

# **Customer Connections**

North Ayrshire Housing Services'  
Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-22

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

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## 1. Foreword

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Text to be added post consultation when agreed by Cabinet Member for Place.

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## 2. Introduction

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Working in partnership with tenants and customers is core to delivering excellent Housing Services to the people of North Ayrshire. We have collaborated with tenants and other customers to develop this strategy, which sets out how we will develop our approach to tenant participation over the next five years.

This is the fifth Tenant Participation Strategy for North Ayrshire Housing Services, developed in consultation with a range of partners and stakeholders. We have made significant progress in engaging with and involving our customers through our previous strategies, and have developed a range of tools and services to enable and empower participation in North Ayrshire.

Some of our key achievements through the life of our previous strategy include:

- The development of our Business Plan Implementation Group, a key strategic forum to involve tenants in decision making and shaping services
- The introduction of a Tenant Scrutiny Panel to inspect and improve our services
- The development of our annual tenant event, encouraging engagement and participation with a wide range of our tenants.

This strategy is underpinned by a recognition and commitment to working with and listening to tenants, to continue to provide excellent services that meet our customers' needs.

## 3. Background

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### National Context

#### Housing Scotland Act 2001

The [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#) introduced a legal requirement for landlords to actively develop and support tenant participation. As part of this we must have a strategy, to enable continuous improvement in performance to support and empower tenants to participate.

Under this legislation, landlords are required to consult with registered tenant organisations and individual tenants on a range of housing and related issues which may affect them, including:

- our Tenant Participation Strategy
- changes to rent and service charges
- some changes to policy which are likely to have a significant impact on tenants, residents and service users
- our standards of service in housing management, repairs and maintenance.

Housing Services has well established methods of consultation and feedback. More information on this is provided in Appendix 2.

#### Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 created two fundamental influences in the social housing sector in Scotland:

**The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)** is an independent regulator, directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament. Its statutory objective is to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants, homeless people and others who use the services provided by social landlords. The Regulator assesses and reports on how social landlords are performing their housing services through **the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC)**. The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities. The Charter was revised in 2017. Tenant scrutiny and landlord self-assessment are key priorities on the national agenda for customer engagement.

Together, they have created a new environment in which the Council and our customers must work in partnership to achieve positive outcomes for communities.

#### Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)

We are required to provide an annual return to the Housing Regulator on our progress in achieving the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes and standards. Outcomes linked to this Strategy are those relating to the customer / landlord relationship:

### **Outcome 1 – Equalities**

Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

### **Outcome 2 – Communication**

Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

### **Outcome 3 – Participation**

Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

## **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 focuses on promoting real engagement and participation, to facilitate communities' achieving more influence and control in decisions and circumstances that affect them. The National Standards for Community Engagement set out the values that provide the basis of successful community engagement. The standards act as a good practice guideline, and a means to benchmark. They were reviewed and re-launched in 2016 in response to the Community Empowerment Act, and to build on established good practice. The revised standards are:



## Local Context

The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership's (CPP) **Single Outcome Agreement** describes how all partners will work together to provide better services with the aim of making sure the people and communities of North Ayrshire are working, healthier and safe and secure. The CPP's Community Engagement Network facilitates partnership working to share good practice, experience and opportunities in North Ayrshire, and contribute to the Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy.

The **Council Plan** sets out the ambitions and priorities in North Ayrshire over a five year period. One of these priorities is '*working together to develop stronger communities*'. The Council continues to help people and communities to get involved in local decisions and to reach their full potential.

The **Locality Planning Approach** is key to improving outcomes for local communities. It ensures public sector resources are targeted at those local areas most in need in North Ayrshire. The approach is based around six locality planning areas: Arran; Irvine; Kilwinning; Three Towns; Garnock Valley and the North Coast.

Housing Services' approach to tenant participation supports these strategic priorities. This strategy has been developed to ensure working with tenants and customers remains a core part of our business. It also underpins the approach to customer involvement in developing plans, such as the **Local Housing Strategy** (LHS) and **Antisocial Behaviour Strategy**.

### Housing Service Standards

We have a range of service standards, which were developed in consultation with staff and tenant representatives, including tenants on our gypsy travellers' site. These standards cover each area of service, including customer involvement. We report performance in these areas on a six monthly basis.

A copy of these standards is available on [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk).

## 4. Inclusive Involvement

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The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced responsibilities for landlords relating to equal opportunities and tenant participation / customer involvement. Specifically, landlords are required to:

- consider the needs of equalities groups, proactively involving under-represented groups
- ensure any barriers to participation are taken into consideration
- ensure registered tenant organisations (RTOs) promote equal opportunities, and the criteria for registration makes it accessible to all tenants (see Appendix 4 for information on RTOs, and the current Register of Tenant Organisations in North Ayrshire).

There is also a requirement for RTOs to promote equal opportunities in their communities and pursue the involvement of excluded groups. This should be reflected in their constitution. Tenants and Residents Associations who act in a discriminatory or offensive way towards minority groups could be subject to removal from the Register of Tenants' Organisations.

Housing Services is committed to treating people respectfully, fairly and equally across all areas of our business, and tackling discrimination and harassment in all of our activities. Inclusive involvement underpins the objectives within the strategy, and engaging with hard to reach groups continues to be a priority within the service.

An equality impact assessment has been completed for this Strategy in consultation with tenant representatives on North Ayrshire Network. No adverse impact or affect was identified on particular group(s) or people.

### **Involving all customers**

Some groups of tenants and other customers are often under-represented in community involvement, including:

- young people
- refugees & ethnic minority groups
- gypsy travellers
- people with accessibility needs
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people
- homeless service users
- the digitally excluded

**We already have great examples of how we are involving under-represented groups:**

#### **Redburn Record**

North Ayrshire Council has a dedicated Coordinator based at our Redburn Traveller Site who works closely with the tenants and site visitors on a daily basis. Tenants of the site contribute to the 'Redburn Record', a newsletter containing information about relevant calendar events, service performance and information from partners across a number of



services, including education, health, welfare rights and housing support. The Coordinator also has responsibility for gathering tenants' views, suggestions and insights to inform our policy and practice.

### **Digital Inclusion**

Universal Credit (UC) is part of the Government's welfare reform programme, and is replacing six existing legacy benefits. It is currently being rolled out across the UK, and is due to be fully implemented by 2022. All UC claims will be encouraged to be made and managed online, to support the Government's digital by default strategy.

In our preparations for implementation, it has become apparent that a some of our tenants do not have, or have limited, digital skills and many do not have access to computers.

Housing Services is part of a corporate group exploring other ways to more widely support North Ayrshire residents to have digital access and support. To date, public access computers have been installed in Area Housing Offices in Dalry and Kilbirnie. Tenants can use these during office hours to claim benefits, complete job searches etc., with support available if required. We have also installed wifi at our gypsy travellers' site in Irvine.

### **Overcoming Barriers to Involvement**

Housing Services aim to offer all tenants the opportunity to become involved. We are committed to removing barriers to involvement, and do this by:

- Providing crèche facilities during meeting hours free of charge, or making child minding allowances available to enable people to attend participation meetings
- Providing transport for customers to attend events hosted by Housing Services where requested
- Holding meetings in venues that are accessible, convenient and secure for everyone, including people with mobility issues
- Establishing meeting times to take account of the needs and preferences of local communities
- Providing training to give tenants, residents and service users the appropriate knowledge, and provide specialist assistance as required. This training includes awareness of equality issues
- Ensuring all information is provided in accordance with our accessibility policy to ensure that complex statistical information doesn't lead to non-participation. We can also provide documents in other languages and formats. Interpreting facilities are available, and hearing loops are available in all local housing offices
- Ensuring adequate funds are provided to develop the key issues agreed with tenants, residents and all service users, and considering appropriate ways of enhancing resources, including the provision of a Freepost address to eliminate postal expenditure
- Providing Council contact numbers charged at local rates
- Providing opportunities for all customers and age groups to get involved

### **But we want to do more...**

We aim to build on our approach to involving 'under-represented' groups, to gain their views on services. An example of areas we will focus on during the life of this strategy is:

#### Engaging Young People

Whilst we have a range of different methods and levels of participation available in North Ayrshire, the core group of tenants who actively participate regularly have an older age profile. Diversity in the age of our involved tenants will give us a better understanding of their needs and aspirations.

We know the majority of our young people are digitally skilled and active on social media. Developing our approach to this will increase the age range of our involved customers.

#### Engaging Refugees

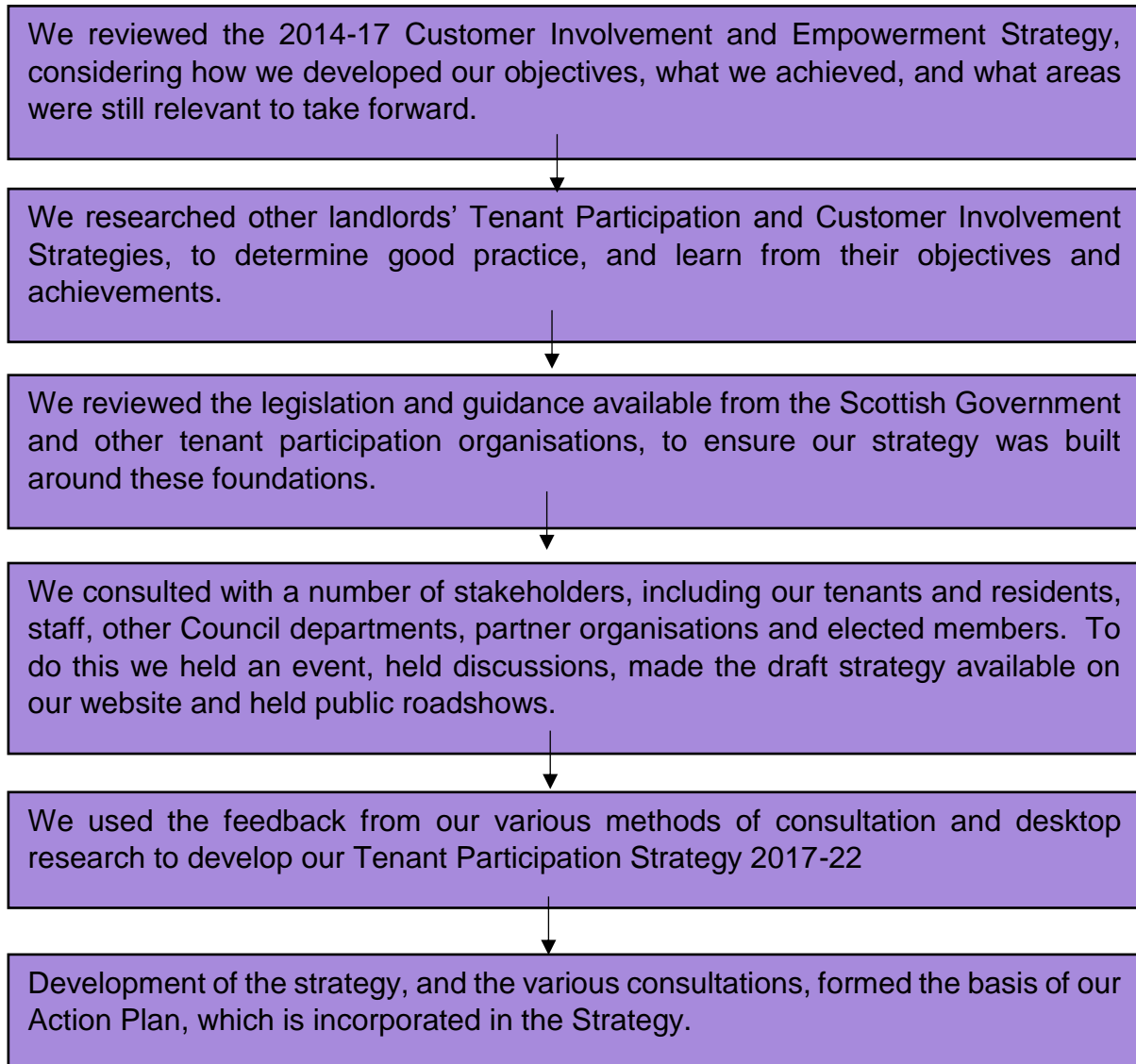
In 2015, North Ayrshire Council made a humanitarian commitment to support the resettlement and integration of 100 refugees into local communities as part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme. The programme of resettlement has commenced, and over the next three years the Council will continue to provide homes and support refugees into the local community.

We can support our involved tenants and groups to embrace these new Scots, helping to integrate them into local communities and offering Refugees opportunities for involvement.

## 5. Developing the Strategy

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This 2017-2022 Strategy builds on previous tenant involvement strategies, and has been developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including our tenants. Our strategic development process was as follows:



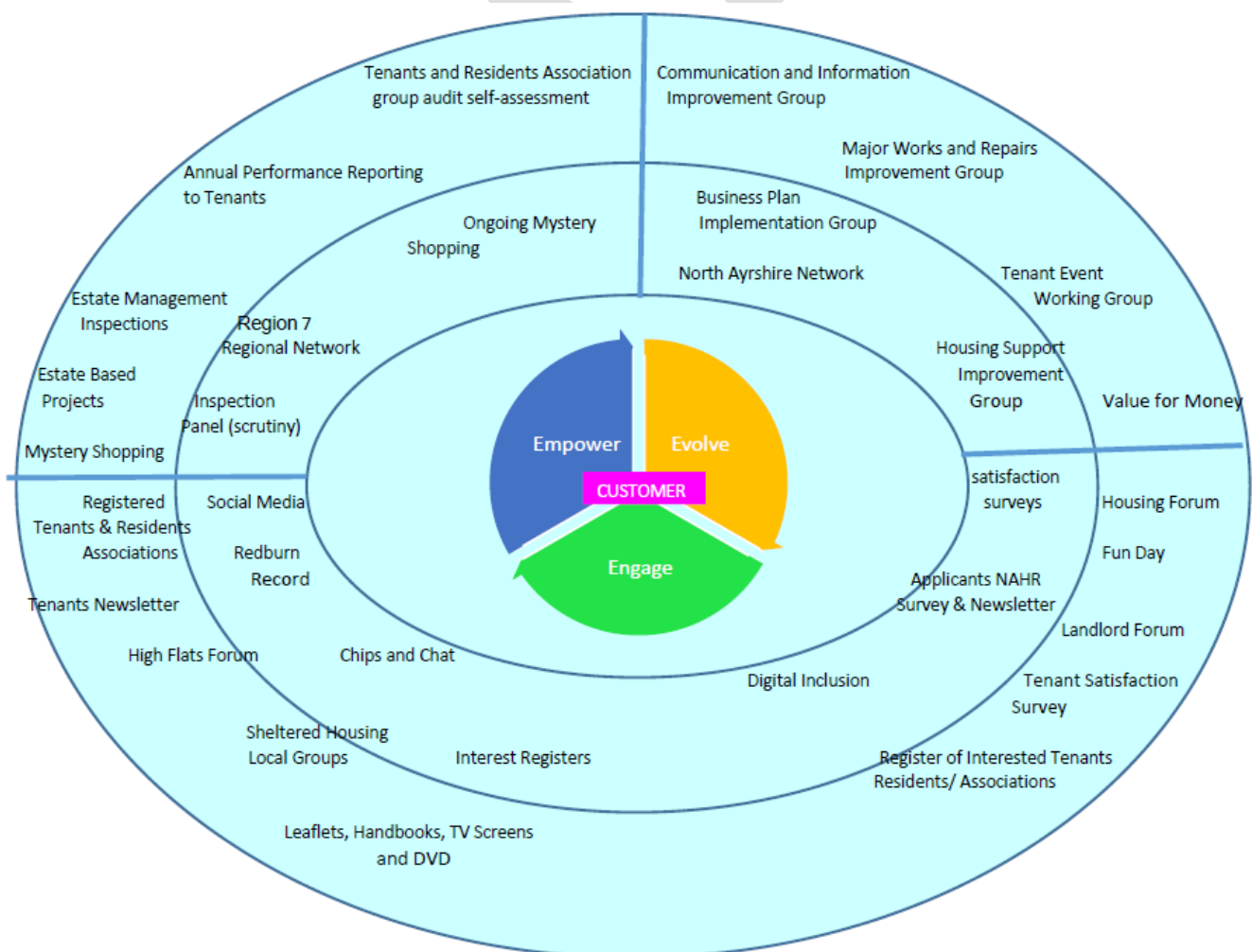
## 6. Customer Connections

Based on the information gathered during the research and consultation phases of developing this strategy, our tenant participation work will be shaped around three key priorities:

1. **Engage** – ensuring two way communication with our tenants and customers, and providing opportunities for customers to take part in ways that meet their needs;
2. **Empower** – developing the skills and confidence of our tenants to shape the services we provide;
3. **Evolve** – continually improving our services to meet the needs of our customers.

This framework seeks to create a balanced approach to involvement, recognising the need to move away from the traditional method of solely consulting with formal tenant and resident associations.

Our Customer Connections Circle demonstrates how these priorities link with our established methods of involvement in North Ayrshire and our Action Plan in Appendix 1 highlights the timescales for each priority.



## Priority 1: Engage

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Our first priority, 'Engage', focuses on communicating with, consulting and including our customers.

### What we know

In order to participate effectively, communication is essential. Tenants need to have all the information necessary to consider issues properly, within the limits of confidentiality. This includes providing information about our strategies, decision making processes, policies and procedures, tenants' rights, and proposals for change.

Offering different methods and levels of involvement allows tenants to choose how actively they participate to suit their lifestyle and commitments. For some, this may be attending meetings and events, whilst others may prefer to take part from their own home. Providing diversity in this makes participation accessible to more customers.

### Our objectives

We aim to effectively engage with our tenants in a way that suits them. In order to achieve this, our key objectives for this priority are ensuring that:

- Customers are well informed and can communicate with us easily
- Opportunities are provided to obtain feedback
- Involvement is accessible and inclusive
- There are a range of opportunities to take part and get feedback

### We already have great examples of how we engage with our customers:

#### Newsletters

'Tenancy Matters' is a quarterly newsletter sent to all North Ayrshire Council tenants. It is developed by an editorial panel of staff, tenants and other stakeholders. Tenants are encouraged to contribute articles, and the panel oversees the writing of each newsletter to encourage a sense of ownership of the final product. Tenancy Matters is used as a method of communicating service developments and changes to tenants, and as a method of consultation on topics such as annual rent increases. It is also used to provide information on wider issues that may interest or affect tenants.

An annual newsletter is also produced for applicants of the North Ayrshire Housing Register.

#### Interest registers

We hold registers of interested tenants, applicants and other customers to allow individuals the opportunity to have their voice heard on topics that are important to, or affect, them. People can select which subjects they would like to be informed or consulted on, and choose to take part when it suits them. The registers are used regularly to consult on a variety of housing issues, policies and strategies.

## Annual fun day

Housing Services reviewed the approach to our annual tenant event in 2013. Attendees at the previous conference style format did not fully represent our diverse group of tenants, and it was not always well attended. Following consultation with various stakeholders and review of good practice, our annual tenant fun day was launched. The summer event is free and open to everyone, providing information stands, opportunities for consultation and fun activities for all ages. The events are very well attended, and are organised and facilitated by tenants, staff and other customers and organisations.

Our popular methods of engagement include:

- Registered tenant organisations
- Sheltered housing local groups
- Satisfaction surveys
- Housing forum
- High flats forum
- Chips and chat meetings
- Social media

We regularly inform tenants through various methods including:

- Information leaflets
- Tenants and sheltered tenants' handbooks
- Our new tenant DVD
- TV screens in public areas
- Applicants newsletter
- Tenancy Matters newsletter
- Tenant Group Manual

## But we want to do more...

In order to achieve the key objectives under this priority, our areas of development include:

### Digital engagement

North Ayrshire Council is currently developing its approach to digital services, as part of the aim to provide exceptional customer service whilst embedding digital methodologies. Within Housing Services we have also begun that journey, with Housing Facebook, access to rent accounts and payments via the internet, online surveys and our North Ayrshire Housing Register web application system.

In this strategy we aim to make advances in our approach to digital engagement, embedding an 'e-participation' strand to our methods of involvement. As part of this, we will develop our social media brand on Facebook, and consider other platforms such as Twitter and Instagram. We will also establish more interactive online communications, such as live chats, online polling, and more communication via email and our online rent account. These platforms will help us to engage with under-represented community groups, such as young people, and support the wider Channel Shift agenda.

### Understanding customer needs

Our current processes include asking tenants to contribute to publications, such as Tenancy Matters, and gaining their approval on our strategies, leaflets and publications. We would like to develop our approach to this, by gauging tenant interest on various areas of our service, and providing them with information that matters to them. This can be progressed through the current forums and social media, and would provide a more interactive, two-way

communication. We can also use this to ensure we have appropriate representation from tenants on the issues most pertinent to them.

Our actions under the 'Engage' priority are:

- Provide good quality information that meets the needs of our customers;
- Provide opportunities for customers to tell us types of information they are interested in receiving;
- Use a range of communication methods, including digital participation to communicate with customers;
- Consider ways to improve communication digitally, through better use of social media, email, text messaging and smart phone apps;
- Ask tenants about their preferred methods of contact and participation through various channels; Develop new methods of engagement with harder to reach groups, such as young people;
- Ensure involvement methods are promoted and barriers are mitigated;
- Provide support for under-represented groups;
- Provide varied involvement opportunities so tenants can take part in a way that suits them;
- Review our approach to consultation to identify any areas for improvement;
- Offer a range of opportunities to gain feedback on the services we provide.

Timescales and how we will measure progress against actions are included in our Action Plan in Appendix 1.

## Priority 2: Empower

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Our second priority, 'Empower', focuses on building community capacity, encouraging and supporting customers to take part, and helping them to influence decision making.

### What we know

Service improvement and change is most effective when influenced and driven by its customers. Engagement is essential, in order to identify and deal with problems, and deliver services that meet customers' needs.

Communities must have the capacity to take part in the engagement process, to enable them to deal more effectively with services in identifying solutions, opportunities and improvements. In order to build this capacity, the provision of support to develop confidence, abilities and skills is fundamental.

Establishing that base will enable and empower people to take more ownership, and support and encourage each other to take part.

### Our objectives

We aim to empower our communities to help shape our services. In order to achieve this, our key objectives for this priority are:

- Customer involvement influences service delivery
- Customers are supported to build their capacity and confidence

**We already have great examples of how we work with tenants to ensure their voice is heard:**

### Tenant Scrutiny

The North Ayrshire Inspection Panel is an independent function of the participation structure in Housing Services. Members receive ongoing training, initially developed by an independent organisation, which has been continued and enhanced in-house. An Inspection Panel Toolkit has been established to identify the skills and techniques used in the scrutiny process.

This method of taking part has developed the knowledge base of the tenants involved, and given them the ability and confidence to analyse performance and ask relevant questions. Following an inspection, the Panel produce a report providing a suite of recommendations for improvement, which are used to develop our areas of service.



## **Mystery shopping**

Mystery Shopping is a well-established method of quality control within Housing Services, providing our customers with the opportunity to evaluate the service we provide. Specialist training and support from the Tenant Participation Team enables those involved to develop their organisational and interview skills.

Exercises are structured around specific parts of the service to allow results to be collated and analysed. It allows tenants to take part in service reviews from their own home, and at a time that suits their needs and commitments.

We empower our tenants to be involved in making decisions about service delivery through:

- Approval of all our strategies, information leaflets and publications
- The North Ayrshire Inspection Panel
- Ongoing Mystery Shopping
- Our Annual Performance Report to tenants, in the autumn edition of Tenancy Matters
- Estate Based Projects, giving tenants the opportunity to improve their communities by suggesting and prioritising projects
- Estate Management Inspections
- Tenant and Resident self-assessments
- Tenant representation on regional networks at national level

## **But we want to do more...**

In order to achieve the key objectives under this priority, our areas of development include:

### Peer support

Introducing a 'peer support' element to involvement promotes tenant to tenant communication and engagement. It also removes the formality of exclusively working with housing professionals, which may be a barrier to some people. Individuals may have similar experiences as tenants, and are able to give and receive help and information based on shared responsibility and a mutual agreement of what is important and helpful. This can help build individuals' confidence, and help to build capacity within our communities to deal with local issues effectively.

### Participatory Budgeting

Our Estate Based Projects initiative, which has been in place for ten years in North Ayrshire, allows tenants the opportunity to determine how resources are spent to improve our housing estates. Reviewing this process will allow us to measure how the well initiative incorporates participatory budgeting principles, whilst ensuring the improvements we make to our estates are benefitting tenants.

Our actions under the 'Empower' priority are:

- Measure the impact of participation on service delivery;
- Develop our approach to reporting feedback on customer views;
- Improve information on customer feedback, and how this has impacted service planning and delivery;
- Provide support to tenants to build their capacity;
- Develop our training programme for tenants and other customers;
- Introduce and develop an approach to peer support.

Timescales and how we will measure progress against actions are included in our Action Plan in Appendix 1.

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## Priority 3: Evolve

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Our third priority, 'Evolve' focuses on the continuous improvement and development of our service to best meet the needs of our customers.

Real participation and involvement can only be achieved if it is embedded in the culture of an organisation. Key to this is the empowerment of our tenants, and individuals within our organisation, to identify areas for development. A focus on our customer is core to embedding these behaviours in our organisation.

Our motivation is to continue to provide a high performing, value for money service to our customers. In order to do so, we have to focus on making our services easier and faster to access, and achieve the outcomes our customers want from us. We need to keep up-to-date on legislative and policy changes and emerging trends, to ensure our service continue to meet the needs of its users.

### **Our objectives**

We aim to continually improve on the services we provide, changing and evolving to meet customers' needs in the best way possible. In order to achieve this, our key objectives for this priority are:

- A culture of participation is embedded in Housing Services
- The Service continually adapts to meet changing needs

**We already have great examples of how we are proactive in our approach to developing our service, and are early adopters of good practice.** We do this to facilitate continuous progression, using innovative approaches in the development and delivery of our strategic objectives:

### **Service Improvement Groups**

We have a number of working groups in operation throughout the service, some of which have tenant representation, to promote a 'hands on' approach to service development for tenants. We have tenant membership on our:

- Business Plan Implementation Group
- Repairs / Major Works Service Improvement Group
- Communication and Information Improvement Group
- Tenant Event Working Group
- Value for Money Group
- Housing Support Improvement Group

Physical representation on these groups allows customers to impact on service delivery in real time, and gain an understanding of our policies and procedures. It provides a strategic dimension to our methods of participation, and the groups we have focus on topics we know are important to our tenants.

Our Rent Arrears, Void and Allocations, Estate Management and Customer Care Working Groups, which do not have tenant representation, link closely with these groups to ensure tenant involvement in all areas of service improvement.

### **North Ayrshire Network**

North Ayrshire Network (NAN) is a constituted group comprising tenant representatives from different communities across North Ayrshire. The current role of the Network is to provide an independent examination of the work of Housing Services, and be responsible for ensuring Housing Services continually improves the way it delivers services to tenants and other customers.

There is an inherent understanding throughout all areas of the service that any areas we intend to consult on are taken to the Network for initial comments, before consulting more widely with our tenants and residents. This promotes consistency, and ensures the principles of participation are embedded in all areas of service.

### **Business Plan Implementation Group (BPIG)**

The BPIG was formed in May 2010 to work alongside tenant representatives to develop our 30 year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. The remit of the group has since been extended to monitor implementation of the Business Plan. The group provides an opportunity for tenants to discuss issues and provide input at a strategic level. To date, three tenant representatives have participated in the group, alongside Council staff and elected members.

We currently promote continuous improvement in tenant participation by:

- Developing our relationship with organisations who specialise in tenant participation
- Applying for accreditations and awards, to develop our service through the assessment criteria
- Learning from other landlords and authorities on established good practice methods
- Sharing our good practice with other organisations

### **But we want to do more...**

In order to achieve the key objectives under this priority, our areas of development include:

#### Process review

In order to ensure methods of participation remain relevant and fit for purpose, they need to be reviewed and evaluated regularly. This helps focus our efforts on the topics most important to our customers, and to make certain opportunities available for customers to be involved.

Reviewing our approach to tenant participation will allow us to ensure services are appropriate, efficient and effective. It provides benefits for the Council and our customers, such as higher quality service provision, a more systematic approach to understanding customer needs, and a more engaged community.

#### Improved joint working

Our Connected Communities Service is developing a locality approach, including participation and empowerment, which is essential to ensuring that communities play a central role in shaping local priorities. They will play a key role in the development of community networks to ensure full local participation.

Developing a stronger working relationship will allow both Services to learn from the other's good practice, and provide the opportunity to engage with established groups in communities. This could help Housing Services to involve harder to reach groups, such as young people.

Our actions under the 'Evolve' priority are:

- Develop an in-house training programme on tenant participation;
- Review consultation undertaken across the service to identify good practice and areas for improvement;
- Develop links between local offices / teams and tenants / tenant groups;
- Agree the consultation approach taken by partner services (such as Property Management and Investment) to ensure this fits with our approach;
- Keep abreast of any legislative or policy changes relating to tenant participation and customer involvement;
- Research good practice examples and consider their development in North Ayrshire;
- Ensure engagement and consultation with tenants and other customers reviews their needs from the service.

Timescales and how we will measure progress against actions are included in our Action Plan in Appendix 1.

## 7. Monitoring and Review

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Monitoring and review of this Strategy is as important as setting the strategic objectives. It ensures the Service is following the direction established during the planning process. Our efforts don't stop with the publishing of this Strategy. We looking to continuously improve and find more imaginative and innovative ways of developing services.

We see this strategy as being a living document, informing the work we plan to do over the next five years. It is flexible to allow us to adapt to any changes in policy, legislation or external factors, such as technology changes.

Responsibility for the monitoring and review of this strategy lies with the Housing Senior Manager (West), with the Action Plan (see Appendix 1) being implemented by the Tenant Participation Team. We will review progress on the action plan quarterly, and ensure this information is communicated to our tenants. For more information on the resources and support available to deliver our Tenant Participation Strategy, see Appendix 3.

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# Appendix 1

## Strategy Action Plan 2017-2022

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Progress towards the objectives in this strategy will be reviewed regularly through this action plan, and reported to tenants. The action plan will be reviewed quarterly to ensure work undertaken to achieve the objectives in this strategy continues to address changing national and local policies and priorities.

### Priority 1: Engage

Outcome	What we will do	How we will measure it	Timescale	Lead responsibility
Customers are well informed and can communicate with us easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide good quality information that meets the needs of our customers;</li> <li>Provide opportunities for customers to tell us types of information they are interested in receiving;</li> <li>Use a range of communication methods, including digital participation to communicate with customers;</li> <li>Consider ways to improve communication digitally, through better use of social media, email, text messaging and smart phone apps;</li> <li>Ask tenants about their preferred methods of contact and participation through various channels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenancy Matters to continue to be issued quarterly;</li> </ul>	Annually	TP Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer involvement leaflet to be produced;</li> </ul>	2018/19	Customer Care Working Group
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant and sheltered handbooks to be reviewed;</li> </ul>	2017/18	Customer Care Working Group
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce an Annual Performance Report in line with the SHR requirements and SSHC</li> </ul>	Annually	Head of Service
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive voting through social media to be introduced for posts and Tenancy Matters articles;</li> </ul>	2017/18	TP Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Facebook page developed to include live chats and more interactive communication;</li> </ul>	2017/18	TP Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Tenant Vlog' for Service Improvement Groups to be introduced</li> </ul>	2018/19	TP Team
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Text messaging to be introduced;</li> <li>Twitter and Instagram to be considered as an addition to Facebook;</li> </ul>	2018/19 2018/19	Rent Arrears Working Group TP Team
				TP Team

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of likes on Facebook to be increased;</li> <li>• Number of tenants using online rent accounts to be increased;</li> </ul>	Annually	Rent Arrears Working Group
Involvement is accessible and inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new methods of engagement with harder to reach groups, such as young people;</li> <li>• Ensure involvement methods are promoted and barriers are mitigated;</li> <li>• Provide support for under-represented groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Youth Connections’, a forum to engage with young people, to be introduced;</li> <li>• Participation forum for Refugees to be introduced;</li> <li>• Mobile technology to be piloted in Welfare Reform Advice Team to support digital inclusion.</li> </ul>	2018/19	TP Manager
			2018/19	TP Manager / Refugee Support Manager
			2017/18	Welfare Reform Manager
There are a range of opportunities to take part and get feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide varied involvement opportunities so tenants can take part in a way that suits them;</li> <li>• Review our approach to consultation to identify any areas for improvement;</li> <li>• Offer a range of opportunities to gain feedback on the services we provide.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media engagement to be included as participation method;</li> <li>• Consultation methods to be reviewed in partnership with tenants;</li> <li>• Tri-annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey to be undertaken;</li> </ul>	2017/18	TP Manager
			2018/19	TP Manager
			2018/19	TP Manager

## Priority 2: Empower

Outcome	Actions	How we will measure it	Timescale	Lead responsibility
Customer involvement impacts service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure the impact of participation on service delivery;</li> <li>• Develop our approach to reporting feedback on customer views;</li> <li>• Improve information on customer feedback, and how this has impacted service planning and delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant suggestions to be collated centrally and reported on quarterly to North Ayrshire Network;</li> <li>• You said, we did to be re-introduced to Tenancy Matters and social media.</li> </ul>	2017/18	TP Manager
			2017/18	TP Manager



Customers are supported to build their capacity and confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to tenants to build their capacity;</li> <li>• Develop our training programme for tenants and other customers;</li> <li>• Introduce and develop an approach to peer support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and support to new people taking part to be provided;</li> <li>• Peer support (buddy) programme to be introduced;</li> <li>• Recruitment programme for new participants to be undertaken.</li> </ul>	2018/19	TP Team
			2017/18	TP Team
			2017-19	TP Team

### Priority 3: Evolve

Outcome	Actions	How we will measure it	Timescale	Lead responsibility
A culture of participation is embedded in Housing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an in-house training programme on tenant participation;</li> <li>• Review consultation undertaken across the service to identify good practice and areas for improvement;</li> <li>• Develop links between local offices / teams and tenants / tenant groups;</li> <li>• Agree the consultation approach taken by partner services (such as Property Management and Investment) to ensure this fits with our approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TP to be training delivered to all Housing Services staff;</li> <li>• All Area Housing Offices to be provided with a TP link Officer;</li> <li>• TP Officers to attend all Estate Inspections;</li> <li>• 'Good Neighbour' programme to be introduced</li> <li>• Calendar of Housing Events collated centrally and disseminated to all staff;</li> <li>• Calendar of social media posts collated centrally and disseminated to all staff;</li> </ul>	2017-19	TP Team
			2017/18	TP Team
			2017/18	TP Team
			2018/19	TP Manager
			2017/18	TP Team
The Service continually adapts to meet changing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep abreast of any legislative or policy changes relating to tenant participation and customer involvement;</li> <li>• Research good practice examples and consider their development in North Ayrshire;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good practice in other areas to be standing NAN agenda item;</li> <li>• Estate Based Projects process to be reviewed;</li> <li>• Private Sector and, Value For Money service improvement groups to be introduced;</li> </ul>	2017/18	TP Team
			2017/18	Senior Manager – West
			2018/19	TP Team / Business Planning Team / Private Sector Team

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure engagement and consultation with tenants and other customers reviews their needs from the service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal link between Housing and locality partnerships to be developed;</li> <li>• Tenant participation involving other Services within Place Directorate to be reviewed;</li> <li>• TPAS reaccreditation to be sought;</li> <li>• TIS reaccreditation to be sought.</li> </ul>	2017/18	TP Manager
			2018/19	TP Manager
			2018/19	TP Manager
			2019/20	TP Manager

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## Appendix 2

### Consultation and Feedback

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Consultation involves asking for peoples' views in order to consider them before reaching decisions, with time built in for tenants to make decisions, and landlords to consider them, and agree to the outcome together. Effective consultation helps to design and deliver services people want. It's also a good way to measure service delivery and effectiveness.

Housing Services is committed to improving service delivery and increasing customer satisfaction by making sure that we meet the needs of our customers. We have developed a range of options to ensure participation is maximised, supported by an annual calendar of consultation events. We will consult on a number of topics, for some of which we have a statutory duty to do so. We also carry out large scale surveys, such as our tenant satisfaction survey, to gain views on the services we provide.

In order to continually improve our services, we recognise that we need to regularly collect and use feedback from customers, which is then utilised to improve service delivery. It is also important that we feedback to those who have participated, so that they know that their views have been listened to and are being acted on. We have a number of methods of doing this, including producing an annual consultation report, and sending information to Registered Tenants Organisations, and the North Ayrshire Network.

We know from our tenant satisfaction surveys that 'Tenancy Matters' is a popular way of providing feedback to tenants, residents and all service users, and we will use this forum to highlight how tenant engagement has shaped or improved our Service.

#### **Customer Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

If customers have a comment, compliment or complaint about any part of the Housing Service, they can report it easily to any member of staff.

North Ayrshire is committed to providing high-quality customer services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

An easy to understand leaflet outlining the process on how to complain, comment or compliment a service or staff member is available at most local Council offices, customer contacts centres, online and in local libraries.

## Appendix 3

### Resources and Support

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Resources are required to effectively develop our tenant participation approach, and ensure it is embedded throughout the service. These can be financial, physical, or staff support. North Ayrshire Housing Services has the following resources dedicated to involving our tenants:

#### **Financial**

An annual budget of £100,000 (excluding staff salaries) from our Housing Revenue Account (our Council landlord account funded through rental income from our housing stock) is allocated to tenant participation. This is reviewed annually in consultation with North Ayrshire Network. The budget funds activities such as:

- Consultation exercises, such as our tenant satisfaction survey
- Information for tenants, including our Tenancy Matters newsletter
- Mystery shopping exercises
- Tenant events
- Independent advice and assistance from specialists
- Training and attendance at events, for both staff and tenants
- Administration
- Tenant expenses, such as transport to events
- Field trips and study visits

All eligible Tenants & Residents Associations (TARAs) can apply to the Tenant Participation (TP) Team for an annual grant of £150 to support the development and running of their group. They must provide information with the application, including current audited accounts, a constitution, contact details and minutes of their meetings. The grant can be used to pay for expenses such as postage, stationery, advertising, and travel. Additional funding can be requested, and will be considered by the TP Team.

External grant funding is also available for TARAs. More information on this is available through the Tenant Participation Team.

#### **Staffing**

The Tenant Participation Team comprises a Manager, two Officers and an Administration Assistant. They support and develop tenant participation throughout North Ayrshire. Their functions include:

- Coordinating tenant consultation
- Working with other services to enhance involvement
- Providing specialist advice within the service and to tenants
- Training and developing staff and tenants
- Facilitating tenant and resident meetings
- Encouraging participation with underrepresented groups
- Facilitating North Ayrshire Network, North Ayrshire Inspection Panel and Service Improvement Groups

Aside from this dedicated resource, various parts of the service engage with our customers on a regular basis, and consult on a number of topics in their specialist areas. The Tenant Participation Team support them in these activities.

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## Appendix 4

### Registered Tenants Organisations

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#### Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs)

Tenants & Residents Associations are groups of people representing tenants and residents living in an area or street. Their aim is to put forward views and concerns about their housing, community and local areas to the Council, so they can take part in the decision-making processes. We currently provide support to the nine TARAs in North Ayrshire.

#### Registered Tenants Organisations

Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) are key to tenant involvement. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Registration of Tenant Organisations) Order 2002 sets out the criteria for registration as set by Scottish Ministers. As a landlord, we can provide information on the criteria for both registration and de-registration of groups, and how this is implemented in North Ayrshire.

All of the TARAs we currently support are registered with us. Our current Register of Tenant Organisations is as follows:

Registered Tenant Organisation	Date Re-registered
Blair Residents Association, Dalry	Dec 2016
Broomlands & Bourtreehill Tenants & Residents Association, Irvine	March 2016
Castlepark & Eglinton Tenants & Residents Group, Irvine	Dec 2016
Fullarton Tenants, Association, Irvine	March 2016
Hayocks Tenants & Residents Association, Stevenston	March 2016
John Galt Tenants Association, Irvine	June 2016
Meadowfoot Tenants & Residents Association, West Kilbride	October 2014
Saltcoats High Flats Tenants & Residents Association, Saltcoats	August 2016
Skelmorlie Tenants & Residents Association, Skelmorlie	October 2016

## Useful Contact Numbers

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### **Tenant Participation Team**

01294 324878

### **Area Housing Offices**

Beith & Dalry 01294 835355

Irvine 01294 310150

Kilbirnie 01505 685177

Kilwinning 01294 552261

Largs 01475 687590

Three Towns 01294 310005

### **Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Team**

01294 314640

### **Benefits Service**

01294 310000

### **Repairs Contact Line**

01294 310000

### **Tenant Priorities Team, Scottish Government**

0131 244 5568

### **Tenants Information Service (TIS)**

0141 248 1242

### **Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Scotland**

0141 552 3633

### **Scottish Housing Regulator**

0141 271 3810

### **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

0800 377 7330

### **Equal Opportunities Commission (Scotland)**

0845 601 5901