



# **TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

**2020 - 2023**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Spire View Housing Association aims to provide excellent standards across our services that meet tenants' expectations and provide value for money. Active and meaningful tenant participation contributes towards us achieving this.

The National Strategy for Tenant Participation, 'Partners in Participation (1999)' defines tenant participation as *'about tenants taking part in decision-making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies, housing conditions and housing and related services. It is a two way process which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power. Its aim is to improve the standard of housing conditions and service'*.

Using this definition, this strategy has been developed in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which requires all registered social landlords to involve their tenants in decision-making processes and recognises this as a tenant's right. It demonstrates our ongoing commitment to develop tenant participation and details an Action Plan to ensure this strategy is delivered, monitored, and reviewed.

This Strategy is a living document that will evolve through ongoing review. It will set out the ways in which tenants can participate in the Association and the ways in which the Association will ensure opportunities to participate and influence decision making.

This Strategy complies with the Scottish Social Housing Charter (2012) Outcome Standards:

1. Equalities
2. Communication
3. Participation

## **2.0 Background**

As part of the review of the Tenant Participation Strategy and Action Plan, the Association undertook a comprehensive survey of tenants. This exercise was conducted by staff members and was carried out via telephone, due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings. A total of 102 questionnaires were completed representing a response rate of 48%. The results of this questionnaire have been considered in the development of this Strategy and Action Plan and further details are contained in Section 5.

In the latter part of 2018, the Association undertook a full Tenant Satisfaction Survey. The relevant findings from this survey have also been incorporated into this document.

## **3.0 Benefits of Participation**

Spire View Housing Association aims to provide excellent standards across our services that meet tenants' expectations and provide value for money. Active and meaningful tenant participation contributes towards us achieving this and ensure we meet standards set by the Scottish Housing Charter.

***Benefits for tenants include:***

- Increased control over living conditions.
- Services from the Association that are better targeted and offer greater satisfaction.
- Greater ability to influence the decisions and direction of the Association.
- More direct avenues to inform the Association of the issues that matter most to them and their areas
- The opportunity to develop new skills and access training, which can be applied to other circumstances and to the benefit of communities.

***Benefits for Spire View Housing Association include:***

- Better community knowledge and experience, leading to more efficient and cost effective management.
- Services are targeted to needs.
- The Association is better equipped to respond to changing needs and circumstances.

***Mutual benefits include:***

- Increased communication between tenants, residents, and the Association
- The Association and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives, responsibilities, and limitations.
- Better links between the community and the Association

**4.0 Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the strategy are outlined below. These have been developed taking account of the views of tenants, staff and committee.

- To encourage greater participation in all aspects of the Association's operations.
- To encourage participation from as diverse a range of tenants as possible i.e. various ages, ethnicities, people with disabilities etc.
- To provide good quality information to tenants / residents of Spire View
- To continue to communicate well with tenants / residents on appropriate matters.
- To use a greater variety of consultation methods where appropriate.
- To involve tenants in the scrutiny of the Associations performance

**5.0 Information**

In order to maximise tenant/customer opportunities to raise issues and be able to influence decisions we will use a wide range of information and consultation methods.

We will provide tenants/customers with up to date, accurate, relevant and accessible information of good quality to enable them to be well informed and better equipped to participate. The following list is just some of the information the Association will make available to tenants;

- Newsletters
- Annual report
- Landlord report Card
- Copies of all policies, procedures, accounts, Business Plan
- Risk Management Strategy, Minutes of committee meetings.
- Flyers and leaflets
- Tenants handbook
- Details of local events
- Money advice
- Tenancy Sustainment
- Financial Capability
- Applying for housing / internal transfer
- Help, advice and support agencies
- Performance of the Association
- Staff / committee changes
- Tenant satisfaction survey results
- Complaints and Appeals processes
- Website
- Social Media

## **6.0 Participation Opportunities**

Traditionally, tenant participation has focused on consulting with formal Tenants and Residents Associations. However, Spire View Housing Association recognises that not everyone wants to get involved in this way. We want to encourage as many tenants as possible to have their say on how the Association is managed and delivered. Participation opportunities in which we will encourage participation include:

- Promoting membership of the Association and appointment to our Management Committee
- Community Events – We will encourage tenants to take part in our annual community events.
- Tenants Sign Up Packs - Every tenant is provided with a comprehensive information pack at the start of their tenancy.
- Tenants Newsletters - We produce 4 newsletters each year which is posted to all tenants and published on our website.
- Our website - [www.copperworks.org.uk](http://www.copperworks.org.uk) can be accessed to obtain information on housing and related issues and service provision.
- Satisfaction Surveys / Questionnaires - we carry out a full tenant satisfaction survey every 3 years and a Tenant Participation Survey so as to better understand tenant satisfaction levels.
- Public Meetings - we will hold public meetings when we intend to make significant changes to the way we deliver a service. We will organise public meetings to seek tenants views on our proposals.
- Registered Tenant Organisations (RTO) - RTO gives groups a recognised role in the decision-making process. Landlords and RTOs should work together to identify policies and practices which they think need to be revised.

- Focus Groups - Tenants, residents and customers are invited to join staff in focus groups to participate in policy and service reviews.

## **7.0 Tenant Consultation Questionnaire**

Spire View has always been committed to consulting with tenants on changes to services that have a direct impact on them. The Association wishes to develop a strategy that most reflects the wishes of our tenants.

The outcomes of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and the Tenant Participation Survey have been used to inform the Action Plan for the period until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, as detailed at Appendix 1. This gave the Association a feel for tenant expectations on tenant participation. The outcomes in relation to the Action Plan will be monitored and reported on a regular basis.

***299 questionnaires were completed and these have now been analysed and incorporated into the attached Action Plan (Appendix 1). This represents a response rate of 48% which, combined with the tenant satisfaction survey data, provides the Association with some very reliable and up-to-date information on what the tenants living in the area really want by way of tenant participation.***

The main views of the tenants surveyed were:

- ***95% of tenants found the Association's newsletters informative***
- ***96% felt that the Association consulted them on matters relating to their tenancy, for example, repairs, allocations and rents***
- ***7% of tenants would consider standing for the Committee (none of which are existing committee members)***

The most popular method of consultation is by far the newsletter. 96% of tenants find this a useful means of consultation whereby they are advised of the Association's plans in a particular area and will consider comments where applicable. 65% of tenants think that community events are effective and the least favourable means of communication was Focus 24%.

Tenants expressed a wish to be consulted on the following:

- ***Major Repairs 60%%***
- ***Rent Charges 60%***
- ***Estate Management 55%***
- ***Environmental 59%***
- ***Anti Social Behaviour 57%***
- ***Day to Day Repairs 57%***

Tenants were also interested in being consulted in relation to:

- ***Complaints 56%***
- ***Allocations 54%***
- ***Rent Arrears 53%***

These results demonstrated a significant interest in most issues.

- ***9% of tenants expressed a wish to have publications made available in large print.***

Tenants were also asked what would encourage them to become more involved in tenant participation, some of the suggestions received included offering more incentives ie raffles, refreshments, committee surgeries, information sessions and social events.

Tenants were also asked if there was anything that put them off becoming involved, comments included timing of meetings, work and family commitments and health reasons.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework requires Spire View Housing Association to involve tenants in the scrutiny of our performance. This allows tenants an opportunity to be involved in measuring our performance in relation to areas such as tenant accountability and value for money. We are also required to report performance to our tenants in a way that suits them best and a format that they wish to see.

- ***Only 10% of the 31 respondents expressed an interest in becoming involved in measuring Spire View Performance.***

These respondents were also asked about their preferred method of measuring Spire View performance, and 7% of respondents said their most favourable method would be a mystery shopper and 6% of respondents said their least preferred method for measuring Spire View performance would be performance improvement / monitoring groups.

The most favourable method for reporting Spire View's performance would be newsletters with 86% of respondents selecting this option. The least preferred method of performance reporting is discussion panels with only 14% of respondents expressing an interest.

All of the above, together with other preferences emerging from the survey, have been incorporated into the TP Strategy.

At first, the strategy may seem modest. However, this is based on the principle that it is much better that our formal strategy is realistic and achievable, as opposed to containing far too many different elements that, even at the outset, we know we are not going to achieve.

Spire View Housing Association is required to report our performance in achieving or progressing towards the Charter outcomes and standards to our tenants and service users who use our services. This will be in the form of a report card, which we will publish each year.

## **8.0 Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)**

The Association has in place a framework for encouraging and assessing applications for groups of tenants to form RTOs. However, it is apparent from past experience that residents in the area who wish to participate tend to join the Management Committee. The Association will, of course, view the setting up of any RTOs positively and will give appropriate financial and administrative support.

Whilst therefore there may be tenants interested in forming an RTO, this has not been evident in either (i) the responses to the tenant questionnaires or (ii) past experience when the Association has tried to identify tenants who may be interested in joining working groups or the Management Committee and there has been a typically poor response.

Given that the level of resources (in terms of the time and staff levels we have available) is finite and we therefore have to prioritise all the important elements that form our tenant participation strategy, it is viewed as more productive to concentrate on other aspects of TP. However, we will endeavour to encourage RTO's wherever possible in the newsletter or with interested parties.

## **9.0 Equal Opportunities**

We will encourage and promote measures that ensure all tenants have equitable access to participating, as per the Equalities Act 2010.

We will achieve this by:

- Using interpreters, signers, tapes and Braille if appropriate.
- Facilitating tenants' and residents' attendance at meetings by ensuring premises are accessible.
- Providing childcare or allowances for childcare.
- Ensuring meetings are appropriately timed so that the maximum number of people can attend.
- Meeting 'Out of Pocket' expenses where necessary.

We are aware that for some groups there are additional barriers to participation and are thus at risk of being under-represented across tenant participation. Such groups include:

- people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities
- lone parents
- people with additional support needs
- people with physical disabilities
- young people
- older people
- people in supported accommodation
- people experiencing mental ill health

We will actively engage with these groups and with the services and agencies that represent and support them. We will listen and learn to ensure we are implementing best practice for encouraging and supporting participation from these groups.

## **10. Training**

To achieve involvement that is meaningful and capable of influencing the Association's decisions, we will ensure that:

- Staff receive training in developing and supporting participation.
- A demonstrable commitment to tenant and resident involvement will be included in all person specifications when recruiting staff. For some posts, this will be an essential requirement e.g. Managers, Housing Officers etc.
- New staff will receive induction training on our approach to tenant participation.
- Skills and knowledge in techniques for assisting and developing participation will be part of ongoing staff training and development
- Staff are adequately informed and supported when involved in consultation and dialogue with individuals and groups.
- We will consult with tenants on their training needs and facilitate these opportunities internally or through various external organisations, for example; Tenant Participation Advisory Service, Tenant Information Service, Chartered Institute of Housing, SFHA and SHARE.

## **11. Resources**

We recognise that sufficient resources are required to implement the strategy effectively. Resources include; a member of staff dedicated to Tenant Participation, budgets for consultation exercises, training for staff and groups, staff time, supporting registered and unregistered groups and initiating specific projects.

We also provide 'in kind' resources for all of our tenant-led groups by providing:

- Hire of meeting rooms
- Photocopying
- Provision of child care
- Provision of any special requirements
- Attendance at conferences
- 'Out of Pocket' expenses

## **12. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Association will produce an Action Plan developed in discussion with tenants and residents. The Action Plan (Appendix 1) will set targets and timescales and will be reviewed annually. This Strategy will be monitored and reviewed every three years to ensure that it continues to meet tenants' needs and conforms to best practice.

The impact of this Strategy will be monitored through recording the following:

- Representation of tenant group membership by area coverage, age, gender, ethnicity, and how this has changed over time
- Percentage of tenants responding to consultation

- Number of tenant group memberships and how this has changed over time
- How we have engaged with tenants

**August 2020**



## TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN 2020-2023

### Appendix 1

Finding	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer
<p>1. <b>95%</b> of tenants found the newsletters informative</p> <p>Tenants are happy with the format, content and length of the newsletter.</p> <p><b>86%</b> would like performance reported in newsletter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to send out quarterly <b>newsletters including performance information.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Spring Summer Autumn Winter Each year 20-23</p>	<p>Corporate Governance Officer</p>
<p>2. <b>65%</b> of tenants wish to have community events.</p> <p>3. <b>54%</b> would like public meetings to be consulted on issues in relation to allocations / rent arrears / Day to Day repairs / Major Repairs / rent levels / estate management / environmental works anti-social behaviour / complaints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up one/two <b>Public Meeting(s) / drop in day / community event</b> during each year and use opportunity to provide information on allocations / rent arrears / Day to Day repairs / Major Repairs / rent levels / estate management / environmental works anti-social behaviour / complaints</li> </ul>	<p>Sep 20, 21 &amp; 22</p> <p>Feb 21, 22 &amp; 23</p>	<p>Corporate Governance Officer</p>

Finding	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer
4. <b>96%</b> of tenants believe we are good at keeping them informed about our activities and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to inform tenants using various methods including an <b>annual report and landlord report</b>.</li> </ul>	July 20 July 21 July 22	Corporate Governance Officer
5. <b>9%</b> of tenants would find it beneficial to have documents available in large print.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the questionnaire to identify these households and contact to find out specific requirements such as large print or translated letters.</li> </ul> <p>Aim to have these addressed within 12 months.</p>	April 2021	Corporate Governance Officer / Housing Manager
The Association has not yet received any definite enquiries from tenants or groups of tenants in relation to establishing RTO's.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place <b>regular reminders</b> in newsletters with a view to encouraging local people to set up <b>RTO's</b>. Remind them of the support we will offer.</li> </ul>	Oct 20 Oct 21 Oct 22	Corporate Governance Officer
The Association has a 'Consultation Register' with named tenants who are interested in policy review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to involve tenants in policy review that affects them. Contact tenants on Consultation Register wherever possible to be part of <b>focus groups</b> for policy review and other consultation exercises.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	All Staff

Finding	Task	Timescale	Lead Officer
We want to encourage tenants to participate in a way which suits them. It was on this basis that members approved the TP Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to <b>investigate and promote</b> as many ways as possible of allowing and encouraging tenants to participate e.g. in person, comments and suggestion box, surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, AGM, public meetings, web site etc.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Director / Housing Manager
We want tenants to know what their rights are in respect of tenant consultation and information. We want tenants to know how they can participate, should they wish to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminders about <b>rights to information and consultation</b> should be publicised on the Association website (once available) and in newsletters.</li> </ul>	<p>Oct 20</p> <p>Oct 21</p> <p>Oct 22</p>	Corporate Governance Officer
The Association is keen to attract younger members onto the management committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and approach younger tenants when committee vacancies become available.</li> </ul>	As appropriate	Corporate Governance Officer
6. <b>10%</b> of tenants would like to be involved in measuring performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review feedback provided and performance methods eg survey's, tenant led inspections, performance monitoring groups and aim to introduce if possible.</li> </ul>	Dec 20	Corporate Governance Officer

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
7. <b>11%</b> of tenants indicated they would be interested in joining the management committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact those who expressed an interest when committee vacancies become available</li> </ul>	Dec 20	Corporate Governance Officer
8. <b>63%</b> of tenants advised that phone survey's would be their preferred method of being kept informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use this method of consultation where appropriate eg rent charges, environmental, Anti Social Behaviour</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Corporate Governance Officer
9. <b>60%</b> of tenants would like to be kept informed by Social Media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to use social media to full effect to inform and consult tenants.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Corporate Governance Officer
10. <b>24%</b> of tenants advised that focus groups would be their preferred method of being kept informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use this method of consultation where appropriate eg allocations / rent arrears / Day to Day repairs / Major Repairs / rent levels / estate management / environmental works anti-social behaviour / complaints</li> </ul>	As appropriate	Corporate Governance Officer