

Report

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	23 May 2018
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ request approval for the Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 attached as Appendix 1, be approved; and
- (2) that an annual progress report on progress against the strategic outcomes be presented to Committee in autumn 2019.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced a range of duties in relation to tenant participation with the key requirements being to prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy and maintain a register of tenant organisations.
- 3.2. Taking into account the principles of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and to reflect the focus of the Scottish Housing Regulator on landlord, homelessness and gypsy/traveller services, it was agreed with tenant representatives that the new strategy should be broadened to include other customer groups using Housing Services.
- 3.3. To reflect the broader approach to involving wider groups, the Council's fourth strategy for tenant participation has been named the Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy. For the purposes of this Strategy, the term 'customer' includes tenants, future tenants, homelessness customers and residents of the two Gypsy/Traveller sites.
- 3.4. During the last 18 months a significant pre-consultation process has been undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources and the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group (TPCG), supported by the South Lanarkshire Tenant Development Support Project (SLTDSP). Officers have worked closely with tenants to review the progress made during the period of the existing Tenant Participation Strategy and agree the scope and timeline for the updated Strategy.

- 3.5. This process informed the development of a co-produced consultative draft strategy which was subsequently issued for formal consultation in January 2018.

4. Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022

- 4.1. The Strategy sets out:-

- ◆ the strengths of our approach and achievements to date
- ◆ what we intend to do to further develop customer involvement
- ◆ how we will measure success and monitor progress

- 4.2. The overall objective of the updated Strategy is to provide housing customers with a range of effective opportunities to become involved and help shape housing services. In order to achieve this objective the following four strategic outcomes have been agreed with the TPCG:-

- ◆ customers are informed and knowledgeable
- ◆ more customers are involved
- ◆ customers help to drive continuous service improvement
- ◆ customers help to shape change and make a difference

- 4.3. The commitment to involving customers in shaping housing services is in line with the Council's values to be accountable, effective, efficient and transparent; fair, open and people focused; ambitious, self-aware and improving; and working with and respecting others.

- 4.4. The action plan in the Strategy sets out the detail of the actions and outcomes intended to ensure that progress is made in relation to each of the four strategic outcomes.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. The draft strategy was issued for formal consultation between 29 January and 16 April 2018 and a particular emphasis during the consultation was placed upon seeking views from a broad range of customers who use housing services.

- 5.2. To assist customers in providing feedback on the Strategy, a survey was developed comprising 6 questions relating to the key sections of the Strategy. The survey was made available online, and a paper copy and was also used to inform group discussions. In addition to providing responses to the survey questions, customers also had the opportunity to provide any additional views or comments.

- 5.3. The draft Strategy and associated consultation was publicised through a variety of formats including Housing News, on the Council's website and on social media. SMS texts, emails and letters were also sent to a contact panel consisting of tenants and residents who had previously expressed an interest in being consulted on housing matters.

- 5.4. The draft strategy was also distributed to a wide range of interested parties including elected members, tenant representatives, tenant and resident groups, other local authorities, the Tenants Information Service (TIS) and Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

- 5.5. Specific consultation events included:-

- ◆ discussion with the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group, facilitated by the SLTDSP

- ◆ presentation and discussion at 8 local Housing Forums
- ◆ presentation and discussion at 9 Neighbourhood Management Boards
- ◆ presentation to East Kilbride Sheltered Housing Forum and discussions held between staff and tenants at sheltered housing complexes across South Lanarkshire
- ◆ discussion with both the Disability Housing Partnership Sub-group and the Older Peoples assembly
- ◆ discussion with the Housing Services Management Team and employees through a Service Development Session
- ◆ 2 focus groups with service users at both Gypsy/Traveller sites in South Lanarkshire
- ◆ 2 focus groups for homelessness service users

5.6. During the specific consultation events noted at 5.5 and also through the online survey, 236 housing service customers provided views on the consultative draft strategy.

5.7. A wide range of positive views were expressed during the consultation with many respondents commenting that the strategy was well presented and easy to understand.

5.8. There was strong support for the strategic outcomes with particular emphasis on the need to focus upon increasing the levels of involvement and improving the range of opportunities for customers to become involved, including the use of social media.

5.9. Based on responses to the survey questions, the following general feedback on the strategy was received:-

- ◆ 96% of respondents agreed the aim of the strategy was clear
- ◆ 92% of respondents agreed the strategic outcomes were appropriate
- ◆ 100% of respondents agreed with the actions identified to ensure progress is made on the strategic outcomes
- ◆ 61% of respondents agreed that the process identified to monitor the strategy is robust and effective

5.10. Views and comments collated through the consultation as well as suggestions to improve the strategy have been considered and a number of remedial actions taken to revise the document accordingly. A number of common themes were highlighted during the consultation and these have been set out in the table below along with the response/action taken in respect of each.

Comment	Response/action(s)
Increased focus on homelessness service users required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The document has been amended at Section 6 to include a specific action relating to engaging with homelessness service users.
More emphasis on engaging with young people required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The document has been amended at Section 6 to include specific actions relating to engaging with young people.
The strategy is too long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complement the strategy and encourage customers to get involved, a short guide on customer involvement will be developed and widely publicised.

Comment	Response/action(s)
Ensure all customer groups are kept informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers living in temporary accommodation will receive a copy of the Housing News • Processes will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that as many customer groups as possible are kept informed in ways that suit them.
The term 'scrutiny' may discourage customers from getting involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term is used nationally by the Scottish Housing Regulator and to ensure consistency across all local authorities it is proposed that the term should remain within the strategy. • To provide clarity the strategy includes an explanation of the term scrutiny.
More information should be provided on customer panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 2.3 within the strategy states that the council will establish customer panels throughout the duration of the strategy. This process will include publicising the role of the panels and how customers can get involved.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. The TPCG will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy. A monitoring framework will be established with the TPCG to ensure that the strategy is making effective progress in relation to the strategic outcomes. Taking account of feedback on the efficiencies of current monitoring arrangements, the group will give specific consideration to how monitoring and reporting on the Strategy can be further developed and improved.
- 6.2. It is proposed that a progress report on the strategic outcomes will be presented to Committee on an annual basis, with the first report coming to member in Autumn 2019.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

8. Employee Implications

- 8.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1. There are no issues in terms of risk and sustainability associated with this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the recommendations contained in this report and, where issues were identified, remedial action has been taken. The assessment is that the proposals do not have any adverse impact on any part of the community covered by equalities legislation, or on community relations, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council website.

Daniel Lowe
Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

26 April 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve the availability, quality and access of housing

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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