

# Tenant Participation Strategy



Listening



Informing



Responding

## Working Together

Tenant Participation Arrangements in  
Dundee City Council's Housing Service

## Contents

page

Introduction	<b>2</b>
Principles Behind the Strategy	<b>2</b>
Aims of the Strategy	<b>3</b>
Commitments and Standards of Service	<b>3</b>
Equal Opportunities	<b>5</b>
How We Involve Tenants in Shaping the Housing Service	<b>6</b>
How We Developed the Strategy	<b>6</b>
Development of Tenant Organisations	<b>7</b>
Consulting and Giving Information	<b>8</b>
Working with the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations	<b>9</b>
Involving Tenants and Other Service Users in Scrutiny	<b>9</b>
Resources for Tenant Participation	<b>11</b>
Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plan	<b>12</b>
How the Strategy will be Monitored and Reviewed	<b>13</b>
Calendar for Participation	<b>19</b>
Making a Complaint	<b>20</b>
Glossary of terms	<b>21</b>

## Introduction

Tenant Participation is about tenants taking part and influencing decisions which will have a direct effect on the housing services they receive.

Tenant participation is about two way communication, consultation and participation which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power.



The aim of this document is to build on the achievements already made in tenant participation and the Strategy is intended to be a working document which sets out how we will continue to develop tenant participation throughout Dundee.

This Strategy sets out opportunities for tenant involvement and includes objectives and an action plan for the period 2016-20. The Strategy contains information on the ways tenants can get involved in working with the Council to shape and develop the housing service.

## Principles behind the Strategy

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out the legal requirements for tenant participation in Scotland. The Council, as a landlord has a number of legal duties regarding tenant participation. They are:

- To develop and implement a tenant participation strategy.
- To maintain a register of tenant organisations and to set up arrangements for the registration of tenant organisations.
- To consult with registered tenant organisations and individual tenants on a range of issues – housing policies (changes to policies and procedures), housing conditions and other related services e.g. anti-social behaviour, environmental issues.

In addition to the duty for participation, the Government has given guidance to social landlords on the principles for good participation. These are set out in the National Strategy - 'Partners in Participation'. These principles are:

- Tenant participation requires a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, councillors and housing officers working towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services.
- Tenant participation practice should be seen as a continuous process where information, ideas and power are shared, common understandings of problems are strived for and a consensus on solutions is worked out.
- Good tenant participation allows all parties to contribute to the agenda.
- All participants need to have all the information needed to consider the issues properly; that information requires to be clear, timely, accessible and to take account of equal opportunities concerns.

- ❑ Processes of decision making should be open, clear and accountable.
- ❑ Adequate time should be given to tenant representatives to consider the issues properly. Tenants should have the opportunity to work out a common view in advance of meeting landlords' representatives.
- ❑ Good tenant participation requires the landlord to recognise the independence of tenant organisations.
- ❑ Good working relationships evolve gradually and are flexible to adapt to local circumstances.
- ❑ Tenant organisations require adequate resources for organisation, training and support.
- ❑ Tenant participation must meet the requirements of the legislation surrounding equal opportunities. Good practice in participation removes barriers to effective participation arising from ethnicity, geographic location, and special needs language differences, learning difficulties, age, sexual orientation or disability.



### **Aims of this Strategy**

By delivering this Strategy the Council will:

- ❑ Develop a range of opportunities for people to get involved, which reflect local circumstances and allow people to participate effectively.
- ❑ Build and develop an agreed programme of scrutiny activities with people who use our services.
- ❑ Ensure all tenants, staff and all other people who use our services, will be given access to adequate levels of training and support that will enable them to participate more effectively.
- ❑ Continuously develop ways of improving communication and information sharing to meet the needs of all.
- ❑ Regularly monitor and review this strategy to ensure it continues to be effective.

### **Commitments and Standards of Service for Tenant Participation**

To deliver these aims and the principles of good tenant participation the Council will abide by a set of commitments to the way we deliver our services. The Council expects that RTO's will also meet certain expectations in joint working to develop a spirit of trust and partnership. Over the period of this Strategy the Council will review standards for housing services including any local outcomes and "Codes of Practice" together with tenants' representatives.

### **When engaging in Tenant Participation the Council will:**

- Involve its tenants as partners in considering matters affecting their communities and recognise their collective concerns.
- Continue to support Registered Tenants' Organisations (RTO's) and encourage new tenants groups.
- Maintain a register of tenant organisations which meet the criteria set by the Scottish Government and who have successfully applied for registration.
- Ensure that all tenants' groups are kept informed and updated on issues which affect them.
- Consult with tenants to assess and agree the level of resources that are committed to implement the Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Acknowledge the importance of independent advice to tenants and agree with tenants' arrangements for resourcing this advice.
- Recognise and respect the rights of RTO's to be independent of the Council.
- Provide training opportunities for staff, elected members, tenants and other customers to develop the skills necessary to assist partnership working.
- Ensure that all printed information sent to our tenants is clearly written in "plain English" or meets the individual's needs on request.
- Continue to improve communication by providing better information and listening to tenant's ideas and views.
- Hold a register of interested tenants who can be contacted to participate in working groups, surveys or other consultations.
- Support tenants and other customers to scrutinise the Council's performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes.

The standards of service which individual tenants and RTO's can expect of the Council are:

- When a tenant or RTO writes to Neighbourhood Services, a full reply will be given within ten working days.
- If the information requested is not readily available, an explanation will be given within five working days. A full reply will then follow within a further ten working days.
- If we cannot give a date by which the information requested will be provided, an explanation will be given within five working days.
- All written replies will name the person who is dealing with the enquiry.
- When invited to a meeting, Neighbourhood Services will confirm who will attend.
- Those attending will be expected to know any details of the subjects to be discussed and be able to explain what influence tenants' views will have on Council decisions.
- When inviting tenants to meetings the Neighbourhood Services will provide written details of the time, place and purpose of the meeting 10 working days in advance (or less, if agreed by the appropriate tenant representative and the department).



In addition to this the Council will abide by its Customer Charter

We will:-

- be open and honest and explain our decisions
- deal with your enquiry promptly and explain reasons for any delay
- provide choices around how you access our services
- give you the information you need about our services
- listen to what you have to say
- treat you with respect and courtesy
- aim to get things right first time
- apologise to you when we get things wrong and then put things right.

We expect that Registered Tenants Organisations will:

- Work as partners with the Council on matters affecting their communities.
- Try to make information available to all tenants in the areas covered by their organisations.
- Aim to represent the views and interests of Council tenants and communicate issues of concern.
- Identify resources needed, including training for Council tenants.
- Be accountable to the Council for the use of the funds it provides.

## Equal Opportunities

Dundee City Council recognises the importance of equality of opportunity for all of its citizens. The Council aims to achieve equality of opportunity by ensuring commitment to the provision of accessible services taking account of the diversity of groups and individuals. Registered Tenant Organisations are also required to promote equal opportunities in their written constitutions.

The Council wants people from different backgrounds and with different experiences to get involved in the decision making process. Similarly, the Council promotes participation free from prejudice and bias with regard to ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, geographic location, special needs, language differences, learning difficulties or disability.

The Council will ensure that everyone who wants to get involved can get involved and will make events and activities welcoming and safe. It also addresses issues of accessibility with regard to information, publicity, venues, transport, caring responsibilities and other obstacles as budgetary constraints allow.

When working with tenants we will:

- promote and encourage the full and active involvement of all tenants in tenant participation



- support and advise any tenant who encounters barriers arising from ethnicity, special needs, language difficulties, age, sexual orientation or disability
- provide on request, translations of publications produced for tenants or in another format which meets tenant's needs
- provide on request language and British Sign Language translators at tenant's meetings.
- promote good practice amongst staff by providing equal opportunities training

## How We Involve Tenants in Shaping the Housing Service

### How We Developed the Strategy

Between November 2015 and March 2016 the Council consulted with tenants to review the Tenant Participation Strategy. A number of individuals and representatives of RTO's and the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Organisations (DFTA) attended a consultation event in November 2015 and tenants and RTO's responded to on-line and paper surveys about what they thought should be addressed by the strategy. The main issues highlighted in these consultations were:

- The need to engage with hard to reach groups.
- A need to review and revise the written and electronic information on Tenant Participation.
- Ensure that information is effectively communicated to RTOs, 'Interested Persons' and the DFTA.
- Produce a Calendar of tenant participation opportunities.
- Improve use of social media to promote tenant participation.
- Investigate the opportunities for producing newsletters.
- Provide feedback on the outcomes of consultations and how changes are being made as a result.
- Ensure that council offices are used to advertise Tenant Participation.
- Give better information on planned improvements to Council houses.
- Promote tenant participation by attending: community events, supermarkets, shopping centres, hospitals, libraries etc.
- Develop training for tenants.
- Arrange study visits/shadowing to allow tenants to learn from each other and see how other groups work.
- Have more joint working with local housing associations and their tenants.
- Arrange free use of photocopiers/printers in council buildings for RTO's.
- Review the funding allocated to the DFTA and RTO's

Where appropriate we have addressed these issues in the Action Plan for this Tenant Participation Strategy.

## Development of Tenant Organisations

Dundee City Council and the DFTA will actively encourage the development of tenant organisations. Groups will be provided with support and guidance by council staff. Groups will be encouraged to register with the Council and it will try to address the issues which tenants raise.

The Council will support tenants in attending regional and national conferences where possible.

### Training and Development of Participants

The Council will work together with tenants to identify their training requirements. The Council will identify and evaluate training providers, both in-house and external. Tenant groups and people who take part in scrutiny activities will be provided with information on training opportunities. Taking part in conferences and seminars run by, for example, the Tenants Information Service (TIS), Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), Scotland's Housing Network (SHN), are also recognised as an important part of individual development so the council will continue to support tenant attendance at these functions.



### Registration of Tenants Groups

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out criteria which tenant groups must meet to be accepted as a registered tenant organisation. The Council has produced a leaflet and an application form to be completed for registration and these are available from any Council office and the Council's website.



In brief, groups will need to:

- Have a publicly available constitution.
- Have a formally elected committee.
- Operate within a specific area and have a defined membership.
- Have appropriate accounting records and an annual financial statement to its annual general meeting.
- Demonstrate that it can represent the views of its members who are Council tenants in its area of operation.

The Council will encourage tenant organisations to apply for registered tenant organisation status. The legislation allows the Council to refuse to register a tenant group or remove it from the register. A group may appeal against the Council's decision. A copy of the Register of Tenants Organisations is available on the Council's website.

We recognise that some tenant organisations may not wish to register. Where appropriate, we will consult with non registered groups, but these consultation arrangements will not be bound by the commitments set out in our strategy and the statutory provisions of the Act. Members of such groups who are council tenants will maintain their rights to be consulted as individuals.



## Consulting and Giving Information

We will ensure that tenants have the opportunity to have a say in how the housing service should be delivered. We will ensure that tenants are kept updated on service changes and on how their views have been taken on board.

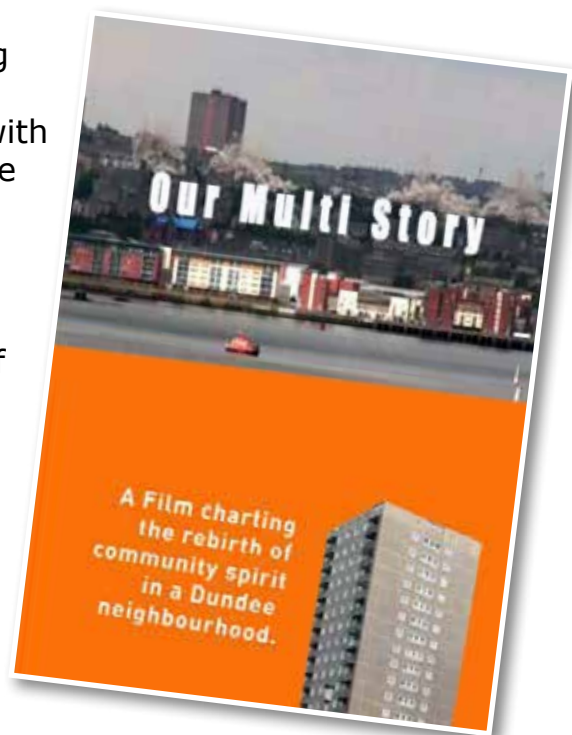
We will also ensure that tenants are kept fully informed about proposals or projects which may directly affect their home or local environment. We provide tenants with the opportunity to indicate whether or not we have adhered to these commitments through customer satisfaction surveys and by monitoring complaints.

We will keep tenants informed about day to day services. This information will be provided using leaflets, posters, social media, the council's web page and tenant's handbooks issued to new tenants at tenancy agreement signings.

We will also keep tenants informed through focus groups (groups of service users coming together to discuss specific service delivery issues) consultation events and by issuing surveys.

Registered Tenants' Organisations representing an area affected by a major repair and improvement project will always be provided with information about the project. This may include the following information unless agreed otherwise by the Council and the RTO:

- Details of any project planned for their area over the course of the coming year
- Details of any changes to the start date of any project planned for their area
- A briefing from the appropriate housing officer on how the work will be carried out before it starts on site
- A briefing from the appropriate housing officer prior to any public meeting
- Regular updates on the progress of projects
- Reasons for any withdrawal of a project originally planned for their area.



Tenants directly affected by a major repair or improvement project will always receive information about:

- The amount of work that will take place and the level of disruption that it will cause
- The expected start and completion dates
- The contact person in the housing department
- An emergency contact number where necessary.

We will, where possible, offer design choices to tenants and RTOs on projects. We will ensure that any meetings required to reach an agreement will provide tenants/RTOs adequate time to consider the issues properly.

## Working with the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations



The Council recognises the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations (DFTA) as the largest representative body for tenants groups in the city. The Council will provide funding and support to the DFTA to help it to be an effective voice for tenants. Regular meetings will take place to ensure that officials, tenants' representatives and councillors work together in partnership to deliver the Tenant Participation Strategy.

The Council will meet with the DFTA quarterly. These meetings provide opportunities for tenants to bring forward concerns or proposals on issues which they feel are not, or cannot be met through established decision making processes. The agendas for these meetings are determined by tenants' representatives.

### Involving Tenants in Scrutiny

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 requires Scottish Ministers to set standards and outcomes which social landlords should aim to achieve and to publish these in a Scottish Social Housing Charter. It is the responsibility of each landlord to meet the outcomes and standards set by the Charter.

The Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) approach to monitoring landlords' achievement of the Charter Outcomes emphasises the importance of tenants being involved in the scrutiny of landlords' performance. This is firmly rooted in the principles that a landlord should: understand its tenants' priorities and needs; involve them in setting policies, objectives and standards; involve them in the implementation of decisions; and then support them to hold the landlord to account.

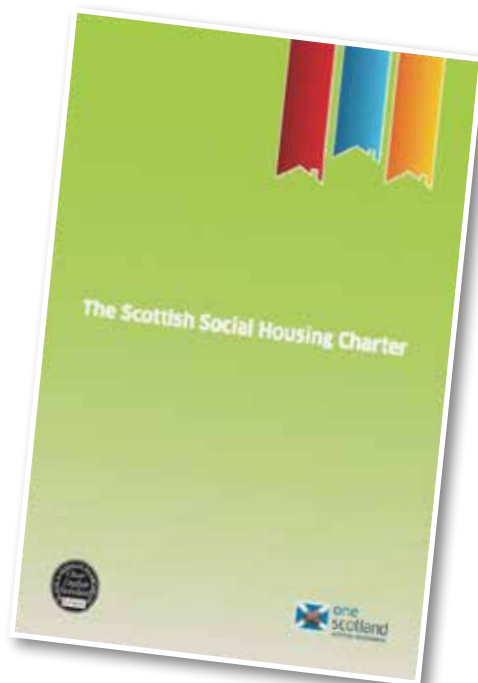
To meet the requirements of the SHR, Landlords must demonstrate that they:

- Have agreed their approach with tenants.
- Ensure that it is effective and meaningful – that the chosen approach gives tenants a real and demonstrable say in the assessment of performance.
- Publicise the approach to tenants.
- Landlords must have regard to a range of other service users who are not tenants, including:
  - Homeless people
  - Owners
  - Gypsies/Travellers who use sites provided and managed by councils and RSLs.

For each year ending on 31 March, social landlords must report their performance in achieving or progressing towards the Charter outcomes and standards to their tenants and other service users. They should do this as soon after the end of the reporting year as is practicable and reasonable, but no later than the October of each year.

To meet the requirements of the SHR that we involve tenants and other service users in the scrutiny of housing services we have consulted widely. Between June and November 2013 we consulted on what service users considered the most important services were, how they would like us to report performance information, how they would prefer to be involved in scrutiny.

To follow up the consultation we held a further consultation event on 30th January 2014. At this event workshops discussed the outcomes of the consultation and options for scrutiny. There was a broad agreement for some sort of scrutiny panel together with a range of other scrutiny activity. It was agreed to set up a steering group of tenants and other service users to develop a model for scrutiny in Dundee. During February and March 2014 a Steering Group consisting of 13 Tenants and other service users met to draft a scrutiny framework.



### Scrutiny Panel

The Scrutiny Steering Group recommended that the scrutiny framework should centre on a Scrutiny Panel which oversees and directs other scrutiny activity such as Tenant Led inspections and Mystery Shopping. The panel has now been constituted and consists of 16 members drawn from:

- DFTA
- RTO's who are not affiliated to the DFTA
- Home owners to whom the council provides a factoring service
- Minority Groups (who are tenants or service users)
- Open nominations – anyone who:
  - Is a tenant (but not DFTA Committee or an RTO who is already represented)
  - An applicant on the housing list (including Common Housing Register)
  - Is a factored owner

The main remit of the Scrutiny Panel is to agree a programme of scrutiny activity over the year and to recommend areas for improvement for the Council to implement.



### Scrutiny Activities

Tenants have expressed an interest in a wide range of methods to scrutinise services. These include Tenant Led Inspections, (which the Council has been using for several years now) and Mystery Shopping.

## Resources for Tenant Participation

The Tenant Participation budget is made up of two elements: direct Council expenditure to implement the tenant participation sections of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and; Grants to Tenant Associations (registered with and/or supported by the Council).

Staff within Housing and Communities will have responsibility for liaising with tenants groups and to help tenants and staff get the most from the tenant participation strategy. Support and advice may include:

- Helping RTOs to prepare and adopt a constitution which complies with statutory criteria forming part of the Housing (Scotland) act 2001
- Helping RTOs to draw up and submit an application to be included on the Council's register
- Helping RTOs communicate with /obtain the views of their individual members.
- Support and encouragement to take part in "Community Planning".

## Direct Expenditure

The Council (Direct Expenditure) budget will pay for the following:

- The costs of producing, printing and posting information to tenants. Information will have clear tenant participation content/input.
- The costs of promoting and developing tenant participation generally within the City. This includes support from staff: facilities; advertising or promotional activities to encourage new groups and/or individual tenants to become involved in tenant participation activities.
- The expenses involved in running tenant participation working groups set up by the Council, including joint tenant/officer groups, tenant scrutiny and training for those involved.

Tenants are not expected to be out of pocket as a result of participating. The following expenses can be claimed by tenants:

- Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by tenants where they have been invited to attend meetings by the Council.
- Travel and subsistence expenses of tenants attending conferences where attendance has been agreed with the Council and they are representing Dundee's tenants.
- Reimbursement of other expenses incurred by individual tenants (e.g. telephone and stationery costs) in contributing to general tenant participation initiatives where their contribution has been previously agreed with the Council and the tenants cannot reclaim these expenses from tenant organisations.

## Grants to Registered Tenants Organisations

Funding will be awarded on the basis of applications received from each association. These bids will be assessed and a grant will be paid if required criteria are met.

The funding is intended to be a contribution to the costs of running tenant organisations. It is not necessarily intended to cover all running costs. It is assumed that associations will pursue other sources of funding e.g. local fundraising, donations, and grants from other bodies. An organisation's bid should cover all planned expenditure for the forthcoming financial year and only in exceptional cases will further bids be considered during the same financial year.

## Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plan

The Strategy Action Plan has been set out using the Scottish Social Housing Charter's Outcomes and where relevant Charter Indicators, these being:

### Participation

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.

*Charter Indicator: Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes.*

### Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that: 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.

*Charter Indicator: Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions.*



### Value for Money for Rents and Service Charges

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that: tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay. Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

- A balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them
- Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

*Charter Indicator: Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money.*



## Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that 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.

*Charter Indicator: Ethnic origins and disability details of service users, staff and for RSLs only, governing body members.*

Each of these outcomes has a set of actions which the council intends to take to achieve the desired outcome a measurement of our success.

## How the strategy will be monitored and reviewed

The Action Plan on pages will provide the main means of monitoring and reviewing the Tenant Participation Strategy. The Council's Lead Officers will meet with the Housing Best Value Review Group, the DFTA and the Scrutiny Panel regularly to review the progress of the Action Plan to ensure that the strategy is achieving its aims. The progress of the strategy will also be discussed at tenant events in order to include as many tenants as possible in the process.





## Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plan 2016 - 2020

<p><b>Outcome:</b>  <i>Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.</i></p>	<p><b>Measurement</b>  <b>Charter Indicator No. 6:</b>                  Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes. This will be measured through a survey every 3 years.</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p>	
<p>Introduce a Suggestions/ Complaints/ Compliments box in main offices</p> <p>Support and develop the scrutiny of Housing Services in Dundee</p>	<p><b>Measurement</b>                  By December 2016.                  Number of Scrutiny activities completed annually by tenants or other service users.</p>
<p>Promote Tenant Participation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending community events</li> <li>• Having tenant participation stalls/surgeries in supermarkets, shopping centres, hospitals, libraries etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Number of events/locations attended per year</p>
<p>Develop and implement a comprehensive training programme for tenants including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a qualification or accreditation certificate for 'volunteers' who complete certain aspects/ tasks to encourage involvement</li> <li>• Arrange study visits/shadowing in other RTO areas – tenants can learn from each other and see how other groups work.</li> <li>• Investigate possibility of using staff E-learning packages for new tenants/ RTO groups</li> <li>• DFTA - Develop better in-depth training for DFTA representatives to ensure they are equipped to deal with or feed back difficult issues.</li> </ul>	<p>Number of Tenants qualified</p> <p>Number of visits per year</p> <p>Number of volunteers trained per year.</p> <p>Number of DFTA Representatives trained per year.</p>
<p>Consider free use of photocopiers/printer for RTO's in district offices</p>	<p>By April 2017</p>
<p>Review arrangements for Tenant Led Inspections (TLI's) and Mystery Shopping together with tenants representatives every 2 years</p>	<p>Review TLI's in 2017 &amp; 2019</p> <p>Review Mystery Shopping in 2018 &amp; 2020</p>
<p>Develop an E-Learning training module on Tenant Participation for staff to coincide with the launch of the new Strategy</p>	<p>Complete the Module by January 2016</p> <p>100% of staff completed the training module</p>

<p>Develop the DFTA and RTO's to maximise their engagement with a wide range of tenants by giving guidance and training covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutions</li> <li>• Committee roles</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Codes of conduct</li> <li>• Development plans</li> <li>• Communication and social media.</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> </ul>	<p>Number of tenants receiving training/briefings per year</p>
<p>Consult on policy developments and give RTO's a minimum of six weeks to respond.</p>	<p>Number of Consultations carried out per year. Number of RTO's responding to consultations</p>
<p>Pursue more joint working with local Housing Associations to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share good practice</li> <li>• Make best use of resources</li> <li>• Widen opportunities for participation</li> </ul>	<p>Number of Joint activities completed per year.</p>

<p><b>Outcome</b>  <i>Tenants 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.</i></p>	<p><b>Measurement</b>  <b>Charter Indicator No. 3:</b>  Percentage of tenants who feel their landlords is good at keeping them informed. This will be measured through a survey every 3 years.</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Review and revise the written and electronic information on Tenant Participation and the opportunities for involvement to ensure that they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible</li> <li>• Easily understood</li> <li>• Take account of dyslexia, non English, sensory impairment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Measurement</b></p> <p>Number of joint reviews undertaken with tenants' representatives per year</p>
<p>Review Standards of Service and any "Codes of Practice" for tenant participation together with tenants' representatives</p>	<p>By December 2017</p>
<p>Develop and keep up to date an 'interested persons' database/ mailing list (in accordance with Scottish Government Requirements)</p>	<p>Review the interested person's database annually.</p>
<p>Invite RTO's to share their development plans with the local area housing manager/Local Community Planning Partnerships to improve communication and partnership working</p>	<p>Percentage of RTOs sharing Development Plans each year</p>
<p>Produce a Calendar of Tenant Participation Opportunities</p>	<p>Produce Calendar by March each year</p>
<p>Improve and expand use of social media to promote tenant participation</p>	<p>Number of "friends" on DCC Tenant Participation Facebook.   Number of followers and "tweets" on twitter account</p>
<p>Produce a quarterly summary report of all tenant involvement where RTOs/tenants have contributed to improvements in the service and distribute to RTOs and to the wider tenant movement via the website</p>	<p>Quarterly Reports produced in July, October, January and April.</p>
<p>Investigate the opportunities for producing newsletters together with other council services</p>	<p>By October 2017</p>

Provide feedback on the outcomes of consultations and how changes are being made as a result.	Annual update in the Customer Report
Ensure that Council offices are used to promote and advertise Tenant Participation	Outcome of mystery shopping on frontline services.
Meet with tenants groups to give them information on planned improvements to their houses	Number of meetings held per year
Survey Registered Tenants' Organisations annually to assess their satisfaction with support given by the Council	% of RTO's who are satisfied with support given by the Council
<p><b>Outcome</b>  <i>Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them</li> <li>• tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Measurement</b>  <b>Charter Indicator No. 29:</b>  Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money. This will be measured through a survey every 3 years.</p>
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Measurement</b>
Widely advertise and consult on the annual rent increase	November to January Annually. Number of responses to consultation.
Implement the 'Guidance on the Operation of Local Authority Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) in Scotland' including the role of tenant scrutiny in the running of housing services.	Review the methodology for involving tenants in HRA decisions in line with new guidance by December 2017
Review the funding agreement between Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations and the Council to implement an outcome based contract.	By October 2017
Agree annually the budget for Tenant Participation and the resources allocated to the DFTA and RTO's.	By October annually

<p><b>Outcome</b> 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</p>	<p><b>Measurement</b> Percentage of complaints related to equalities issues, responded to in full every year, that were resolved by the landlord and the percentage upheld.</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Increase engagement of hard to reach groups (homeless people, gypsy travellers, hearing/visually impaired, physical/learning/mental health, minority ethnic groups in tenant participation activities by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulting with representative groups (where they exist) on policy changes</li> <li>• Consult with residents on Gypsy Travellers site regarding satisfaction</li> <li>• Seek out representatives from hard to reach groups on any forums or working groups (e.g. Scrutiny Panel, Tenant Led Inspections)</li> <li>• Have a presence at community/cultural events to promote Tenant Participation</li> </ul> <p>Ensure that signage in offices advertise translation/interpretation services</p>	<p><b>Measurement</b></p> <p>Number of Consultations Percentage satisfied Representation on Groups Number of events attended</p>
<p>Ensure that signage in offices advertise translation/interpretation services</p>	<p>Outcome of mystery shopping on frontline services.</p>

## Calendar for Participation

Every year there are certain important decisions which the Council must make. These are regularly timetabled to meet the Council's requirement to set its budgets. There are opportunities for tenants to participate in these decisions and be informed of outcomes. The Calendar below sets out these timescales and opportunities for participation:

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
<b>Policy</b>			Service Plan is Agreed								DFTA/RTO's are consulted on Priorities for next year's service plan	
<b>Rents</b>								Rent consultation starts	Rent consultation closes	Rent Increase Agreed		
<b>Investment Plans</b>		DFTA and RTO's consider priorities for major repair and improvement programmes							Tenants representatives and the Council agree the draft capital plan and agree arrangements for giving information or further participation of tenants		Capital Programme is agreed	
<b>Review</b>		Scrutiny Panel Annual Progress Report		Scrutiny Panel and the council draft the annual Customer Report				Customer Report is Published			The Scrutiny Panel agrees it's annual Scrutiny Plan	
		The Council submits the Annual Return on the Charter		SHR Publishes Landlord Report								
									Tenants and Residents participate in the design of the 3 yearly survey of tenants and residents.			Satisfaction Survey is carried out and reported



## Making a Complaint

We do our best to get things right first time. If you are not happy with the service you receive, the quickest way to sort things out is to contact the staff responsible for the service and give them a chance to put things right.

If, after speaking to them, you are still not satisfied, you have the right to make an official complaint using our Complaints Procedure. Any member of staff can show you how to submit a complaint. You can also contact Customer Services or visit the Council's website

[www.dundee.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.dundee.gov.uk/complaints)

If you are still dissatisfied after going through our Complaints Procedure you can report this to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Any complaint for the Ombudsman can be sent free of charge (i.e. no stamp is needed) to:

**Freepost SPSO**

Where you believe that the Council has made a significant performance failure, a complaint can be made to the Scottish Housing Regulator:

<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/what-we-do/raising-concerns-about-landlord>

## Councillors Surgeries

All councillors have regular surgeries which any tenant or tenant representative can go along to. These surgeries provide opportunities for tenants or their representatives to put their concerns on council housing issues directly to their local councillors, particularly where they feel all other avenues open to them have not provided them with satisfaction.

## Who to contact

- West District Housing Office 01382 307301
- East District Housing Office 01382 307401
- Lettings Centre 01382 307400
- Housing Repairs 01382 434343
- Antisocial Behaviour Advice Line 0800 169 3845 or 01382 307342
- Homeless Advice Line 0800 633 5843 or 01382 432001
- Housing Investment Unit 01382 434848

## Glossary of Terms

**Constitution** – The written rules which a tenants group uses to run its business.

**AGM (Annual General Meeting)** – The yearly meeting which a tenants' group holds to elect its chairperson, committee and to report on its achievements and finances.

**Capital Expenditure** – the money which the council spends to improve or build houses.

**DFTA – The Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations** – the body which represents Registered Tenants' Organisations in Dundee.

**Direct Council expenditure** – the money which the council spends on tenant participation itself (that is not including grants to the DFTA and RTO's).

**Equal opportunities** – it is illegal to treat someone less fairly because of: age, sex, race, disability, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or religious background.

**Financial Year** – the year running from 1st April to 31st March.

**Housing Revenue Account** – a separate account held by the council for the money collected from council house rents and spent by the council on repairing, maintaining and improving council housing.

**Indicator** - Something that provides an indication, especially of trends.

**Legislation** - The act or process of making laws.

**Mystery Shopping** – tenants using the council services to collect information about how good the service is.

**Outcome** – the change or difference made as the result of an action.

**Representative** – people who are chosen to speak on behalf of other tenants or customers

**Register of Tenants Organisations** – A list of tenant groups held by the council which is available on its website.

**Registered Social Landlord** – a Housing Association which is registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator.

**Resources** – the money, people or property which the council or another body can use to do its business.

**Revenue Expenditure** – the money which the council uses to pay running costs e.g. office costs, staff wages, repairs.

**RTO** – a registered tenant organisation (tenants association)

**Scottish Housing Regulator** – a non government body which protects the interests of tenants, homeless people and others who use social landlords' services.

**Scottish Public Services Ombudsman** – an organisation which deals with the final stage of complaints about councils, the National Health Service, housing associations, colleges and universities, prisons, most water providers, the Scottish Government and its agencies and departments and most Scottish authorities.

**Scottish Social Housing Charter** – a government statement of the standards and outcomes that tenants and homeless people can expect of social landlords.

**Scrutiny** – giving tenants the ability to hold their landlords to account by working in partnership to achieve better performance and improved outcomes

**Social Landlord** – a landlord who manages non commercial housing, usually a local authority or housing association.

**Tenant Led Inspection** – an assessment of the council's housing service and agreed with the Council but led by a group of tenant volunteers.

**Tenant Participation** - tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about their housing and related services.

