

**TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

**POLICY NO: 6**

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| **Date of Review** | November 2019 |
| **Date of Next Review** | November 2022 |
| **Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management**  | RS 2: The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities. Guidance: 2.3; 2.4 |

**GLEN HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

**TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

1. **– 2022**

**1. Introduction**

Glen Housing Association is committed to providing good quality information, and to fully involving tenants in decision making. This strategy outlines Glen Housing Association’s aims and objectives in relation to its tenant participation. It provides some background information, details the various opportunities for tenants to participate and influence our decisions, and highlights the benefits of tenant participation. This strategy covers the period from Autumn 2019 until Autumn 2022.

Appended to the strategy is our three-year work plan for this area of work which will be subject to on-going review via the Wider Role Working Group, and via reports to the Board.

**2. Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the strategy are as listed below. These have been developed taking account of the views of tenants (via survey feedback etc.), staff and Board Members:-

* 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 involve tenants in scrutiny of the Association’s performance.
* To provide good quality information to our tenants.
* To continue to communicate well with our tenants.

* To use a greater variety of consultation methods where appropriate.

**3. Background Information**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 creates a legal framework for tenants to take part in the way their housing is managed. This means that we must:

* give our tenants certain information;
* develop a Tenant Participation Strategy and put it into practice;
* set up arrangements for tenant groups to register with us as Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) and keep a register of these organisations which anyone can inspect; and
* consult our tenants, and any RTOs, on tenancy issues which affect them.

*What information can our tenants get from us?*

We must give our tenants a written tenancy agreement and information about our complaints procedure. If our tenants ask, we must also provide information about:

* setting rent and service charges;
* applying to the housing register and how houses are let;
* exchanging homes between tenants;
* transferring tenancies;
* repairs and maintenance;
* arrangements for taking decisions about managing their home and the services we provide.

*What rights do tenants have to be consulted?*

RTO’s have a right to be asked about what they think **before** we make any new housing management policies or change existing policies that are likely to affect them. For example, we may ask if we should change our policy on repairs and maintenance and if so, how.

We will take into account what tenants and any RTO think before making a final decision.

*What should we consult our tenants on?*

We must consult our tenants (and any RTO) when making or changing:

* policies on how we manage their houses, and repairs and maintenance if the proposal is likely to affect our tenants a lot;
* decisions about the information to give our tenants on our standard of housing management and performance;
* performance standards or targets on housing repairs and maintenance; and
* our tenant participation strategy.

*How will our tenants be consulted?*

We can consult in a number of different ways for example, electronic media, public meetings, door-to-door surveys, individual letters, etc. Our Tenant Participation Strategy describes how we, as a landlord will consult with tenants (and any RTOs) and how their views will be taken into account.

The Tenant Participation Strategy will also:

* describe how we keep tenants (and any RTOs) up to date on what is happening about any proposals that are being developed; and
* include an assessment of the resources needed to carry out the strategy and a statement of the resources that we will give to put the strategy into practice and make it work.

**4.** **National Priorities**

The Scottish Government’s Housing, Regeneration and Planning social research paper “Identifying the Priorities of Tenants of Social Landlords” noted two aspects of tenant participation amongst priorities for tenants and RTOs; namely “taking tenants views into account” and “involving tenants in decision making”.

The key findings related to communication and tenants participation are the following:

* Most tenants saw their landlord as good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them. However, while most were also satisfied with opportunities for participation in decision making, nearly a quarter were dissatisfied.
* Appetite for greater involvement in the running of housing services was relatively low among tenants. Among tenants wanting to be more involved, the main issues on which they wanted a greater say were related to the condition of their home, closely followed by the condition of the estate as a whole, the communal areas and safety and security.
* In terms of the methods by which tenants would like to have more say, the most frequently-mentioned techniques were those requiring less commitment of time and effort, including filling in feedback cards and responding to surveys.

Nationally, there is therefore a need for improving communication and tenant participation to reach out to, and involve all tenants.

**5. Glen Housing Association’s Priorities**

Our own Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out in 2017 looked at two aspects of communication and tenant participation, namely “keeping tenants informed” and “satisfaction with opportunities to participate”.

On balance, 94% of tenants rate Glen’s capacity to keep them informed about services and decisions as either very good or fairly good; only 2% of tenants overall rate Glen as fairly poor in this area in 2017. The results for 2017 are similar to those of previous survey years but are slightly better than the RSL average (92%).

83% of Glen’s tenants are satisfied with their opportunities to participate whilst 3% are dissatisfied. Compared to 2014, there has been a slight drop-off in satisfaction (down 2% points) with this element of Glen’s service. Glen’s results for 2017 are however on a par with the RSL average (84% satisfied).

Tenants were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with a range of six communication methods offered by Glen. The feedback on this question illustrates that tenants are either satisfied or have no opinion about Glen’s communication tools. Tenants rated these six methods in the following order of satisfaction:

* 1. Letters sent from Glen Housing Association
	2. Newsletter “On Your Doorstep”
	3. Texting service from Glen Housing Association
	4. Glen Housing Association’s website
	5. Emails sent from Glen Housing Association
	6. Glen Housing Association’s Facebook page (some tenants were not aware of the Facebook page)

The results of this survey highlights the need for better communications tools (especially digital tools) and for better opportunities to participate for all.

**6. Information and Communication**

Glen Housing Association has made a lot of information available to its tenants, including (but not limited to) the following:

* Newsletters
* Annual reports
* Copies of policies, procedures, annual accounts
* Tenants handbook
* Housing application and mutual exchange forms
* List of external support agencies
* Performance report
* Satisfaction surveys
* List of current staff and Board Members
* Details of local events
* Tenant satisfaction survey results
* Staff changes

This information is available both as hard copies and electronic copies and a lot of information can be found on Glen Housing Association’s website or Facebook page. The information can be made available in other formats (such as large print or coloured, etc.) upon request

**7. Ways to Participate**

**Membership** – Anybody over the age of 16 with an interest in the work of the Association can become a member. Life membership is £1, and we currently have 48 members.

**Tenant Participation Register** - Any tenant wishing to get involved in tenant participation in any way gets added to this register. There are currently 55 people registered, and they can get involved in any of the following:

**Board of Management** - There are currently 5 tenants (out of 14 members) on our Board

**Scrutiny Panel** - We have a small scrutiny panel made up of 6 tenants. This group is still in its infancy and work is required to strengthen the group. Members of the panel will also require further training.

**Focus Groups** - We set up focus groups as and when required, usually to contribute to policy updates, wider role matters or targeted consultations.

**Tenants and Residents Associations** - We currently have 2 tenants and residents associations, both in partnership with Fife Council. One is in North Glenrothes, the other one in Lower Methil.

**Consultations** - We carry out regular tenants consultations on various themes (rent, planned maintenance, etc.). These take the form of drop in sessions, paper questionnaires and/or online questionnaires to reach as many tenants as possible.

**Feedback forms** - All tenants have the opportunity to provide feedback after any work carried out in their property, either by ourselves or by contractors. These can be done over the phone or as paper forms.

**Satisfaction surveys** - All tenants are regularly sent comprehensive satisfaction surveys to help Glen identify its strengths and weaknesses and improve services delivery.

**8. Our Commitment to Equality & Diversity**

Glen Housing Association is committed to providing fair and equal treatment to all in accordance with our Equality & Diversity Policy.

In line with our commitment, this Strategy can be made available free of charge in a variety of formats including; large print, language translation or audio format.

**9. Monitoring and Review**

This Strategy and Work Plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis and comprehensively reviewed every 3 years.