Local Initiatives' above. This is contrary to the general impression that we had that TP activities are mainly delivered via formal TP structures arranged centrally. Looking at average attendances, this district-wide strategic TP input is being achieved by more meetings (121) and with a lower average attendance of 7 per meeting.

e. 'When broken down into its 3 separate components, 'PKC wide '**Strategic' TP activities** attracted more participants – on average 8 per meeting and generated 813 or 9% of all TP contact hours recorded; the '**SURE Team'** generated 764 of recorded TP contact hours. With an average attendance of 6, the SURE Team met more frequently: 48 SURE team meetings as opposed to 44 for Strategic activities to achieve these contact hours

f. **Training'** accounted for 913 (10%) of all recorded contact hours, generated from 27 sessions, with an average of 6 tenants per session.

g. It was certainly a surprise to us that the largest single block of contact hours (**3,398 over 18 months)** was for TP activities with Homeless people. However, we think this breakdown shows that any claim that the Council's TP activities are overwhelmingly focused on a narrow range of participants who have the ability to respond through formal structures working collectively with other tenants is not true. Clearly, the homeless are generally a much under-represented group in most formal participation structures. Here they are very much part of the participation scene, with consistency in attendance throughout the 18 months, though we do not know how many individual homeless people were involved

h. We were also encouraged to see that **462 contact hours from 21 meetings** (5%) of total TP contact time were generated by participation with tenants with disabilities, including learning difficulties: again another group of people that TP is often accused of by-passing

i. We also know that some work is done with tenants and service users from black and minority ethnic groups, but we have no data on this

j. We were also intrigued to learn that we, as the SURE Team, have generated **764 contact hours** which equates to on average **42.4 hours per month, with an average attendance of 6.** This is well above what was estimated in 2014 when the SURE Team was set up of an assumed average 5 hours per month. Unfortunately SURE Team membership has fallen during this 18 month time frame for various reasons placing more responsibility on those still actively involved. It does however indicate the level of commitment needed for tenant-led scrutiny of Housing Services to be effective

3.4.5 Our conclusions

Given this scale and range of TP activities, the current TP Strategy does seem to have been effective in informing, evaluating and supporting the work of the landlord and in offering a wide menu of opportunities for tenants and service users to engage with the Service at both PKC wide and area levels.

3.5 Valuing Tenant and Resident Volunteering (Volunteer Investment and Value Audit - VIVA)

Performance measurement and accountability have become increasingly important in voluntary work. Attempts to identify the cost and the value/benefits of volunteering have been made. The latter assess the 'outputs' of volunteer programmes i.e. the value of volunteer time as against the 'inputs' i.e. the resources used to support the volunteers. For the landlord this is staff, training, external consultancy, the non -staff cost budget and reimbursement of actual expenses incurred by participants etc. It's a way of acknowledging the scale and significance of the voluntary contribution as 'payback' for the investment made in TP through the Housing Revenue Account.

We have shown above the significant number of contact hours generated by participants in TP activities. We use three alternative ways to give an indication of the monetary value of the voluntary contribution from the three components of **the strategic TP activities where involvement is** related to shaping district-wide policy and improving service delivery. Many participants have been through the Academy training and have been committed to regular attendance building their knowledge and understanding of the Housing Service in the process. Their contribution **totals 1919 contact hours:**

There are several reasonable, realistic ways in which a value could be attributed to the 1919 hours donated, for example at:

a. The April 16 National Living Wage at £7.20 per hour, it would equate to a value of around **£13,817**

b. If you equated this strategic TP input to that say of the national average salary of a Housing Manager (given on-line as currently between £30-45,000 per annum), taking the average at £37,500, an hourly rate of £14.67, the value would equate to approximately **£28,152**, and

c. If the strategic input is valued at say the current on-line rate for a Non -Executive Director for an organisation with a turnover of £1.5m , at £69,000, then the value of the would equate to £27 per hour or **£51,813**

It is useful to have this type of information, but it is important not to focus too narrowly on the economic benefits or 'monetary value' alone. It has the potential to devalue the voluntary contributions if they become too closely tied to the notion that for the landlord it is all about 'saving' money.

It is not about 'saving money'. It is about celebrating a full appreciation of why volunteering is valued, desirable and beneficial to the overall performance of the Council as the landlord to whom the contact time is given eg. **the valuing of different perspectives, experiences and views, which is what TP is trying to achieve to help to shape housing services and to improve service delivery performance**

The value of tenant participation is in enabling a social landlord to fulfil its obligations to all of its tenants by understanding better the needs of the tenants and wider customer base and by ensuring that services are delivered in ways that reflects the needs and priorities of the tenants as service users.

3.6 Issues Arising from the contact hours or volunteer time breakdown

From our assessment, 38% of TP contact time generated is from engagement with the **'homeless'** delivered through 246 meetings. We know membership of this group will be constantly changing during the year. For some council landlords work with the homeless would not be included as part of its TP activities, but in Perth and Kinross it is delivered by the Community Engagement Assistant. Some will go on to become a council tenant or a tenant of other landlords.

This intensive engagement is about helping people to cope, to address the issues in their personal lives, and to move the homeless forwards to obtain a tenancy of their own. We understand from our witness evidence that the Housing Service needs to continue to provide enough intensive support to help those with coping difficulties sustain their tenancy once offered. This would ensure that the benefit of this intensive input and education at the pre-tenancy stage is fully realised.

We also think that the Housing Service should be clear why it accounts for engagement with homeless people within the Tenant Participation programme rather than under the Homeless Support Team (Recommendation 14)

3.7. Comparison of PKC's current TP Strategy with those of other Council landlords

Reading through the current published TP Strategies of Aberdeen City (not dated, but the timetable refers to actions in 2011 and 2012) and North Ayrshire Council's Customer Engagement Strategy and both Councils' website, they reflect a similar approach towards TP structures and activities to that being delivered by PKC.

The formal tenant engagement structures of at least RTOs continue to survive and be supported. There is no mention in either case of an area wide Tenant Federation. TP opportunities show a more diverse 'menu' based approach to delivering tenant participation, some involving joint working with staff.

We have no reason to believe that PKC is out of step with the approach being taken by other council landlords. We believe that PKC has been innovative in the range of new opportunities that it has offered to tenants and service users during its current 3 year TP Strategy.

Whilst at a much reduced level, the Housing Service has continued to maintain funding and practical support for the continuation of the district-wide Tenants Federation. This allows tenants to meet with one another to share information and experience without PKC staff, unless specifically invited to attend.

3.8 Overall TP SWOT Analysis

The SURE Team made its own assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (a SWOT) analysis that the next TP Strategy needs to address. The SURE Team's initial thoughts are listed in Appendix 7. We used the SURE Team's SWOT analysis as the basis for discussion with the Customer and Community Engagement Team Leader and the Tenant and Community Engagement Worker. The key points below reflect our more considered views:

3.8.1 Strengths

- The experience and commitment of the Customer and Community Engagement Team has been **effective in identifying and piloting new TP initiatives**

- This centrally based staff team has the **necessary range of skills**, knowledge and most importantly, good communication skills to build relationships with people

- **The positive backing of the Senior Housing Management Team** for the Customer and Community Engagement Team to try out and to respond to new initiatives

- **The sequential approach to develop TP activities**: to train and support tenants to become active; to provide stepping stones from training into being involved tenants at district-wide or locally through community initiatives designed to improve council housing neighbourhoods; joint staff and tenant training to develop shared understanding and working relationships

- **Short-life Working Groups** have been successful in engaging with tenants and service users on specific topics eg Rent Restructure Review, the review of Sheltered Housing, Policy Reviews and Housing Repairs

- **Some RTO's have been more outward** looking than others in taking an interest in issues beyond housing. This has added to their success, their local impact and contribution and to their longer term relevance and survival eg in Letham and Tulloch

3.8.2 Weaknesses

- The Customer and Community Engagement Team has been **less successful in monitoring and evaluating the TP activities** than in initiating them, particularly those supported by the Locality Teams

- The inability to overcome the feeling from many tenants **that staff don't listen** and that the Housing Service is pushing its own Agenda without first finding out what tenants and the local community think is required

- **Delay in and lack of clarity in feeding back to tenants** after their involvement. This leaves tenants feeling their input is not valued, or at a loss at to know what is agreed, what is to happen next and by when

- **Locality teams have less TP experience**; have limited capacity to respond to tenant-led initiatives due to the demands of the Housing Management service delivery; and some are not clear about how to respond to ideas from tenants so seem to be discouraging

- **Some Locality staff are less willing to work with individual tenants** and/or local community groups who want to raise concerns or introduce change for the better into their neighbourhood. We recommend that the Housing Service should work **with** not against tenants providing that this is approached in an open, inclusive and transparent manner

- **Reduced contact between tenants** because of lack of interest in meeting collectively with other tenants to talk about issues of local concern and the successful use of social media and texting which fills the communication gap etc.

- Some RTOs /groups are **over- dependant on key individuals.** When the drive or energy from the 'willing' person is no longer there to rely on, some RTOs/groups fold eg Blairgowerie RTO. Many tenants do not want to take on the administrative bureaucracy that comes with setting up these types of formal TP structures. Other council landlords have experienced a similar impact from the change in society's attitudes towards voluntary and community activity

- **There is no local promotion of TP** through the Locality Teams to explain the existing TP structures, how tenants can get involved or what this type of involvement might achieve. We know that TP activities in council housing areas can be more visible and high profile with staff, tenants and Councillors all be involved. The Housing Service will need to review and update its TP information and leaflets to explain what the next TP Strategy will offer tenants

3.8.3 Opportunities

- **Digital inclusion** is an exciting opportunity with potential – it enhances individual skills and may lead to more tenants wanting to continue their involvement in the TP programme as well as helping them to cope in an increasingly digital age

- **Community Planning** on estates (as a consequence of the provisions of the Community Empowerment Act) potentially offers a new opportunity for partnership working and engagement at the neighbourhood level. The Housing Service needs to consider how to take this forward, how to get tenants and local communities in areas of council housing to become

involved, possibly advised and practically supported. Could other Council departments help and **could this type of initiative be a focus for training and the catalyst for the next generation of EBIs?**

- **Investment in learning** is a key strength for tenants. Joint learning opportunities for 'tenants and staff' together are very valuable. In future training should be **delivered more in the Locality Teams** to try to draw in more people, to foster positive local working relationships, to help tenants to understand what TP can offer, and to support the upskilling of tenants to be able to work with Area Housing staff and external agencies (Recommendation 23)

- The Locality model is about putting tenants at the 'heart'. Local teams will need support and resources to achieve this. **There is real scope to engage tenants in the work of the Localities Teams.** This will need a cultural change to create a positive 'says YES' attitude, time to be developed and to be embedded. This could include Community Planning in some areas; the Council has to have **Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Health and Social Care** needs to be delivered in each locality based on 'area plans' that tenants and residents are engaged in producing. We understand that work in Letham is helping to pioneer this new approach.

- Ensure **follow-on support**, **resources and trained staff** to continue to build and use the new skills learnt by tenants and staff. The Customer and Community Engagement Team provide much of this support now through the Estate Based Initiatives. Could specific joint working and learning initiatives in the Locality teams help to nurture this approach if introduced on a gradual basis over the next 3 year TP Strategy and with the support of staff in the central TP team?

- Some recent TP initiatives have simply been about bringing tenants together to overcome isolation and loneliness eg the centrally based Tenant and Community Engagement Worker has successfully arranged Tea dances. Some Friendship Groups meet locally. Whilst largely social in nature, these types of activities could still create opportunities to engage with tenants on local issues affecting the Housing Service or the neighbourhood

- **Follow-up on the 700 Interested Person's list** to try to actively engage more tenants in the Council's TP activities The extensive centrally held database of all tenants who have expressed interest in being an involved tenant and those who are already engaged in some way within the Council's Tenant Participation activities is an asset. This could be a specific task to pilot how effective new and updated TP information is in getting a positive interest and to monitor how much active involvement can be generated and sustained

- We agree tenant involvement in **monitoring and evaluating expenditure under the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a key strategic opportunity** that tenants need to be involved in – possibly using the TP budget as a pilot training exercise to develop a template for how to do it. This should be a priority for the Council's next 3 year TP Strategy as a logical extension of tenant-led scrutiny

- **R**estart the TP Monitoring and Evaluation Group** – the SURE Team assisted by other interested tenants could take on this detailed monitoring and evaluation role on a twice a year basis with feedback being presented by these tenants to the TP Forum to give more openness, transparency and wider opportunities for tenants to have their say and/or become aware of the range of TP opportunities that are available to council tenants

- Continue to **support and strengthen the Tenants Federation** as being entirely tenants working for and in the best interests of council tenants by sign posting and advising less experienced tenant representatives, and meeting with Housing Officers by invitation to discuss specific issues

3.8.4 Threats

- **Budget restrictions / constraints** to the Customer and Community Engagement staff team and non-staff cost budgets, and to Locality Teams – the loss of key personnel from the Customer and Community Engagement Team and Locality teams would be very damaging of attempts to expand on the progress made in TP in the next 3 year TP Strategy

- **Lack of interest, ability or capacity of Locality Teams to respond** to local tenants who are interested in TP and who do want to initiate change for the better in their area through an open, proper and inclusive process of engagement

- **Lack of interest from tenants and residents** to attend and take part in the TP initiatives on offer

- The shaping of local agendas by **external forces** and not by tenants

- Other than on a temporary or project specific basis, it would be hard **to re-allocate the resources from the Customer and Community engagement staff team to practically support the four Locality Teams.** This might leave the central team too depleted in terms of staff capacity, its skill base and unable to continue to take an initiating, an overview, and a performance monitoring and evaluation role

3.8.5 Summary Conclusions from the SWOT Analysis

We think that the next TP Strategy needs to consider the points we have made in our TP SWOT analysis. It should build on the strengths; address the weaknesses; look to be progressive and to take forward new TP opportunities; and try to protect itself from the perceived threats. In Section 4 we set out what we think the next 3 year TP Strategy should aim to do.

Section 4 – What our Evidence Suggests for the Next TP Strategy

4.1 Getting the balance between Strategic and Local TP activities

The Housing Service now operates in four Locality or neighbourhood teams: City Central, Letham and Hillyland, Perth North and Perth South. Each differs in terms of concentrations of housing stock and tenant households: City Central and Letham and Hillyland have the more dense concentrations; there are some very rural, dispersed populations in both the North and South area teams. The Housing Service needs to **get the right balance** between TP activities delivered centrally and in each Housing Management area.

The TP menu approach should continue with the **focus shifting more towards local TP** activities. Our analysis in Section 3.4 shows interest is there locally if it can be positively harnessed. The data we used might have underestimated current TP activities at area level, but locally delivered TP is more accessible, is much better supported than most district-wide TP activities, and tenants are keen opportunities which offer social interaction. TP should 'piggy-back' on this. The SURE Team believes that as a minimum each Housing Office could be a base from which to carry out local TP activities.

4.2 New Opportunities for TP in the Localities

In Section 2.2 we set out the future possibly longer term potential under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015 Act. The development of **'Locality Agendas'** will be an important part of the next three year TP Strategy following the restructuring of housing management into the Area teams. We have not been able to research the four opportunities we have listed. Council departments are currently considering the implications of the Act. In some areas the Housing Service might need to work closely with the Council's Neighbourhood Services or local planning teams. Over time, with awareness, advice and support, the Act might stimulate more resident-led initiatives, and the possibility of asset management and transfer. (Recommendation 4)

This may offer a 'new impetus' in the medium to longer term to develop Locality Agendas that all residents can be involved in around: community/neighbourhood issues; methods of delivery and standards for housing and other services with a focus on council housing. In areas of change in land use, of investment in new homes and infrastructure, where a major planning application might impact on the neighbourhood, or where the community want to negotiate to manage or own land or a building in public ownership, the Housing Service would then need to support tenants to play a full part and to facilitate partnership working. It should aim to be forward looking (10-15 years) to link TP into other initiatives which might lead to area based participatory budgeting and agreement of local service delivery plans.

Current examples are Muirton in Bloom, the Loons Brae Partnership where tenants had support from TP and from a council capacity Worker from the hub at Blairgowerie, and the Letham Community Hub, where Lorna Cameron, as the Director of Housing and Community Care services is leading a pilot local consultation to develop a future strategy to deliver integrated care, health and housing outputs.

4.3 Developing the TP Locality Agenda

The TP Locality Agenda should have two strands:

a. A mechanism that allows council tenants and staff to pick up issues or problems and to put right anything that does go wrong

b. A 'local mirroring' of TP work done at the district-wide level. In the case of the SURE Team for example, area based TP should focus on monitoring the implementation of the recommendations that have been accepted by the Housing Management Team or included in the various service improvement plans.(Recommendation 8)

4.4 The role for the Community and Customer Engagement staff team

The current TP Strategy relies upon delivery by the centrally based specialist Customer and Community Engagement staff team**.** The team's future role should be to:

- **Support strategic TP initiatives** around housing policy development and improvement of performance standards, quality and service delivery across the district

- **Pilot and evaluate** new TP initiatives

- **Deliver TP activities with agreed specific client groups** eg the 'homeless' or 'Us and the Housing' etc;

- **Provide tenant training and capacity building**, delivered locally and jointly as staff/tenant training, and to pilot new training opportunities to build on successful initiatives such as the EBIs, Skills with Bills, and Digital Inclusion

- Develop and be responsible for **monitoring TP outcomes** at both the strategic and area levels

- **Support and up-skill area housing staff** to carry out TP activities in the four Locality teams, and

- **Monitor and evaluate** annual TP performance, and review the overall progress in 2020 at the end of the next 3 year Tenant Participation Strategy.(Recommendation 11)

4.5 Addressing the Potential Constraints on Staff Resources Locally

We have to understand the constraints: many of the housing staff are not specifically trained on TP but:

- Area Co-Ordinator and Housing Officer post holders do have this requirement in their job description to:
  'Engage and work with tenants and other customers to pursue opportunities to shape and develop services'

- Housing Assistants are expected to be involved in:

  'Contact and liaison with customers and tenant representatives', and

- Housing staff at all grades have *Customer Care responsibilities* as part of their Specific Job Requirements

There is limited staff capacity due to the demands of housing management. Could the central TP staff kick start this shift by offering specific support: to advise area staff and to develop local effective joint working – staff and tenants/residents – on specific community-led initiatives? This might get more tenants involved and gradually stimulate partnership working locally with other agencies in the public, voluntary and community sectors. The central TP staff could advise the Area Teams on a rotating project specific or part-time basis during the next three year TP Strategy to realise the Locality dimension without undermining the effectiveness of the Customer and Community Engagement team. (Recommendation 22)

4.6 Set a Minimum Level of Access to Tenant Participation activity in each Locality

The Customer and Community Engagement Team should set out the **'minimum level of access'** to TP and how TP would be developed and supported in each Locality team during the next 3 year TP Strategy. (Recommendation 13)

Gradually build on current local TP initiatives; identify new opportunities/issues to be addressed; provide the training/capacity building; share the experience learnt into the more rural parts of each Locality to address their identified problems and concerns.

It would be a '**go with the flow' approach**, working with established and emerging local partners including RTOs where they exist, and nurturing local interest in others. It would mean staff and tenants working together to resolve local issues, without tenants having to take on the additional demands of being on a Committee or managing a voluntary organisation and its finances.

4.7 Set out the TP Structures and Opportunities and the extent of any influence

The landlord has to explain to tenants the limits of the influence that their participation might achieve: what can or cannot be changed through tenant participation by individual or collective involvement and at the local and district-wide levels. If tenants are prepared to meet to discuss issues, providing that a fair and open process is carried out, the views of groups of tenants working together with staff should carry more weight than say an individual tenant who completes a survey form to express his or her own views on an issue or a design preference for their home. An individual tenant should be able to express a personal choice in respect of their home or the type of service they would prefer to receive. Beyond this the views of an individual tenant can only sensibly be considered alongside those of other tenants to reach a collective outcome. (Recommendation 10)

4.8 Giving clear and timely feedback to tenants

Tenants say there is often **not enough or no feedback** following their TP involvement. The giving of clear and timely feedback to involved tenants is crucial to maintain their interest: they need to know what will happen next and when, or what can, or cannot be done, and why. The lack of TP feedback leads tenants to feel they have not been listened to, or that the Agenda is one sided: that of the Housing Service and not one mutually agreed.

It is probably a 'bone of contention' as staff on the other hand, may believe that they have given feedback. If it is not what a tenant wants to hear it may not accepted; it may not be recognised as feedback; it may be forgotten or ignored. Feedback does take staff time. It may involve other costs if it means a letter by post.

There are issues here are around the timing of giving feedback; how it is given; whether or not the feedback contains messages that tenants might not want to hear, in which case it should be put in writing for clarity and the avoidance of doubt. To avoid confusion and disillusionment, we recommend that proper feedback should be built into the TP process as an essential step to achieve successful participation with agreed procedures and timescales for 'feeding back', if possible, without it being too rigid. (Recommendation 15)

4.9 Future Demands on the Council's Non-staff TP budget

It is important that the **TP budget is well spent and that it delivers value for money**. We have not looked at what it should or should not include. If the emphasis is agreed to shift more TP to the Localities, this needs to be reflected in how the budget is spent each year. Many demands will still be the same: publicity; information; venue hire, reimbursement of tenant expenses, training etc.

If new local TP initiatives are piloted then specific budget provision will be required. The Locality teams will need to access or be given a small budget, from the overall TP budget, to kick start and to promote local TP activities in agreement with the Customer and Community Engagement Team.

A budget for external consultancy for Independent Tenant Advice and/or for specialist support might be an on-going requirement: if a second Mystery Shopping exercise is delivered; if the SURE Team continues being advised by its own Independent Adviser; or to **pilot tenant involvement in agreeing the TP and then the Housing Revenue Account budget**. A way of involving tenants to prioritise future demands on these budgets over the next three years should be developed using criteria which anticipate the potential TP outputs and value to the Service and not just simply the initial costs. (Recommendations 16 and 17)

4.10 Planning in advance – a Tenant Participation calendar

The Locality Events in autumn 2016 were arranged at short notice. Though welcomed, their purpose was not clear to tenants; promotional information was not targeted as well as it might have been; attendance was generally low.

In future the Housing Service should plan these type of key TP dates well in advance, based we suggest around one central event and one in each Locality. This will allow a good lead-in period to successfully raise awareness, give time to get tenants/residents involved, enable staff from the central and area teams to work together to share skills, learn from one another, and to make these open information 'events' as effective as possible.

The Housing Service could agree an **annual Tenant Participation Calendar** of the key events when the annual Housing Management performance is reviewed and as targets are set for the Service. The piloting of this approach might be sensible as part of the gradual roll out of tenant participation in the Locality teams. (Recommendation 18)

4.11 Update and tailor TP information to raise awareness and involvement

Tenants need to be aware of the TP programme; what participation aims to achieve; understand the menu of TP activities to include opportunities at district-wide level and locally to respond to local issues, concerns and opportunities and to mirror in each Locality the district-wide TP programme; tenant training and capacity building should be delivered in, and tailored to the needs of each Locality. Information to promote TP should be prepared with tenants, and be widely advertised and available in central and all area housing offices, on line and via social media. The Tenant Participation calendar and a short TP hand-book for tenants should be part of the wider TP information available to council tenants

4.12. Monitoring and Evaluation of Tenant Participation Activities

The Tenant Participation Monitoring Group has folded. We agree on the **need to re-establish the Tenant Participation monitoring function.** This could be done as part of the on-going development of the role for the SURE Team in leading on tenant-led scrutiny, but with the involvement of other tenants and service users for this specific TP function. We suggest the TP monitoring should be carried out twice a year, based on a series of agreed assessment criteria, with a full report back of for discussion at the TP Forum. This will give more openness and transparency. It might well become a stepping stone to invite interest in the district-wide scrutiny role of the SURE Team or to develop local scrutiny of the implementation of agreed scrutiny actions by the Area teams.(Recommendation 19)

4.13 Consider further Mystery Shopping Exercises?

The Mystery Shopping project focused on how well the Housing Services met the Council's customer service standards. Like the SURE Team the first Mystery Shopping exercise in 2014/15 was facilitated by an external Independent Tenant Adviser, the Tenant Information Service (TIS) to provide training and advice to the tenants and service users involved, to set up and to support its delivery, and to analyse and presentation the results.

The SURE Team had understood there would be a continuing role for Mystery Shopping, with one exercise used to collect evidence for a tenant-led scrutiny exercise and /or where appropriate, to

monitor the progress and impact of the implementation of scrutiny recommendations eg those from the 'Communications Around Repairs' Scrutiny in each Management Area.

The Customer and Community Team Leader said that: "Mystery Shopping has not been re-run because as a project it came to an end with all the recommendations that were accepted being put into place and like the complaints scrutiny some of the longer term activities (such as staff training and IT) were rolled on to the service improvement plan.

The Quality Panel undertook follow-up activity to monitor improvements undertaken in relation to reception areas. This was reported back to the relevant housing managers, to the wider TP Forum on two occasions about the progress of the recommendations, and on the Council's website. A further follow up meeting with the Mystery Shoppers was cancelled when only one tenant confirmed their attendance.

A second Mystery Shopping exercise has not been ruled out if required to support any scrutiny or service improvement activities. This option is open for discussion.

One of the barriers we are aware of in considering Mystery Shopping with actual customers is data protection. The Council cannot share the personal details of tenants. This would need to be considered to find a way to overcome this without breaching regulations."

Some budget provision should be made to repeat a Mystery Shopping exercise in the Council's next three year TP Strategy. The Mystery Shopping should work alongside the assumed continuation of the SURE Team to gather evidence for a new scrutiny, and/or to follow-up on the impact of how well agreed scrutiny recommendations have been delivered and the consistency of implementation in the four Housing Management Areas. This proposal would enable TP activities to be 'more –joined up', even as a one-off exercise. (Recommendation 20)

4.14 Contact the list of 700 interested persons from the last Tenant Satisfaction Survey

We know from the HMT annual feedback to SURE Team on the Housing Service performance reviews that the success rate has increased in the last two years in using new technologies to get more tenants to respond. The 700 Persons List is an extensive centrally held database of all tenants who have expressed interest in becoming involved. If the delay is not considered too long since this information was obtained, we think it worthwhile to carry out an exercise to actively engage these tenants in future TP activities. As a pilot it could be used to assess the effectiveness of new and updated TP information in getting a positive response, and then to monitor how much active involvement results from the follow-up contact made (or how long each 'light bulb' stays lit) - Recommendation 21.

Section 5 – Our TP Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The term 'Tenant Participation' should continue to be used as the best term to describe the activities that PKC Housing Service engages in with tenants, housing service users and the wider community as these are predominantly funded by the Housing Revenue Account and rents paid by council tenants

Recommendation 2

The Council's current TP strategy sets out a vision and aims, which we agree, but it does not contain a definition of TP. Our definition, for inclusion in the next TP Strategy is that:

'***Tenant Participation properly refers to the processes and structures by means of which all PKC tenants and service users have the opportunity to influence both the setting of policies for council housing services and the nature of service delivery for council housing, and, with other residents, be involved in estate, neighbourhood and community issues.'***

Recommendation 3

The next TP Strategy will need to continue to offer a **'menu'** approach to tenant participation: by complying with the provisions in the 2001 Act to fund and support formal, collective TP systems and structures, including RTOs, where tenants come together to engage in TP activities, and, more modern opportunities with emphasis on flexible, less formal methods of participation, engaging with tenants individually, and using social media, mobile phones and new technology as additional opportunities to talk to tenants

 Recommendation 4

The most recent relevant legislation affecting tenant participation is the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which '**sets out a plan for empowering the people of Scotland'**. We think has the potential to be the most radical legislative framework that will intersect with tenant participation systems and structures based around four sections that are relevant to tenants (working collectively) in their local communities. These are:

Part 2 Community Planning

Part 3 Participation Requests

Part 3 Community Rights to Land

Part 4 Asset Transfer Requests

Each sets out rights (not just requests) for individual and groups working in their communities to influence decisions in respect of land, buildings and policies that shape their neighbourhoods. These potentially fit well if the Council accepts our Recommendation 8 to place a much greater emphasis on delivering tenant participation in local communities and by local housing teams

Recommendation 5

We think that the Housing Service in assessing the impact of TP should place an equal emphasis on what it achieves or the *outcomes* of participation irrespective of the actual numbers of tenants involved in each specific TP activity. The Service should ask whether and how it has demonstrably helped improve policy development, service delivery and / or the neighbourhood.

Recommendation 6

From national research in Scotland and the UK, evidence shows that **at most only 40% of tenants** will be interested in being involved tenants to have their say or to help the landlord to improve housing services. In setting targets for involvement, the Housing Service has to be realistic. Any strategies for 'combatting apathy' have to recognise that non-engagement may be a perfectly logical response for the majority of tenants who do not have the time, interest, or who believe that it will not make any difference because the Service will not listen.

Recommendation 7

The value of tenant participation, both for the landlord and all tenants, is the extent to which it gives a landlord **a tenant perspective on its work** that it would not otherwise have, and that this 'insight' is used to make the service better than it would have been without that tenant input. It enables a social landlord to fulfil its obligations to all of its tenants by seeking to understand their needs and the wider customer base as service users. This is summarised by the 'You said.. We did' type approach to highlight service improvements

Recommendation 8

Given the recent re-structuring of the Housing Management Service into four Area or Locality Teams, the next TP Strategy will need to **strike the right balance** between district-wide (centrally delivered) and local collective opportunities for Tenant Participation and resolve how the staff and non-staff TP budget can be used to achieve this.

The work at the area level TP should take two forms:

Recommendation 8a
Tenant Participation at the local level should **respond to local concerns and issues**. That is: a prime focus should be on responding to locally identified issues and opportunities.

Recommendation 8b
There should be **a local 'mirroring' of TP work done at the strategic level**. In the case of the SURE Team, for example, area-based TP should also be focused on monitoring how the SURE Team's recommendations on any individual scrutiny topic , that have been accepted by HMT, are then subsequently delivered at the area level.

In respect of both of these work strands the targets and outcomes for them should be set and monitored by the Customer and Community Engagement Team.

Recommendation 9

We think that the TP non-staff cost budget has been used to good effect over the last three years to initiate and try out new TP activities eg Mystery Shopping, tenant-led scrutiny, new types of training opportunities, and steps to encourage tenants to contribute their learning through involvement in other TP activities, both district-wide and locally eg the Estate Based Initiatives. TP should not only been seen as a 'cost' to the landlord to deliver. It should be seen as involving both **inputs** (i.e. the money spent by the landlord) and **outputs** (the value created by tenant participants).

Recommendation 10

TPAS recognised in its Report of 9 December 2013 *'it might still not be clear to tenants how all the various TP structures and activities fit together to make up the Council's TP Strategy'*.

We think this is still the case despite the many and varied efforts that the Housing Service has made to inform, engage with and invite tenants to become involved. The right balance has to be found in the next 3 year TP strategy between activities delivered PKC wide from the centre and the encouragement of more TP within each of the four Locality teams. Both tenants and staff need to work together to jointly prepare appropriate TP information. This should explain the TP opportunities that are available, how the menu fits together, what each activity aims to do and its limits, how decisions will be made and shared, the need for staff to provide clear, timely and appropriate feedback to those involved, and to keep those tenants who aren't involved aware of what is being considered

Recommendation 11

The drive, commitment, enthusiasm and skill mix of the staff in the Customer and Community Engagement Team needs to be protected and used appropriately to support the delivery of the next 3 year TP Strategy. The role for the staff in the central specialist TP staff team needs to be defined to:

- **Support strategic initiatives** around housing policy development, improvement of performance standards, quality and service delivery across the PKC district
- **Pilot and evaluate** new Tenant Participation initiatives
- **Deliver TP activities with agreed specific client groups** eg the 'homeless' or 'Us and the Housing'
- **Provide tenant training and capacity building**, delivered jointly as staff/tenant training in each Locality, and the piloting of new training opportunities to build on successful initiatives eg Digital Inclusion for example
- **Develop and be responsible for monitoring TP outcomes at both the district-wide and area level**
- **Support and up-skill area housing staff** to carry out Tenant Participation activities in the four Locality teams, and
- **Monitor and evaluate** annual TP performance and the overall three year Tenant Participation programme in 2020.

Recommendation 12

The network of contacts of the Customer and Community Engagement Team Leader, whose post involves delivery of a wider community engagement remit for the Council could be used **to develop**

effective working relationships with the Council's Planning and Neighbourhood Services teams to inform and to help drive the TP Localities Agenda forward

Recommendation 13

The Customer and Community Engagement Team should set out what the *'minimum level of access'* to TP would be and how TP would be developed and supported in each Locality team during the next three year TP Strategy

Recommendation 14

We think the Council needs to be clear why it accounts for engagement with homeless people in the TP strategy rather than within the Homeless Support Service

Recommendation 15

To avoid confusion and disillusionment, we recommend that **proper feedback** should be built into the TP process as an essential step to achieve successful tenant participation with agreed procedures and timescales for staff to 'feed-back', if possible, without it becoming too rigid and routine.

Recommendation 16

Given the expected pressure on budgets and resources, a way of involving tenants to consider and to **prioritise future demands on the TP budget** over the next 3 years has to be developed using criteria to help them to understand the potential outputs and value to both tenants and the Housing Service and not simply to look at the initial costs.

Recommendation 17

Once tenants have evaluated the TP budget, this approach should be 'scaled up' to train and support tenants to comment on and to prioritise spending in the Housing Revenue Account. Tenants would need to understand the issues and be able to express their views on the challenges facing the Housing Service

Recommendation 18

When the Housing Service reviews annual performance and agrees its Action Plan for the next 12 months, it should agree dates for key TP opportunities both centrally and in each of the four Housing Management areas. In each Housing Management Team the aim of a 'Locality Event' should be to combine an open TP and information opportunity with other local social activities or community fun days. This would have a bigger impact locally; should be more engaging; and be of interest to both tenants and other residents. A longer lead-in time should be allowed for tenants and staff to jointly prepare for these key participation activities at both the central and local level.

Recommendation 19

The Tenant Participation Monitoring Group has folded. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the TP programme by tenants. The TP monitoring function should be re-established as part of the on-going development of the SURE Team in leading on tenant-led scrutiny. The TP monitoring function should involve other tenants and service users and be carried out twice a year, based on a series of

assessment criteria that are agreed and reviewed annually. There should be a full report back for discussion at the TP Forum. This will give more openness and transparency. It might well create a stepping stone to invite interest in the housing service scrutiny role of the SURE Team. Also all four Locality teams should have a local TP monitoring and evaluation function and a mechanism to feedback to the SURE Team, possibly by a tenant from each Locality Team attending the TP monitoring meetings of the SURE Team

Recommendation 20

We recommend that Mystery Shopping be repeated and given a budget for an Independent Adviser with a second exercise being used to either provide evidence for a future tenant-led scrutiny or to assess how and with what impact agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny exercises are being implemented by each of the four Housing Management teams

Recommendation 21

A pilot exercise to actively engage tenants on the list of 700 interested persons in future TP activities would be very informative. This list was obtained from the last Tenant Satisfaction Survey. It could assess how effective any new and updated TP information is in getting a positive response from previously un-involved tenants and then to monitor how long their active involvement continues after the follow-up contact is made

Recommendation 22

During the next 3 year TP Strategy we think there needs to be a gradual and supported hand-over coupled with training for the housing staff in the Locality teams to begin to lead local Tenant Participation initiatives in their area, possibly underpinned initially by short term, project specific advice and support from the specialist staff in the Customer and Community Engagement Team

Recommendation 23

TP training for Housing Officers, and joint staff and tenant training should be arranged by the Customer and Community Engagement Team possibly as part of the proposals for the CIH accredited Training Academy, with some of this training aimed to build skills and working relationships between staff and tenants and to be delivered in each of Locality during the next 3 years

Recommendation 24

The SURE Team will make **a first draft of the next 3 year TP Strategy,** based on the initial feedback from the HMT, the Customer and Community Engagement Team Leader and discussion with the TP Forum for full discussion, consultation and agreement.

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1 SURE Team meetings 3 Oct 2016 – 20 February 2017 for Tenant Participation Scrutiny

Date	Time	Venue	Purpose
03 October 16	10am-1pm	MR7, Pullar House	Introduction to Tenant Participation: scope content, plan timetable and tasks, next steps
10 October 16	10am-1pm	MR8, Pullar House	Understanding the background information and examples of TP of other Council landlords
31 October 16	10am-1pm	MR9, Pullar House	Context for TP in PKC; review information. Prepare questions for staff interviews
1 November 16	10am - 12pm	Pullar House	Interviews TP staff: Jan Manion & Kevin Heller around their roles and future opportunities
8 November 16	10am -1pm	Pullar House	Interviews: Judy Barrow & Carrie Clark Locality Team Leader, Letham & Hillyland
14 November 16	10am-1pm	MR14, Pullar House	Feedback evidence gathered from staff interviews. TP monitoring. Identify issues
21 November 16	10am-1pm	MR8, Pullar House	SURE Team TP SWOT analysis developed as basis for interviews with SB and DF
28 November 16	10am-1pm	MR14, Pullar House	Discuss SWOT analysis with SB & DF and changes to TP delivery & staff roles with DF
29 November 16	10am-12 pm		Interviews: Sharon Kerr and Debbie Mitchell, Locality Team Leaders City Central & South
12 December 16	10am-1pm	MR14, Pullar House	Discuss evidence & identify main considerations; structure of TP Report
19 December 16	10am- 12 pm	MR14, Pullar House	Breakdown of TP volunteer hours against the TP 18 month calendar of activities & SWOT
16 January 17	10am-1pm	MR14, Pullar House	First draft text; Consider evidence; identify initial conclusions and recommendations
23 January 17	10am-1pm	MR10/11, Pullar House	Second discussion of revised draft TP Report, develop conclusions & recommendations
6 February 17	10am-1pm	MR12, Pullar House	Agree Final TP Report, prepare presentation and script
20 February 17	9.45am- 1pm	MR12/13, Pullar House	Present TP Scrutiny Report to HMT & discussion key ideas for next 3 year TP Strategy

Appendix 2 – Background Information Used In this TP Scrutiny Exercise

PKC Information

PKC tenant Participation Strategy: 2010-2013 and 2014-2017

PKC TP Self-Assessment Report for TPAS Accreditation, August 2013 and TPAS Accreditation Feedback Report, November 2013

PKC Housing and Health Committee Reports:

 PKC Tenant Participation Strategy 2014-17 – Approval of Strategy - 12 March 2014 Progress Report - 11 March 2015

PKC Tenant Participation Updates:

- April 2014, June 2014, September 2014, December 2014
- January 2015,April 2015, July 2015, November 2015
- February 2016, April 2016, July 2016

Tenant Participation Strategy Implementation Plan: Updated Nov 15, June 16 and October 16

Tenant Participation Calendar of Events as at 22 September 2016

PKC Job profiles Housing & Community Care: Team Leader, Housing Officer & Housing Assistant

TP Strategy Documents from Other Councils

North Ayrshire Customer Involvement and Empowerment Strategy Housing Services 2014-17

Aberdeen City Council Get Involved, Tenant Participation Strategy

Aberdeenshire Council's Tenant Participation Strategy 2009-2012

Other Information

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, Policy Memorandum, 2014

SHR National Panel of Tenants and Service Users, Year 3 (2015/16) Headline Report

Appendix 3 – PKC's TP Structures and Activities, 2014-17 Tenant Participation Strategy (active in January 2017)

Local

Local Tenant and Residents Groups eg Pomarium Residents Meeting

Estate based Initiatives – learning outcomes/joint staff and tenant initiatives from the Resident Academy Training

The TP Network

Social interaction- T Dances, local Friendship groups

Strategic

Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)

Letham Residents Association

Perth and Kinross Residents Federation

Stanley Tenants' and Residents' Association

Perth Homeless Voice Association

Us and the Housing

Thematic Groups

The Homeless Voice Group

Us and the Housing

Older People's Forum

Learning Opportunities (through Resident Academies)

Accredited Learning- around Resident Inspection, Community Research and Resident Scrutiny

Understanding Housing – informal learning about aspect of Housing Services – allocations, Homeless Service, Neighbourhood Services, Repairs and Improvements, Finance

TPAS delivered Committee skills, Tenant Participation, Creating Newsletters, Complaint Handling, Performance Management and Negotiation skills

Tenancy Academy – piloted for new tenants to support tenancy sustainment

Skills with Bills

Financial Inclusion

Digital Inclusion

The Activate Programme – introduction to issues around support people to cope and social work

Becoming a CIH Accredited Training Centre

Working Groups

The Quality Panel – graduates from the Resident academies work with staff to give a tenant perspective through inspections and quality checks

The Tenant Participation Strategy Monitoring Group - met quarterly to monitor the TP Action plan but folded through lack of interest

The Tenant Participation Forum – bi-monthly, open to all TRA representatives and registered persons to discuss emerging issues, share information, consultation

The Safer Communities Working Group – joint working –staff and tenants around the implementation of the Neighbourhood Strategy

The Tenant Committee Report Panel – invites 2 representatives from each TRA and Working Groups to comment on draft Reports before presentation to the Housing and Health Committee. Comments are included and two representatives are invited to attend the Committee meeting

Strategic Tenant Engagement in Annual Rent Setting Review Group – to involve tenants in rent setting and leading to the setting up of the Rent Restructuring Tenant Working Group

The Service User Review and Evaluation (SURE) Team – set up to monitor aspects of service delivery and the annual performance review as reported to tenants in the Council's Annual Report to Tenants

Information and Communication

Provided by:

'On the House' magazine

Tenant Participation updates (quarterly)

Free Texting to mobile phones and on line communications

Social media

Tenant e Panel

List of Interested Persons

Cost Centre: Tenant Participation
Budget Holder: Suzie Burt

		15/16 Actuals £	14/15 Actuals £	13/14 Actuals £
SUPPLIES AND SERVICES				
201001	Equip Purchase	41	0	0
201304	General Training	6,138	909	3,780
201306	Ext Consult	38,692	28,012	37,540
203000	Furn Purch	0	0	(424)
204018	Venue Hire	3,118	6,939	4,668
211001	Materials	0	0	1
220000	Catering	3,947	6,571	6,136
240003	Printing	21,768	18,694	12,971
240010	Meeting Expens	1,845	2,692	5,979
240106	Stationery	328	82	468
250024	Translator Fees	170	0	45
260009	Postages	0	0	0
260102	PC/Laptop Hardware	860	464	3,402
260103	PC/Laptop Software	0	258	0
260122	Mobiles/Radio Rental & Calls	0	0	450
272002	Advertising/Publicity	1,146	0	0
272010	Provision Of Outside Hospitality	445	60	175
272030	Misc-Supplies & Services	347	2,105	1,804
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & SERVICES	**78,845**	**66,786**	**76,995**
TRANSPORT COSTS				
344000	Transport-Hire	0	74	810
352000	Travel-Client	101	52	0
352200	Travel & Sub-Volunteers	6,941	3,869	5,253
387012	Travel Pass Scheme	236	386	500
	TOTAL TRANSPORT COSTS	**7,278**	**4,381**	**6,563**
THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS				
514000	Payments To Voluntary Associat	4,680	5,227	5,000
597000	Grants Payable	0	2,533	0
599000	Subscription To Bodies	1,000	3,581	13,038
	TOTAL THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS	**5,680**	**11,341**	**18,038**
GROSS EXPENDITURE		**91,803**	**82,508**	**101,596**

Appendix 5 SURE Team – Suggested Questions for CCE staff – Jan, Judy and Kevin

Ask each to talk about their current TP work and how it might be developed:

For Current Work

1. Explain their role/work within TP /what each person does?
2. What is their definition of TP?
3. How does their work contribute to TP and what PKC wants to achieve from the TP Strategy?
4. What has their project(s) achieved?
5. How many tenants have been involved in their TP work in the last 12 – 18 months?
6. What problems have been identified and how have they been overcome?
7. What has gone well?
8. What percentage of their time on average per week is spent on setting up and delivering these TP activities? How much budget is provided to them to cover non-staff or project expenses?
9. Is their work/TP activity delivered centrally eg from Pullar House/Perth? If not how much is delivered in one or more of the 4 Housing Management Areas?
10. Any other points?

For the future

10. What opportunities do you see to develop your contribution to TP in the future?

11. What would this require in terms of resources?

    a. % of extra staff time?
    b. Increased project or non-staff cost budget?

12. What targets would you set for future engagement in your TP projects/activities?

13. Are you aware of good ideas/good practice from other landlords?

14. Could this work for PKC?

15.   Should their project/TP continue to be focused on council tenants or should it be open to all residents? How could this be achieved and how would it be funded?

16. Do you see more TP activities being carried out in the 4 housing management teams in the future and not just delivered as a central strategic activity?

17. Have you any other thoughts and suggestions about how TP might be developed in PKC over the next 3 years?

Appendix 6 -Suggested Questions for Managers of the Area Housing Management Teams – to talk about how TP is delivered now and what could change for the future

What happens now and how is it delivered?

1. How does TP work in their locality? Ask for an indication of the type of TP activities are happening in their locality
2. What range or menu of TP opportunities is there/should there be in each area? Eg tenant groups, opportunity for tenants to comment through surveys etc, community projects to improve the neighbourhood, working in partnership with other agencies?
3. What is your definition of TP?
4. How does the Area Team communicate with your tenants about the TP activities that are available?
5. To want extent do the Locality teams use social media to communicate with tenants?
6. How effective is this?
7. Is this the way forward?
8. How are these activities supported now? How much staff time is devoted to TP activities & by whom?
9. What do tenants say they want in each locality? How do you know this?
10. How does TP differ in areas with a large number of PKC tenants living close together and in those in more scattered communities in rural areas?
11. How does each locality do things differently to overcome such problems to make TP work?

Future opportunities?

12. Do you see TP as part of what Housing Officers should do within the neighbourhood they work in?
13. How could TP be developed as a neighbourhood/community activity?
14. Does the locality team see it as their role?
15. What support and resources would be needed to take it forwards? (Eg staff, budget, training, advice from Suzie's team, other?)
16. Are Team Leaders/Area Managers aware of any experience from elsewhere that could be tried here to develop TP?
17. Could locality events help to raise awareness and to open up TP to more tenants etc?
18. Should TP activities be open to all residents in each neighbourhood and not just tenants?
19. Does this cause any issues/restrictions locally? Eg how it is funded?
20. Could more be achieved by tenants and staff working together on local issues as short term?
21. Any other thoughts and suggestions?

Appendix 7 PKC TP SWOT Analysis – by SURE Team, 21 November 2016

Based on an overview of PKC's TP in practice and of the PKC TP Team

1. Past and Current Issues - Evaluation (looks backwards)

    a. Strengths   (list from most to least importance)

    Overview of PKC's TP in Practice

      I.   It's the staff that make/deliver TP (not the Council)
     II.   The SURE Team
    III.   The Rent Restructuring initiative
    IV.   The Homeless Service
     V.   The Interested Person's list
    VI.   Digital Inclusion – engaging with tenants in sheltered housing and others to develop skills
   VII.   HMT – listening/responding to recommendations – using direct feedback, develop/monitor Action Plans, 'You Said ..We Did' updates. It's gone beyond Suzie – direct feedback from HMT Service leaders
  VIII.   A future strength will be a TP Strategy developed by Tenants – the psychological impact of tenants helping tenants and cost effective

    The PKC TP Team

    IX. Has big resources re contact lists developed over time. PKC as a Council is authorised under the Data Protection Act to keep individual tenant/personal contact details: central TP nerve centre

    X Has a TP budget to keep in touch with tenants, promote/deliver TP

    XI. Is focussed on/responsible to develop/deliver TP to plan, resource, contact tenants/advertise, deliver and monitor TP activities

XII Has the right skill set as they do this job day in day out: communication; understanding of what is required; what will and won't work; to pilot new initiatives; external networks to share information and access ideas from others

XIII. Central TP has the support /backing of the Council to deliver TP – SURE Team now held in regard by key Councillors for scrutiny work

XIV. Pioneering: open to external influences; willing to try out new initiatives to see what works; monitor and evaluate what has and hasn't worked

b. **Weaknesses (list from most to least importance)**

Overview of TP in Practice

   I.   Cllr involvement- point scoring/ party political interests considered more than those of the tenants
  II.   Insufficient delegation – if anything involves the HRA the staff need to get specific permission
 III.   Break the yoke of " They don't listen" – tenants have the election to decide who to vote in and out of office and even if this is not accurate, the perception sticks
 IV.   RTO is a dated model from the 1980's/1990's – not appropriate in rural areas & tenants don't want the burden of responsibility now for managing organisational and financial issues
  V.   Tenants want quicker feedback from staff – not a proposal or an action several months down the line as tenants don't know what has influenced if or if it is linked to anything they have been involved in/said
 VI.   The flexible working schedules means it's not always possible to contact staff to get answers as quickly as tenants might like to
VII.   It is realistic to think about engaging only a small proportion of council tenants in TP activities: Scottish Government national survey- only 40% maximum are interested in any form of involvement = maximum target group. PKC is np different
VIII. Locality Teams don't understand or buy into TP. Staff are generally not sympathetic to TP
 IX.   Locality Teams will have to build up their own contact lists & keep tenants updated – Will also need the backing of local Councillors
  X.   Lack of interest generally in working in groups: tenants busy, many other pressures and priorities: RTO's or less formal group not the future: too bureaucratic: most want to have their say, do it now & that's it. Need a TP menu to cater for a variety of needs, circumstances, and available time/interests

XI.   Need to make sure Group Terms of Reference are realistic in terms of numbers to be quorate etc

XII. Less social contact and interaction between tenants if don't come to meetings and talk to one another – T Dances are trying to recreate social contact. Digital solutions not always the best: need to take an overview of what TP is aiming to do/achieve

The PKC TP Team

IX.   Some of the TP staff team on part time and/or on short term contracts whatever projects they are working on

X.   Trying different things but not always evaluating and building gradually on the successes eg Tenant training- EBI's came from the training but not developed and supported to do more or to be expanded in the Locality Teams – joint staff and tenant training on future CIH courses might help to overcome this

2. Possible Future Issue Anticipation - (looks forwards)

c. Opportunities (list from most to least important)

Overview of TP in Practice

I.   Digital inclusion- 2 tenants got certificates – a positive start – so what /where next is? How can TP build on this to make it work for tenants individually and TP as an activity?

II.   Community Empowerment Bill: assets for the community to take over and manage. Community Planning on estates

III. Break into the 'They don't listen cycle': must feedback quickly to say what has come out of a consultation and what PKC intends to do about it

IV.   Develop TP in the Locality teams and not from the Centre outwards – mechanisms in place with: Community Walkabouts; Identify potential Estate-Based Initiatives to address problems/issues; form a short life Task Group- staff and tenants – with Councillors(?); discuss, agree, deliver & disband

V.   CIH Accreditation – Good to train/develop staff as well as tenants; support the idea of joint working staff and tenants; Upskill tenants to take part in Estate-Based Initiatives/local projects; improve communication/joint working/partnership with external agencies

VI.   A menu of opportunities means that even if involvement is limited, once the light bulb has come on this is a 'hit' even if short lived. Follow –up on Last Tenant Satisfaction Survey & those who want to be involved: on-line, social media etc

VII.   Encourage tenants to be involved in improving their own neighbourhoods: again tenants helping other tenants

The PKC TP Team

IX.   Depends on what the future holds. The TP team have a small army of tenant volunteers; make good use of them when they are there

X.   Develop the Interested Person's list – Find out what tenant's interest are and use and engage them in TP activities

XI   Activists and semi-activists want to be kept up to date about what is happening with their homes and neighbourhoods: Digital /social media involvement to be developed further

d. Threats (list from most to least important)

Overview of TP in Practice

 I.   Budget cuts/lack of funding and resources (staff, interested tenants, project funding etc). Such reductions will have a detrimental effect on TP activities
 II.   It seems like the TP team and the housing Dept are "bent" on promoting their agendas via their own resources
 III. It would help if the TP Dept worked in unison with whatever RTO's are left and held meetings together to promote RTO's or RTO's will die and contempt will creep in – joint working staff and tenants is needed
 IV.   Centre/Strategic team has to put pressure on the Localities to increase speed and quality of response and interest in TP
 V.   Lack of interested tenants who want to be involved in some way

The PKC TP Team

 VI.   Loss of key personnel

Appendix 8 - Summary Totals from Analysis of 18 month TP Calendar

	No. Mtgs		Total Meeting Duration (hours)	Avg. No. Attendees per Meeting	Total Attendance	Total time spent by volunteers	
Homeless	246	46%	494	7	1694	3398	38%
Local	110	21%	212	10	1063	2056	23%
Training	27	5%	149	6	166	913	10%
SURE T	48	9%	135	6	272	764	9%
Strategic	44	8%	104	8	344	813	9%
Rent R	29	5%	53	7	189	342	4%
Disabled	21	4%	44	11	223	462	5%
Social Nets	5	1%	10	22	111	222	2%
Total	**530**		**1199**	**0**	**4062**	**8970**	

8970 total hours
is equivalent to
No. full time employees   5.20
each spending
37.5 hours per week
46 weeks per year
= hours per year   1725

Tenant Participation activity April 2015 –September 2016
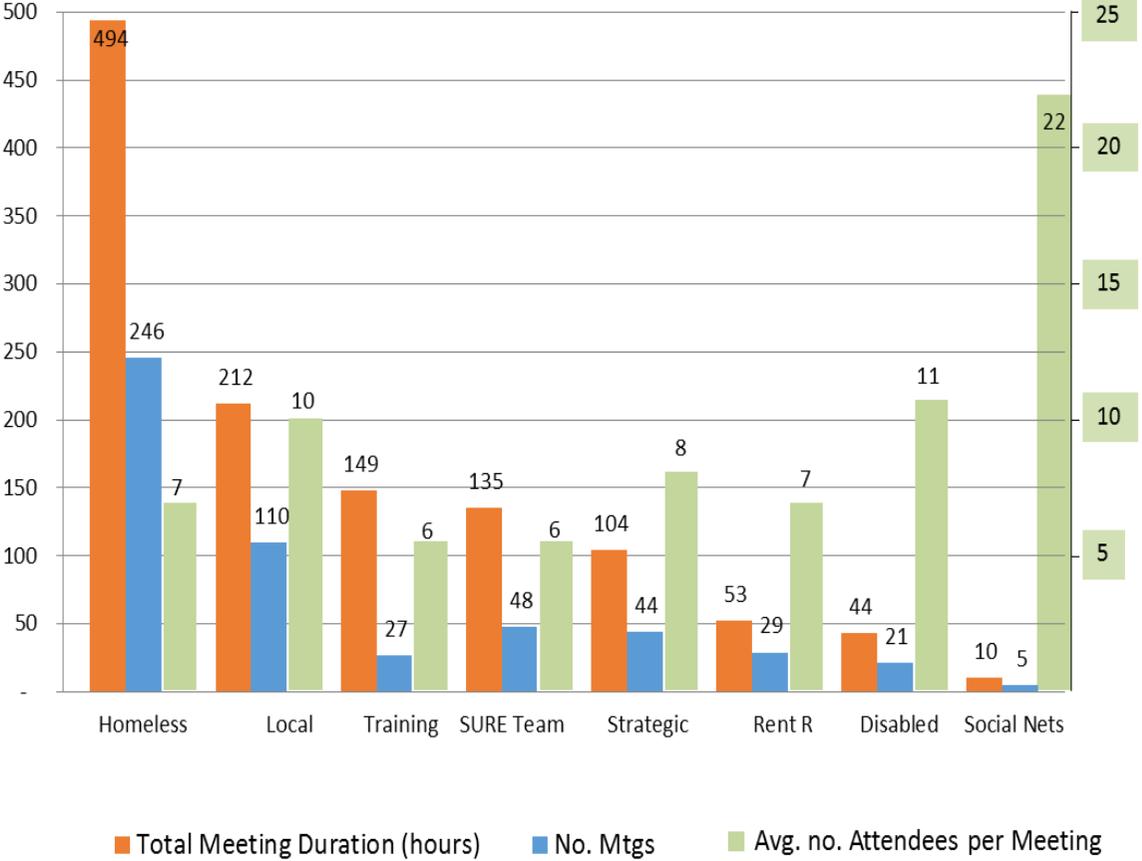

530+
Meetings

Totalling 1199
hours

45+ Venues

4062 Attendances

Perth & Kinross volunteers have invested 8,970 hours on Tenant Participation matters

Tenant Participation activity April 2015 –September 2016

Appendix – 9

Extract from the SURE Team's Assessment of the performance of the Council's Housing Service in Meeting the Requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator in Respect of Charter Outcome 3 - Participation

SURE Team's assessment in 2014/15

3- Participation	**Green**	On average only 40% of tenants will engage with the landlord. Opportunities are there and being positively developed. Language used is clear. Many tenants are not aware of how PKC does listen and is responding

Overall Grade - Green

Good progress made in 2014/15 **AND** the 2015/16 action plans continue to show how further improvement will be achieved

SURE Team's assessment in 2015/16

3- Participation	**Emerald Green**	Improved PKC tenant satisfaction rates with a 12.3% increase in 2015/16 which is 4.3% better than the peer group average; a 76% increase of tenants (665 tenants) returning satisfaction questionnaires to the Council. The impact from a variety of new initiatives and opportunities for tenants and service users to be involved in is being felt: practical to test services (the Mystery Shopping, Tenant Inspectors); locality based to improve neighbourhoods (the Estate Based Initiatives and the work with the homeless); and strategic through the Rent Restructure Review and the work of the SURE Team are in place; specific help for individual tenants through Money Management skills and CIH Level 3 accredited training. All are being used, promoted and positively developed. They are clearly making a positive impact. Proposals for 2016/17 show a well-structured programme to seek to increase future participation rates and satisfaction levels.

Overall Grade - Emerald Green

Good progress made in 2015/16 **AND** the 2016/17 action plans continue to show how further improvement will be achieved