Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029

Agreed by Housing and Community Safety Committee on 7 May 2024

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Moray Council Tenants and Housing Facebook page
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Foreword

Welcome to our Tenant Participation Strategy (2024-2029) which sets out how we will involve our tenants and make sure they are able to influence and review our housing services. It has been developed in partnership with tenants, staff and elected members and builds on previous strategies.

We want to continue to develop participation opportunities with a focus on increasing levels of involvement, especially from our under-represented groups. The development of this new Strategy also takes account of the changing context we are working in and the opportunities that we now have to modernise and enhance our approach through digital engagement opportunities.

Tenant involvement benefits tenants, staff and their landlords. We offer a range of opportunities to get involved at a level that suits you. We also offer support to tenants who would like to develop their skills and confidence so that they can effectively influence decisions about housing services. If you are interested in getting involved, please phone us on 0300 123 4566 or email: **tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk**

We are committed to improving our homes and services in partnership with our tenants. I would like to thank the tenants who have given up their time to give us their feedback by attending meetings or events, reviewing our services or filling in surveys. Your feedback is essential in helping us to improve our performance and develop our housing services. I am confident that this Strategy will help us to make sure that tenants are at the heart of the services we deliver.

Councillor Amber Dunbar

Chair of Housing and Community Safety Committee

Introduction

Tenant participation is about having a say in the decisions that affect your home and community. The National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation (1999) describes tenant participation as being:

> **" 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. It aims to improve the standard of housing conditions and service".**

You have a legal right to be involved in decisions about housing services. Our tenant participation strategy sets out how we will take account of your views and support you in our decision making processes.

Benefits of Tenant Participation

- **Responsive landlords**
  Effective participation helps landlords become more responsive to the views of their customers.
- **Tenant satisfaction**
  Tenants are more satisfied with their services, homes and neighbourhoods.
- **Understanding what's important**
  Landlords better understand what is important to their tenants.
- **Shaping services**
  Offers an opportunity to tenants to shape housing services to reflect their own priorities.
- **Improving services**
  Effective participation helps landlords to improve services and achieve better value for money.

Strategy background and development

This is our fifth Tenant Participation Strategy and builds on previous strategies. It was developed in line with the 'National Standards for Community Engagement' and the Scottish Government's '**Guide to Successful Participation**'. More information about the standards can be read at:**www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards**

The National Standards for **Community Engagement**

The strategy was developed in consultation with tenants, staff and elected members. The development process began in 2019 but was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This work re-started with the lifting of restrictions and the appointment of a Customer Engagement Officer in April 2023 to support tenant participation activities. Our strategic development process is set out below:

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1 INITIAL REVIEW

In 2019, staff, elected members and tenants reviewed current tenant participation activities, policies and practice as part of the Next Steps Programme. The programme was facilitated by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS Scotland) on behalf of the Scottish Government.

2 RESEARCH

We researched other landlords' tenant participation and customer engagement strategies to determine good practice.

3 REVIEW

We reviewed the 2017-2020 Tenant Participation Strategy and sought feedback during a pre-consultation process which included a tenant survey. Feedback received during this process informed a consultative draft strategy.

4 CONSULT

We consulted on the draft strategy between November 2023 and February 2024. Tenants, staff and elected members were invited to comment and their feedback shaped the finalised strategy and formed the basis of our Action Plan.

The Legal Context

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 created a legal duty for landlords to actively develop and support tenant participation. It gave tenants and tenant groups the right to be involved and to take part in decisions which affect them. Later legislation has strengthened tenants' rights, with further rights to information and consultation.

Tenants have the right to:

Form independent representative groups.	**Access information about housing policies.**	**Be consulted on issues that affect them.**	**Participate in decisions that affect the services they receive and be given adequate time to fully consider proposals.**

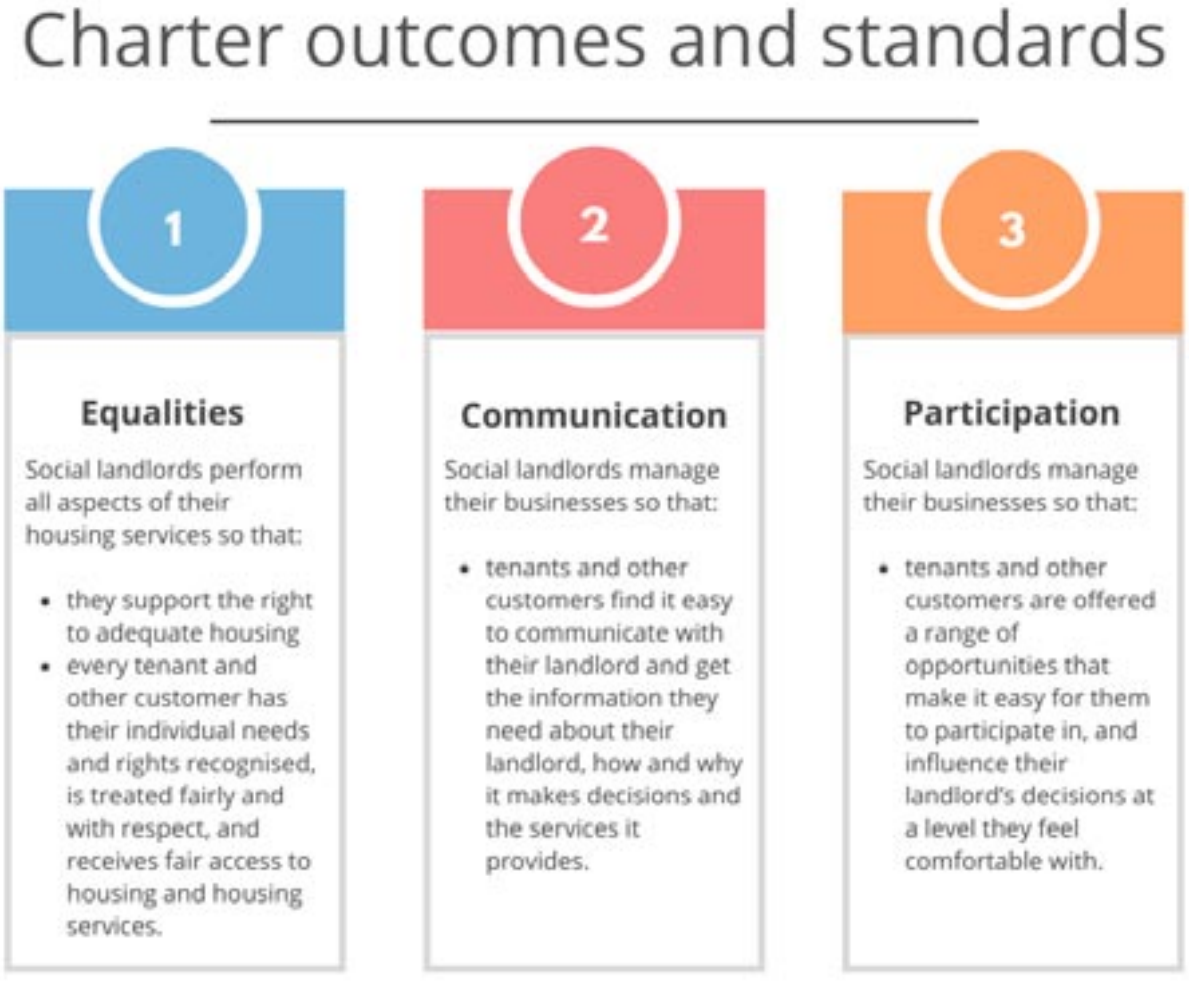
We have duties to:

- Produce a Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Provide resources and support for tenant participation.
- Keep tenants and tenant groups informed on proposals for housing management, standards of service and the Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Take account of the views of individual tenants or tenant groups.
- Set up and maintain a **register of tenant organisations**, in line with Scottish Government guidance.

Social Housing Charter

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the **Scottish Social Housing Charter** which sets out the standards and outcomes that landlords should be delivering to all social housing tenants. The Charter came into effect in 2012 and was last updated in 2022. Information about the Charter is available on the Scottish Government website at: **www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-november-2022**

The right to adequate housing is a human right in international law. The Charter supports this right by setting the standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve for their tenants and other customers by delivering good quality homes and services. The Charter contains a total of 16 outcomes and standards, including equalities, communication and participation.



The Charter provides the basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to assess and report on how well landlords are performing.

The Charter encourages tenants to get involved and also to scrutinise their landlord's performance.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The SHR is the independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Local Authority housing services in Scotland. The SHR is responsible for monitoring, assessing, and reporting on how well social landlords achieve the Charter's outcomes and standards. Actively including tenants and other users of social housing services is key to the work of the SHR.

We are required to provide the SHR with an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) each year providing information on our performance against the Charter. The SHR then produces an independent report on our performance which can be used to compare performance between landlords and against the national average. The report is available on the SHR's website at **www.housingregulator.gov.scot**

We are required each year to produce an Annual Performance Report to tenants to communicate the outcome of the SHR assessment and performance information. Our most recent report is available at: **www.moray.gov.uk/housingperformance**

The Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator require that we have arrangements in place to make sure tenants can scrutinise and help improve performance and influence decisions about policies and services. Scrutiny is a way of giving tenants greater influence and ability to hold their landlord to account, examine services and standards and make recommendations for service improvements.

Scottish Housing Regulator

Housing to 2040

Housing to 2040 sets out a vision for housing in Scotland and a route map to get there. It aims to deliver the Scottish Government ambition for everyone to have a safe, good quality and affordable home that meets their needs in the place they want to be. Tenant voices are placed at the centre of shaping future policy and legislation. Proposals for the rented sector set out how existing strengths and experiences in tenant participation will be built upon. In addition to further developing the Regional Networks to represent diversity within the sector by including people with protected characteristics, younger people and people with a wide range of backgrounds (such as those who have experienced homelessness).

Links to other local strategies and plans

Our Tenant Participation Strategy links to and complements other council policies and strategies, including:

Local Outcome Improvement Plan (version 2)

The plan's main aim and purpose is to improve life for those living and working in Moray. It sets out how it will work to raise aspirations through expanded choices, improved livelihoods and wellbeing. Community engagement is identified as key to this. Creating more resilient and self-sufficient communities with influence over the delivery of public services to their communities and capacity for joint and community based delivery.

Corporate Plan

Our plan to identify what we are going to do to contribute towards the delivery of our priorities and identify any additional targets, why they are needed, and what is to be done to deliver them. It recognises the importance of empowering and supporting communities to build capacity.

Local Housing Strategy

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) aims to make sure there is enough housing, of good quality, of the right size and type, and in the right places, to meet the needs of local people. The LHS covers all tenures; owner occupied and private rented housing as well as social housing. The LHS is based on a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and forms the basis for future investment decisions in housing and related services.

Customer Focus Strategy

The Customer Focus Strategy aims to improve the customer experience for people living in Moray who access our services, putting their needs at the heart of service delivery. It provides a route map showing how the Council will listen to and learn from our customers, improving services. Our **Customer Charter** describes the standards which we promise to meet, depending on how you contact us.

Equalities

We are committed to preventing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. In accordance with the **Equality Act 2010,** we want to make sure that our Tenant Participation Strategy does not discriminate between individuals with any of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. In addition, we seek to promote equal opportunities irrespective of language, literacy and numeracy, social origin, employment status, and responsibility for dependents. We have a duty to assess the impact of this Strategy. We do this through an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to minimise any barriers to participation tenants may experience.

The Moray Tenants' Forum constitution includes an equalities statement which opposes discrimination and encourages engagement with under-represented groups. They have a code of conduct so that all members treat each other with respect. We recognise the value of all members of the community and equalities training will form part of the ongoing training for staff and tenant representatives.

We will make sure that all tenants have the opportunity to get involved and influence decisions about housing services, policies and conditions. Our documents are available in a range of different formats such as large print and braille and can be translated into other languages. Interpretation can be provided for British Sign Language users or non-English speakers on request. We also maintain a register of tenants who require information in alternative formats, such as large print. Public meetings will always be held in accessible venues, and we will cover reasonable out of pocket expenses, such as transport and care costs, to support people to attend.

We value involvement that reflects the whole of our tenant population. Therefore, we will work together to promote equal opportunities and remove or minimise barriers to participation. We recognise that certain groups may be under-represented and that a special effort may be needed to encourage involvement. These groups include young people, minority ethnic communities, Gypsy/Travellers, LGBTQ+, tenants with support needs, homeless service users and people with disabilities. Our action plan identifies how we will develop our approach to involving under-represented groups. We will promote inclusive approaches and work in ways that are appropriate to different people and differing needs within our communities. We will support informal and innovative methods of engagement that may better meet the needs of those who are less likely to participate.

Aims and objectives

The focus of our Tenant Participation Strategy has evolved over time to meet emerging challenges and tenant aspirations but there are a number of overarching principles that guide and inform all of our strategies. These principles are based on the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Participation, "Partners in Participation", and include:

- **Create a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, elected members and housing officers at all levels, working together towards improving housing conditions and housing services.**
- **Ensure tenant participation is a continuously evolving process.**
- **Enable processes of decision making that are open, clear and accountable.**
- **Recognise the independence of tenant organisations.**
- **Recognise that tenant organisations require adequate resources for organisation, training and support.**
- **Tailor tenant participation in remote areas to suit the particular needs of tenants in these communities.**
- **Provide all tenants with an equal opportunity to contribute, removing barriers to effective participation.**

Our overall strategic aim for the Tenant Participation Strategy is:

To work in partnership with our tenants to design and deliver good quality housing services.

To achieve this aim, our strategy continues to be set around 3 key outcomes which are supported by a detailed action plan. Tenants gave feedback during the pre-consultation process that they agreed with the existing strategy outcomes and did not feel these needed to change. However, the development of this new strategy takes account of the changing context we are working in as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It provides an opportunity for us to enhance our approach to tenant participation and make use of new digital technology and tools. It also provides an opportunity to engage with younger tenants. Our 2021 Tenant Satisfaction Survey showed key differences between our younger and older tenants in their preference for contact. Younger tenants were more likely to prefer electronic communications such as text message, email alerts, and social media and were more likely to have internet access than older tenants.

Our Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2021 showed that 96% of tenants were either very or fairly satisfied with opportunities given to them to participate in our Housing Services decision making processes. Where respondents were not satisfied with the opportunities given to participate, the main reasons given were:

46%
Not aware of opportunities to get involved

23%
Don't think the Council listen/ getting involved makes a difference

To address this we will:

- **Develop a digital engagement plan.**
- **Continue to listen to tenant feedback before decisions about housing services are reached.**
- **Make sure the contribution and influence of tenants is highlighted in reports to the Housing and Community Safety committee.**
- **Make sure that the results of consultations are reported and kept under review.**

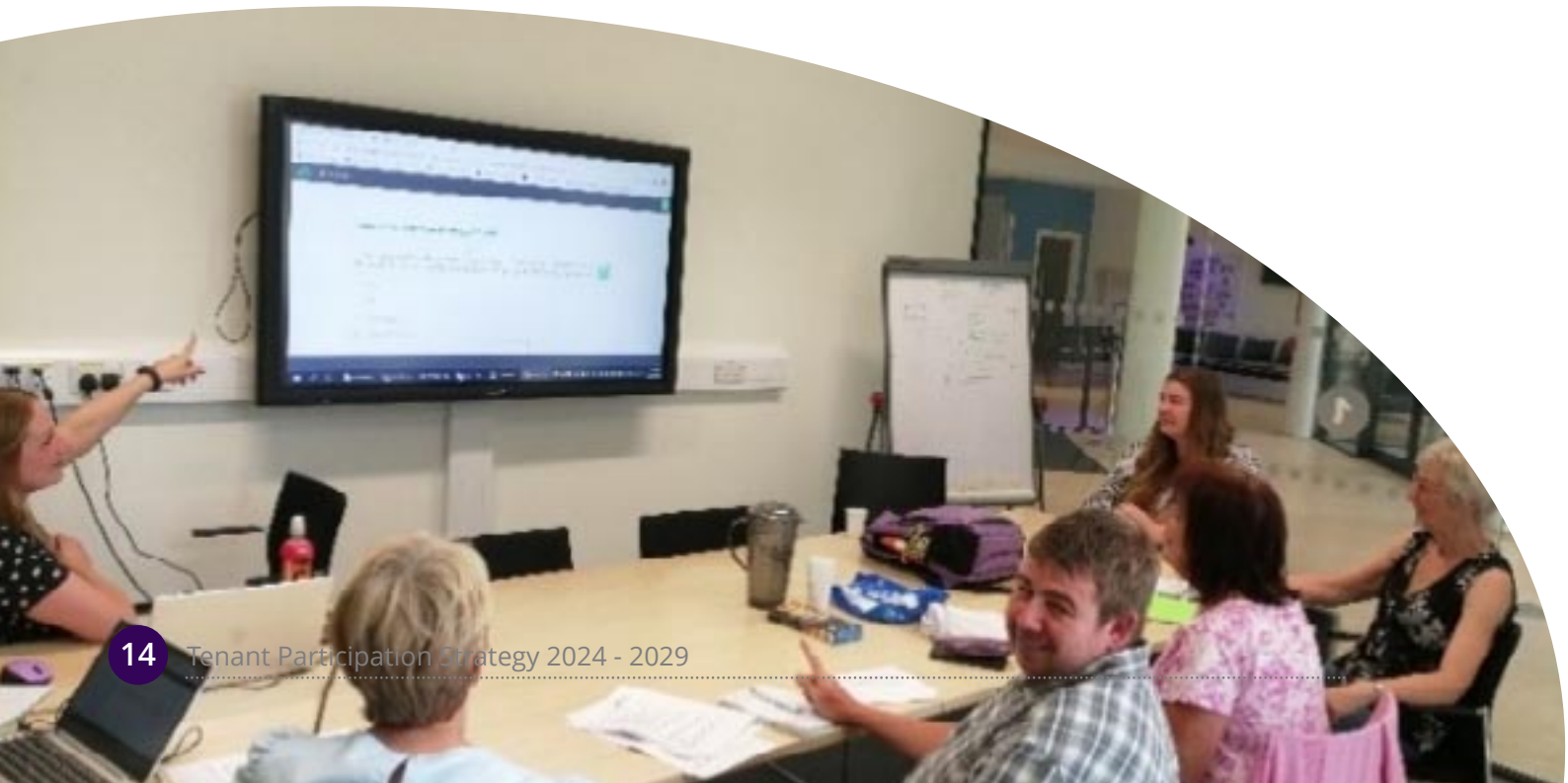
The 3 outcomes of our Tenant Participation Strategy are set out below:

Outcome 1
A strong representation of tenant's views and a wide range of engagement opportunities.

We will continue to widen the opportunities for tenants to shape and influence our housing services, making it easier for you to participate and share your views with us. We recognise that not everyone will want to get involved in the same way and to the same extent. Therefore, we will provide opportunities for tenants to take part in ways that meet their different needs. By doing so, we aim to encourage as diverse a range of tenants as possible to engage with the work of the Housing Service.

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly changed the way we work and communicate. Social media and online meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams enabled us to continue to meet and communicate with tenants and housing networks whilst social restrictions were in place. Digital opportunities can be a convenient option for tenants who might not otherwise be able to take part in face to face activities. Whilst there are benefits to digital participation, we recognise that a significant number of people do not or cannot access the internet whether due to affordability, connectivity, lack of confidence and skills, and access to technology. Some tenants will also prefer non-digital participation opportunities. We will therefore continue to offer traditional in-person and non-digital opportunities alongside the development of digital engagement opportunities.

We will work alongside our partners to share good practice and promote tenant participation in Moray. This could include arranging joint events or working together to seek tenants' views.



What we'll do

- Provide a range of tenant participation opportunities to suit different needs.
- Use a variety of digital and traditional methods to communicate with you (online and offline).
- Develop digital engagement opportunities alongside traditional methods.
- Support you to access digital resources and information where possible.
- Increase the number of tenants who participate.
- Test out different ways to involve tenants, focusing on encouraging those who do not usually get involved to do so, such as young people.
- Consult you on key housing issues including tenant satisfaction, housing management, repairs and maintenance, as well as policy development and changes to rent.
- Provide a range of ways for you to give your feedback.
- Make sure you have enough time to share your views.
- Work in partnership with other tenant organisations such as North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) and Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP) to offer joint engagement opportunities.

Outcome 2
Our tenants are fully engaged in the process of policy formulation, service review, scrutiny and decision-making.

We are committed to working with and supporting our Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) Moray Tenants Forum to influence decisions about housing services. We will support the group to widen its membership and develop its capacity and help make sure it is representative of wider tenant views and priorities.

We recognise the importance of a strong tenant voice and will continue to develop and implement tenant scrutiny opportunities. This enables us to continually review and improve our services and make sure that tenants and service users are at the heart of what we do. Therefore, we will continue to engage with our tenants to identify opportunities to monitor the performance of our housing services and the effectiveness of our housing policies and strategies.

We would like to involve more tenants in scrutiny and will engage with our tenants to identify the best opportunities and methods for scrutiny activity. We will consider how we can support short-life groups who want to address a particular issue to identify and examine areas of review. These groups will establish if there are any service gaps and make recommendations for improvements in service delivery and value for money. Where possible, we will explore joint approaches to scrutiny in partnership with North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) and the Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP).

What we'll do

- Provide information on our performance identifying any areas for improvement.
- Make sure you are able to compare our performance with similar councils.
- Improve information on customer feedback and how this has impacted on service delivery.
- Continue to work with and support Moray Tenants Forum.
- Include tenant representatives as members of a housing function Committee, currently the Housing and Community Safety Committee.
- Set up short-life tenant working groups to independently review areas of housing services.
- Include tenant representatives on estate walkabouts to identify projects and influence how the environmental improvement budget is spent.
- Communicate the outcomes of estate walkabouts.
- Develop partnership approaches to scrutiny.
- Undertake an awareness raising program of scrutiny opportunities.
- Develop appropriate learning and training opportunities to support tenant scrutiny activities.

Outcome 3
Our tenants, council staff and elected members have the capacity to work together effectively.

We want our tenants to be empowered and have opportunities to build skills that support their contribution to the work of the Housing Service. We will work with our tenant representatives to make sure that appropriate learning, training, and capacity-building opportunities are made available.

Keeping up to date is essential for staff, elected members and tenants. There is value in joint training where possible, although it will also be appropriate to offer some training specifically for tenants. Training can be provided in-house by our Corporate Development Training Team as well as by external providers such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). We will seek opportunities to access training and share good practice and resources with partner organisations including North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) and the Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP). Training courses are offered free of charge, and we will cover reasonable expenses, such as travel and childcare.

Accredited learning courses offer tenants the opportunity to build their capacity to undertake tenant representative duties. Courses also help tenants gain a better understanding of a range of housing services such as scrutiny or inspection, tenancy sustainment, performance management, repairs, and finance. Courses can be accredited by agencies such as TPAS and have helped tenants gain the knowledge and skills required to work in partnership with their landlords to improve services. The strategy will consider options for developing accredited training for tenants in Moray.

What we'll do

- Provide a range of good quality information that is easy to read and in plain language.
- Provide information in accessible formats such as large print.
- Carry out a training needs analysis to identify training requirements for tenants and relevant staff.
- Develop a training program for tenants, Council staff and elected members.
- Explore options for accredited training.
- Identify and develop opportunities for partnership working with other landlords and regional tenants groups.
- Continue to develop a relationship with organisations specialising in tenant participation such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).
- Research good practice examples and consider their development in Moray.
- Continue to encourage tenants to participate in external/national events.

Getting involved

Why should I get involved?

Your opinions can help us to identify your priorities, what we are doing well and where we can improve. By working together, we can find service improvements and continue to deliver good quality services which are value for money. You bring a wealth of skills and experience and can provide a unique perspective on our housing services. Depending on how you choose to be involved, you may also:

- **Provide a voice for the wider tenant community**
- **Find out about what is going on in your area**
- **Help improve your estate and create a better sense of community**
- **Meet new people and make friends**
- **Build your confidence and self-esteem**
- **Develop new skills and knowledge**
- **Choose to access free training opportunities or work towards a recognised qualification**
- **Enhance your CV**

What can I get involved in?

There are a range of ways to get involved at a level that suits you. The different options are described in more detail below.

Moray Tenants Forum

The Forum is a Moray-wide group that represents tenants' views and aims to improve housing services and conditions. The Forum is informal and friendly and any of our tenants can join. They get together every few months and we talk to them about our plans and consult them on housing issues. Sometimes guest speakers from housing, another department, or another organisation are invited along to discuss topics of interest to tenants. The Forum helps us develop information for tenants such as leaflets and articles for our newsletter, the Tenants' Voice. The Forum have developed a tenant approved stamp for use on housing service documents. They also represent you at events locally and nationally.

Tenant Scrutiny Groups

Tenants interested in reviewing our services closely may want to join a tenant scrutiny group. These groups independently review our housing services to ensure they are delivered to a high standard and that tenants' views are considered. Scrutiny groups choose a topic and gather a range of information on it by:

- **looking at policy documents or performance information;**
- **mystery shopping;**
- **commissioning surveys;**
- **interviewing staff; and**
- **visiting our offices or empty properties.**

We can provide training and support to assist with all activities a group is involved in. The group will then make recommendations to senior managers and elected members on how we can improve.

Housing and Community Safety Committee

The Housing and Community Safety Committee scrutinises performance information for the service and makes sure it achieves maximum value for money and best value in service delivery. Up to three tenant representatives from Moray Tenants Forum can take part in the Committee meetings where they sit alongside elected members. The tenant representatives are involved in the oversight of the Council's housing function, receiving reports on a range of service, strategy and policy issues, and contributing to the decision-making processes in these areas. There is also a webcasting facility where Committee meetings are available to view for 12 months online at: **www.moray.gov.uk/webcasting**

Tenants Together

There are opportunities to get involved in tenant participation at regional and national levels. Tenants Together (formerly Regional Networks) are a national network of tenants committed to empowering tenants. Making sure their voices are heard and influence decisions within the Scottish social housing sector, to protect tenants' rights and make a difference.

They work in partnership with the Scottish Government and key decision makers, tenants, service users, Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and local authorities to improve the lives and wellbeing of tenants.

Membership is open to all tenants and service users of either a local authority or an RSL in Scotland. You can become a member by either signing up (for free) to their newsletter or registering your interest with the Scottish Government Tenant Priorities team.

Tenants Together Scotland

To find out more about becoming a member email **info@tenantstogether.scot** or sign up to the newsletter at **www.tenantstogether.scot/subscribe**

Partnership working

We are members of the **Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP)** and **North East Tenants Residents and Landlords together (NETRALT).** These groups include social landlords and their tenants or residents in their membership. There are many benefits from working in partnership such as sharing good practice, skills, resources and access to training opportunities. There is an option to join the meetings online so you can get involved from the comfort of your home.

Estate walkabouts

Tenants have a say on how our estate improvement budget gets spent. Each year, tenants, housing staff and councillors carry out joint inspections to identify and agree on projects which could improve our estates. These improvements include a range of projects such as replacement fencing, upgrading of paths, parking improvements and landscaping projects.

Consultations

If we are reviewing a service or making any major changes to our policies we always ask our tenants for their feedback. We advertise consultations on our website at **www.moray.gov.uk**, on social media, and where possible in the **Tenants' Voice** newsletter. We will ask you to give your feedback by filling out a survey or taking part in a focus group. We will provide online and in-person opportunities for you to share your views.

List of interested tenants

We realise that some tenants do not want to join a tenant group but would still like to be involved in decisions about housing services. We can add you to our list of interested tenants and contact you when there are consultations that are relevant to you. In the past we have used the list to ask tenants with internet access to test our website or to inform tenants about consultations or events taking place that might interest them.

Tenant events and conferences

We sometimes organise or attend events to encourage tenants to find out more about tenant participation opportunities. Tenants and staff also have the opportunity to attend events together to learn from and share good practice with other housing providers. This includes national events such as the annual Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) conference and more recently online events in partnership with NETRALT and NTP.

Themed meetings or working groups

We will sometimes organise themed meetings or working groups on a particular area of interest. This gives an opportunity for smaller groups of tenants to get involved in an area that interests them the most.

Satisfaction surveys

We carry out regular surveys on a wide range of topics to gather feedback. We also carry out a larger independent survey every three years. When you fill in surveys, the results and comments are passed to service managers who use them to make improvements and prioritise spending.

Digital engagement

We use our Moray Council Tenants and Housing Facebook page to share news, information and events. You can also leave comments or questions.

www.facebook.com/MCTenantsAndHousing
or scan the QR code.

Sheltered housing groups

Our sheltered housing schemes have their own tenant-led groups that meet regularly. We talk to them about our plans and consult them on housing issues. Sometimes guest speakers from housing, another department, or another organisation are invited along to discuss topics of interest to tenants. Sheltered housing tenants also have the option to attend Moray Tenants Forum.

Participatory budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a way for tenants and other customers to get involved in making decisions about their local area and decide where public money is spent. We work in partnership with the Community Support Unit to help identify and deliver projects. Recent examples of PB projects include improving play areas in Buckie (pictured) and Tomnavoulin.

Suggestions welcome!

We aim to encourage as many tenants as possible to have a voice in shaping our services and welcome suggestions from tenants about new ways of involving people.

If you'd like to get involved, have a suggestion or want to find out more please get in touch:

Phone: 0300 1234 566
Email: tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk

How will I be kept informed?

We aim to provide information in a range of ways and formats to suit different individual needs. Information can be provided in large print, Braille or translated into other languages.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to an increase in our use of social media and online meeting platforms to communicate with tenants. However, we recognise the importance of providing information on paper as well as online and will take account of our customers preferred method of communication. We will continue to support traditional in-person involvement whilst developing our digital engagement opportunities.

We provide regular information and give feedback to tenants in a range of ways including:

- documents, guides and information leaflets. Including a comprehensive **tenants handbook**, **a guide to tenant participation**, advice leaflets and housing policies;
- **Tenants' Voice**, our topical tenants' newsletter which is published twice yearly;
- direct correspondence by letter or email;
- press releases published online at **newsroom.moray.gov.uk;**
- information on our website at **www.moray.gov.uk/housing;**
- social media including our **Moray Council Tenants and Housing Facebook** page to publicise relevant topical news and events and consult via online surveys;
- **an annual report for tenants and other service users which sets out our performance** against the outcomes of the Charter and compares our performance with other landlords;
- providing information in our policies and strategies about changes we have made as a result of tenant feedback;
- Moray Tenant Forum meetings; and
- focus groups.

Consulting tenants and taking account of their views

There are a range of ways for tenants to give feedback and shape our housing policy and services. These include:

- **tenant satisfaction survey carried out every three years;**
- **rent consultation;**
- **consultation on changes to housing service delivery and policies; estate walkabouts; and**
- **feedback surveys on service delivery such as new tenants, tenants moving into new build properties, repairs and planned maintenance.**

We will, where possible, allow at least four weeks for consultations. Our consultations should be meaningful and direct changes in policy or service delivery as a result. Therefore, we will provide information on how your feedback has impacted service delivery so you will know your views have been listened to and acted on. We will provide this information in a range of formats and platforms in the following ways:

annual performance reports;

articles in our tenant newsletter, Tenants' Voice; and

reports on the results of consultations.

We will use your feedback to:

- **develop and improve the Council's website;**
- **prioritise Housing Revenue Account (HRA) spending for improvement works; and**
- **identify and prioritise improvement works through estate walkabouts and the environmental improvement budget.**

How we will support tenant participation

We recognise that every customer has different skills, interests and knowledge. We want to make the best use of your customer experiences by providing opportunities for you to get involved in the things you are most interested in.

We will make sure that tenants and others who want to participate are supported appropriately. This support will be delivered in different ways ranging from providing good quality information, through to direct support to tenants who want to form and run a tenant group.

Tenant participation budget

We provide a dedicated budget for tenant participation which is reviewed annually. This covers the main costs of tenant participation including those associated with the publication of the Tenants' Voice newsletter. It also includes an annual grant to Moray Tenant Forum which they decide how to use to support their activities and to cover relevant expenses such as travel, childcare, attendance at events and meeting venue costs.

Other budgets are used from time to time to cover additional tenant participation costs. For example, there is a separate budget for identified environmental improvement works, which tenant representatives are able to influence and prioritise.

To reflect its importance, tenant participation is integrated into the duties of all housing staff. This is in addition to a customer engagement officer with dedicated tenant participation duties. As a result however, time devoted by housing staff to tenant participation is not easily quantifiable.

Resources and support

We will provide the following resources to support the strategy:

- Tenant travel and specified out of pocket expenses.
- Funding for priorities identified for environmental improvements.
- Staff time, expertise and advice to tenants groups and others.
- Tenant participation training for staff.
- Information and training to help build the capacity of tenant groups.
- Independent advice from organisations such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH).
- Provision of accessible meeting venues.
- An up to date, easy to use and accessible website.
- Support to access equipment or use technology to take part digitally.

Our staff will also support tenant participation by:

- Coordinating tenant consultations.
- Working with other departments to enhance participation.
- Attending relevant training events to keep their skills in tenant participation updated.
- Providing advice on issues such as training for tenant representatives, funding and successfully running tenant and resident groups.
- Attending meetings and events with tenant representatives.
- Providing administrative support to Moray Tenants Forum, including sending out agendas and papers, taking minutes, and organising meeting venues.
- Encouraging participation with under-represented groups.
- Encouraging tenants to attend conferences and wider professional discussion events.
- Providing advice and assistance to tenants on Committee reports.
- Maintaining a register of interested tenants to draw upon to seek tenants' views.
- Maintaining an updated tenant handbook, using tenant input during production.

Training can be provided in a range of subject matters and at various levels to suit individual tenants. Attending these courses will:

- Help raise confidence levels;
- Help the role of the committee member;
- Help with work in their community;
- Help reach their full potential; and
- Provide an opportunity to work towards a recognised housing qualification.

We will review our resource requirements annually as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget preparation, to ensure effective delivery of the strategy and its actions.

How we will monitor and measure progress

The Tenant Participation Strategy and action plan are working documents subject to continuous review.

We will set up a monitoring group consisting of tenants and housing staff to review progress towards the outcomes. The group will meet at least 3 times a year and will produce an annual report to the Housing and Community Safety Committee outlining progress made.

The results of the annual review will be publicised alongside regular updates on our tenant participation activities via our website, Facebook, and tenant newsletter Tenants' Voice.

If you would like to be part of the Tenant Participation Strategy monitoring group or wish to comment on the Strategy, please contact:

0300 123 4566

tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk

Action Plan

Outcome 1: A strong representation of tenants' views and a wide range of engagement opportunities.

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
1.1	Promote and develop a wide range of options for tenants to get involved.	Promote a blended approach to tenant participation with both in-person and digital involvement opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2024	Increased number of opportunities for tenant participation. Increased number of tenants involved in tenant participation. Tenants are aware of service developments and opportunities to participate. Tenants satisfied with the options to participate in decision making exceeds annual local authority average.
		Continue to use social media, including our Tenant Participation Facebook page and Moray Council Tenants group to allow wider participation.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Promote our register of interested tenants as a resource for getting tenants views on a range of housing matters. Providing opportunities for tenants to join the register via feedback surveys, consultations, events, website, Facebook.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		Continue to produce tenant newsletter, Tenants' Voice, twice a year.	Customer Engagement Officer	Annually (summer and winter)	Increased number of Facebook group members. Increased number of tenants on register of interested tenants. Improvement in tenants reporting that they find the newsletter useful through the three yearly tenant survey.
1.2	Develop our digital participation opportunities.	Develop a digital engagement plan for tenant participation.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2025	Digital engagement is properly planned and resourced. Increased number of tenants taking part digitally annually.
		Develop use of virtual and hybrid meetings as an option for those unable to attend in-person meetings, events and other sessions.	Customer Engagement Officer	By July 2024	
		We will make use of digital platforms to maximise how we gather tenant's views.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2024	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		Provide information and support to enable tenants to access digital opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2025 and ongoing	
1.3	Encourage involvement of under-represented groups such as young people.	Explore opportunities to link with organisations working with under-represented groups to raise awareness of participation opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	Increased involvement of groups of people who are under-represented in tenant participation.
		Explore the development of housing focus groups to engage with under-represented groups.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Test the use of new methods/ digital platforms to engage with under-represented groups.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026 and ongoing	
		Develop the use of social media to target the views of under-represented groups.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026 and ongoing	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
1.4	Increase the visibility of tenant participation and the different ways in which tenants can get involved.	Promote tenant participation through a variety of different methods.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	Increased number of tenants involved in tenant participation. Tenants satisfied with the options to participate in decision making exceeds local authority average.
		Develop tenant friendly easy read version of the Strategy.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2024	
		Attend local community events to promote tenant participation such as pop up events.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Consider offering tenants meetings in different localities at different times.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Work in partnership with NTP and NETRALT to promote regional tenant participation opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	

Outcome 2: Our tenants are fully engaged in the process of policy formulation, service review, scrutiny and decision making.

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
2.1	Make sure tenants are aware of options to shape housing services.	Produce and promote a calendar of policies for review and consultation annually.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing Annually	Tenants and tenant representatives are clear about which policies they will be consulted on, how and when. Tenants can get involved in influencing housing across Moray and how their rent is spent. Tenants are aware of the impact of customer feedback on service delivery. Tenants influence where improvement works are carried out.
		Make sure that enough time is provided for you to give your views.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	
		Carry out regular consultation on rent increases and provide clear information for tenants to be able to make informed choices.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	
		Invite tenants from the Register of Interested Tenants and others to participate in short life review groups.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Promote estate walkabouts and ensure they are carried out in line with the Estate Management Policy.	Housing Asset Manager	Ongoing Annually	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		Promote good news stories where tenants have impacted change.	Customer Engagement Officer / All Staff	Ongoing	Tenants who feel they are kept informed about our services and decisions exceeds the local authority average.
		Develop a report card on how tenants are involved and the outcomes of that involvement to help evidence the positive impact tenant participation can have.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing Annually	
2.2	Strengthen the capacity of Moray Tenant Forum.	Promote the Forum and recruit new members.	Customer Engagement Officer / All Staff	Ongoing	Increased number of Moray Tenant Forum members.
		Consider impact of timing and meeting venue on attendance.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Offer a hybrid option to join Forum meetings.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2024	
		Work with the Forum to review their branding/ logo, constitution, and code of practice.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
2.3	Improve our feedback to tenants to demonstrate where our tenants and other service users have influenced or shaped the housing service.	When consulting with tenants we will tell them how their views will be used and how decisions will be made.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	Tenants see the impact of their involvement and are encouraged to get involved. Tenants who feel they are kept informed about our services and decisions exceeds the local authority average.
		Communicate outcomes from consultations to participants and publicise them via the Tenants' Voice, website and social media.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
2.4	Develop tenant involvement in scrutiny.	Provide a variety of methods for tenants to scrutinise Housing Services at a level they feel comfortable with.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing, at least one activity annually.	Increase in tenants involved in scrutiny activities. Improvement in Housing Services in line with tenant priorities. Tenants are fully involved with staff in service performance management. Positive outcomes from tenants involved in participation and evidence of their contributions to service
		Promote and develop the Service Improvement Panel, by: • Promoting benefits of scrutiny • Raising awareness of scrutiny opportunities • Attracting new members • Delivering training • Providing support to the Panel	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		Promote and support regional tenant scrutiny opportunities through groups such as NETRALT and NTP.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	delivery.
2.5	Continue to report on our performance and how we compare with other social landlords.	Produce an Annual Performance Report in consultation with tenants/ tenant editing group.	Senior Housing Officer (Information) / Customer Engagement Officer	Annually, by 31 October	Tenants have access to performance information which is easy to understand. Improvement in tenants reporting that they find the Annual Performance Report relevant to them.
		Provide performance information in each edition of the tenants' newsletter, Tenants' Voice.	Senior Housing Officer (Information) / Customer Engagement Officer	Annually, winter edition	
2.6	Continue to use tenant feedback to influence service planning and delivery.	Commission next major tenant satisfaction survey and implement actions identified.	Senior Housing Officer (Information) / Customer Engagement Officer	Surveys to be commissioned in 2024 and 2027	Feedback from tenants improves housing services and influences the Housing Investment Plan.

Outcome 3: Our tenants, council staff and elected members have the capacity to work together effectively.

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
3.1	Communicate effectively with tenants, council staff and elected members.	Provide good quality information that is clear, in plain language and can be accessed in a range of different formats.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	Housing section of the Council website is easy to use and has a comprehensive list of information for tenants including tenant participation. Information complies with the Council's Equalities Policy and appropriate legislation. There is a comprehensive and updated register of tenants who need support and this is targeted to those who need it.
		Provide information online and issue documents in hard copy on request.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team / All Staff	Ongoing	
		Create a tenant approved editing group for all publications to make sure information is clear and accessible.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026	
		Maintain a register of tenants who require information in alternative formats or need specific assistance to effectively participate.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Review and improve existing tenant and tenant participation information including leaflets, Council website	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026 and ongoing	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		and other documents to make sure it is easy to understand and accessible.			
		Develop an information pack for tenants and a welcome pack for Moray Tenant Forum members.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2025	
		Develop a tenant guide to accessing digital engagement opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2025	
		Make Moray Tenant Forum documents available online including: constitution, code of conduct and meeting minutes.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2024	
		Use of tenant approved stamp on housing service documents.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	
		Review the design and content of our tenant newsletter, Tenants' Voice, with tenants.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2026	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
3.2	Provide professional development and training opportunities.	Review the training needs of tenants, staff and elected members. Develop a flexible training programme to support tenant participation activities, including accredited opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing Annually	Improvement in tenants reporting that they find the newsletter useful through the three yearly tenant survey. Tenant representatives staff and Elected Members are aware of developments in TP.
		Provide training to support housing staff knowledge and understanding of Tenant Participation.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Develop and deliver informal one-off learning opportunities "want to know more sessions" to develop interest in tenant participation activities.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Customer Engagement Officer to undertake TPAS Certificate in Tenant Participation.	Customer Engagement Officer	By January 2024	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		Enable tenant representatives, staff and elected members to attend relevant in-person and online professional activities such as the annual TPAS conference.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Prepare support and training material for tenants involved in scrutiny activities.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026	
		Identify good practice and innovation through continued partnership working and networking, attendance at seminars and events. Consider their development in Moray.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	

Monitoring and Evaluation

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
4.1	Monitor and review this action plan on a regular basis.	Set up Tenant Participation Strategy Monitoring group.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2024	Progress is scrutinised and improvement actions agreed.
		Present an annual review of the strategy to the Housing and Community Safety Committee.	Customer Engagement Officer	May 2025, then annually	
		Publicise the results of the annual strategy review.	Customer Engagement Officer	Annually	
		Report updates to tenant participation through the Tenants' Voice and our social media channels.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	