

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **HOUSING COMMITTEE - 1 NOVEMBER 2006**

#### **PROPOSED TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2006-2009**

##### **Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to consult on the attached draft Tenant Participation Strategy for the period 2006-2009, attached as Appendix 1.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 As required by Part 2, Chapter 3, Section 53(1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, every local authority and Registered Social Landlord must prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy.
- 2.2 The Council's initial Tenant Participation Strategy covering the period 2003 - 2006 was approved by this Committee on 26 March 2003.
- 2.3 At the meeting held on 18 May 2005, Committee approved the appointment of the Tenants Information Service (TIS), to take forward the task of producing, in consultation with tenants and other interested groups, an updated local Tenant Participation Strategy to cover the years 2006 - 2009.

### **3. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 TIS established a Tenant Participation Strategy Working group consisting of officers, tenants and residents. This group has met regularly since February 2006 and has developed the attached draft Strategy.
- 3.2 The document sets out the strategic aims as highlighted by the working group and puts them into the context of an action plan.
- 3.3 It is proposed that a wider consultation exercise on the Strategy should now commence to include:
- Elected Members
  - Registered and Non-Registered Tenants Organisations
  - Tenant Participation Steering Group
  - Individual Interested Tenants
  - East Ayrshire Residents Survey (EARS) Group
  - Other Relevant Services and Agencies
- 3.4 The consultation will consist of a series of presentations to Groups and circulation of the document to invite comment. It is proposed that the

consultation will be carried out in November and December with a report back to members early in the new year.

#### **4. TENANTS AND RESIDENTS FEDERATION**

4.1 Alongside the development of the Strategy, work has been ongoing towards the development of an East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation (EATRF). Some progress has been made in establishing a constitution and it is anticipated that the Federation will be in place in the early part of the new financial year. A progress report on the development of the EATRF will accompany feed-back on the consultation exercise.

4.2 A Draft Communication Code of Practice for Tenant Participation has also been developed (Appendix 2). The Code of Practice embraces the National Standards for Community Engagement. It is proposed that consultation on this document should be carried out in conjunction with the consultation on the Tenant Participation Strategy.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The development of the Tenant Participation Strategy and the proposed consultation will be met from existing budgeted provision. The establishment of a Tenants and Residents Federation may require some additional funding but this has yet to be quantified. Any additional spending in this area will be identified through the budget estimates process.

#### **6. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no additional implications beyond those highlighted at section 2.1.

#### **7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Community Engagement is a key element of the Community Plan. It is anticipated that the proposed Tenant Participation Strategy and the development of a Tenants and Residents Federation will contribute to the main themes of promoting community learning and improving opportunities.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 The Committee are recommended to:-

- (i) consider the terms of the draft Tenant Participation Strategy and the draft Communication Code of Practice appended to this report;
- (ii) approve the draft Strategy and draft Communication Code of Practice, as appended for consultation; and
- (iii) note that the outcomes of this consultation will be reported to elected members at a meeting early in the new year.

**William Stafford**  
**Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

CMCA/LA  
9 October 2006

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Minutes of Housing Committee Meeting of 26 March 2003
2. Minutes of Housing Committee Meeting of 18 May 2005

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 554873 and ask for Gerry Darroch or contact [gerry.darroch@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:gerry.darroch@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Implementation officer – [chris.mcaleavey@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.mcaleavey@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**East Ayrshire Council**

**Tenant Participation Strategy**

**2006 - 2009**

**DRAFT**



**This document is also available, on request, in braille, large print or recorded on to tape, and can be translated into Chinese, Punjabi, Urdu and Gaelic.**

Ma tha sibh airson fiosrachadh fhaighinn ann an cànan sam bith eile, cuiribh brath thugainnaig an t-seòladh a leanas:

اگر آپ یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو براۓ مہربانی نیچے دیے گئے تے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

閣下如需要這份資料的其他語言版本，請透過以下的地址與我們聯絡。

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ  
ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰ ਹੇਠ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ  
ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ ।

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## **Foreword**

### **Chief Executive**

**To be added following completion of consultation exercise.**

### **Chair of Housing's address**

**To be added following completion of consultation exercise.**

## **Vote of thanks to working group members**

### **To be added**

Charles Lindsay, Lainshaw Tenants and Residents Association

Ganes Dunlop, EAC

Helen Merriman, EAC

Jessie Graham, TPSG

Linda Thomson, Newton Tenants and Residents Association

Mairi Fulton, EAC

Margaret Campbell, Barshare Tenants and Residents Association

Maxine McInnes, EAC

Paul Hay, EAC

Peter Hood, Gauchalland East Tenants and Residents Association

Scott Harvey, TPSG

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<b>Key Initials used in Strategy</b>	
<b>BP</b>	Business Plan
<b>CP</b>	Capital Programme
<b>CLO</b>	Customer Liaison Officer
<b>EAC</b>	East Ayrshire Council
<b>EATRF</b>	East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation
<b>HRA</b>	Housing Revenue Account
<b>ITA</b>	Independent Tenant Advisor
<b>RSL</b>	Registered Social Landlord
<b>RTO</b>	Registered Tenants Organisation
<b>SDP</b>	Standard Delivery Plan
<b>TARA</b>	Tenants and Residents Association
<b>TIS</b>	Tenants Information Service
<b>TP</b>	Tenant Participation
<b>TPSG</b>	Tenant Participation Steering Group

## **Section 1 – Introduction**

Welcome to East Ayrshire Council's Tenant Participation Strategy 2006 – 2009. This Strategy has been drafted by a Tenant Participation Strategy Working Group, made up of staff and tenants representatives.

East Ayrshire Council is committed to continually developing and improving Tenant Participation practice throughout the local authority and across the whole range of housing and housing related services. This strategy outlines the following:

- The Council's commitment to tenant participation and consultation
- The range of tenant participation and consultation opportunities available to tenants and tenants and residents groups
- How the implementation of the strategy will be supported and resourced
- The key strategic actions that will be taken to ensure the continual development of effective participation and consultation
- The monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

This strategy also provides practical information to tenants and staff on how to become more involved in tenant participation and details of the support available to assist involvement.

### **Other Relevant Publications**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out the statutory requirement for the development of a Tenant Participation Strategy, within Section 53 (1).

This Strategy is consistent with the aims of other East Ayrshire Council Plans and Strategies such as the Community Plan and the Local Housing Strategy.

In addition, this Strategy complements the priorities of other agencies' publications such as:

- Scottish Executive's National Strategy for Tenant Participation, 'Partners in Participation' 1999.
- Communities Scotland "National Standards for Community Engagement" 2005
- Communities Scotland Performance Standards.
- Equal Opportunities (Schedule 5 the Scotland Act 1998)

The Strategy also reflects the Scottish Executive's National Tenant Participation Working Group's codes of practice:

- Tenant participation at Local Level
- Tenant participation at Best Value
- Tenant participation in Regeneration
- Tenant participation at Stock Transfers
- Tenant participation at Rural Areas

## **Tenant Participation Strategy Link to Community Plan**

Strategic and operational planning in East Ayrshire is set within the context of the East Ayrshire Community Plan 2003 – 2015. This overarching framework sets out the strategic priorities for partners within the Council area and has at its heart the following vision:

**“East Ayrshire will be a place with strong vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services, which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs.”**

A key strand of the community planning framework is the Local Housing Strategy 2004 – 2009 which will contribute towards fulfilling this vision and to ensure that everyone in East Ayrshire should be able to:

- Live in a safe, attractive and sustainable community
- Access quality housing
- Afford a property that meets their needs and aspirations
- Achieve independent living

## **Equal Opportunities**

The Housing Service will strive to encourage equal opportunities and diversity, responding to the different needs and service requirements of people, regardless of sex, race, colour, disability, age, nationality, marital status, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment.

The Housing Service will ensure information is available in various languages and formats to suit the needs of all tenants and prospective tenants on request. When seeking tenants views and involving tenants in consultation and participation activities we will use a variety of methods to suit both the needs of tenants and the topic.

## **Consultation in the Preparation of the Strategy**

Consultation on the draft strategy will be carried out with tenants and residents groups, interested tenants, elected members, housing staff and other stakeholders, including the local Registered Social Landlords and the Council’s Community Planning Partners.

The comments of all of the above will be considered by the Tenant Participation Strategy Working Group and included in the final strategy publication approved by the full Council Committee.

## Section 2 – Background

Since the introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, East Ayrshire Council has continually strived to encourage the further development of tenant participation practices throughout the authority.

Prior to 2001, the Council recognised that although there were tenants and residents groups operating in the area, that these were few and far between and in most cases had little opportunity to effectively influence the direction of the housing service.

In recognition of this low baseline, the council decided to appoint an external independent organisation to assist in the development of the Council's first Tenant Participation Strategy and to assist in increasing tenant participation activity. The Tenants Information Service (TIS) won this contract as part of a competitive tendering process. TIS also won a subsequent contract to continue to assist the Council to further develop tenant participation activity and to support tenant involvement in policy review and development.

In the interim period we have seen participation increase to include:

- The establishment of a Tenant Participation Steering Group (TPSG)
- An increase in the number of Registered Tenants Organisations (RTO's) to 8, with a further 6 non-registered groups
- TPSG representation in joint service review working groups specifically on the repairs service, allocations policy, rent setting and rent levels
- TPSG representation on the Single Regulatory Framework (SRF) Tenant Participation Working Group
- TPSG consultation on various service delivery issues, including the options Appraisal Study
- Annual Tenants Conference
- Biannual Tenants Newsletter
- Regular staff newsletters – with TP update
- Introduction of mini surveys to gauge tenant satisfaction with our services
- Introduction of an Annual Staff Conference – with TP component
- The delivery of staff and tenant training programmes
- Tenant and staff participation in national conferences and training opportunities
- Tenants and residents groups seminars
- A tenants and residents groups needs analysis
- Tenant Focus Groups in Regeneration Initiative Areas
- The establishment of a pilot project for the introduction of local RTO Forums and Estate Walkabouts (Tenant Led Inspections)
- The formation of a federation development working group
- TPSG and RTO representation in the joint Tenant Participation Strategy Working Group

East Ayrshire Council is committed to the further development and enhancement of tenant participation practices and opportunities for all tenants.

## **Section 3 – Our Vision for Tenant Participation in East Ayrshire**

We aim to ensure that tenants and members of democratically elected tenants and residents organisations throughout East Ayrshire Council are encouraged to influence the delivery and direction of the Council's Housing Service through working in partnership at both local and strategic levels.

## **Section 4 – Our Tenant Participation Principles**

Our guiding principles for tenant participation reflect those detailed in “Partners in Participation” – the National Strategy for Participation. In striving to continually develop tenant participation activity throughout East Ayrshire we will:

1. 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.
2. Ensure tenant participation is a continuous process that covers all aspects of the service
3. Enable tenants and staff to set a participation agenda jointly and ensure an easy and timely sharing of information.
4. Ensure processes of decision making are open, clear and accountable.
5. Ensure adequate time is given to tenant representatives to consider the issues properly. We will ensure tenants have the opportunity to work out a common view in advance of meeting the Council's representatives.
6. Recognise the independence and autonomy of tenants' organisations.
7. Recognise that good working relationships evolve gradually and we will assist tenants and staff to develop flexible arrangements to suit local circumstances.
8. Recognise that tenants' organisations require adequate resources for organisation, training and support.
9. Ensure that tenant participation practice reflects the needs of both urban and rural areas communities and reflects the needs of tenants in the differing areas
10. Provide equal opportunities to participate for all our tenants, removing barriers to effective participation arising from ethnicity, geographic location, special needs, language difficulties, learning difficulties, age, sexual orientation or disability.

As well as adhering to the tenant participation principles of “Partners in Participation” and the landlord duties outlined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the East Ayrshire Tenant Participation Strategy is inextricably linked to the governing principles and the national standards for Community Engagement (See appendix 3).

The Housing Service and the tenants that we serve form a fundamental part of almost all communities within East Ayrshire and as such tenant participation is at the core of not only the delivery of housing services but of all services provided by the Council and our partner agencies and service providers.

## **Section 5 – Our Strategic Aims**

The overall aims of the Tenant Participation Strategy are as follows;

### **Aim 1**

Increase the number of democratically elected tenant and resident organisations in East Ayrshire in particular those achieving RTO (Registered Tenant Organisation) status, including supporting the development of groups particularly in areas or with sectors of the population that are traditionally not represented

### **Aim 2**

Increase opportunities for tenants and tenants and residents organisations to influence decisions taken in relation to their housing conditions and services, including increased awareness of TP opportunities and improved communication to tenants and tenants and residents groups

### **Aim 3**

Ensure that TP is integral to all aspects of the housing service

### **Aim 4**

Establish a tenant participation strategy monitoring and implementation group and framework.

**Full details of our aims and objectives are outlined in Section 9 – Key Objectives, Priorities and Action Plan**

## **Section 6 – Existing Resources and Support**

To support and encourage tenant participation there are a range of resources which tenants groups and individuals have access to.

### **Staff**

- **Customer Liaison Team** - This new team established in 2005 consists of 1 full time and 1 part time Customer Liaison Officer. They have responsibility for providing support to existing groups and encouraging new groups to form
- **Housing Service Staff** – All staff are aware of their responsibility to support and encourage tenant participation and will attend meetings where appropriate. Area teams will provide basic administration support to groups such as photocopying

### **Grants and Expenses**

- New Groups can apply for a start up grant of £150
- Existing groups can apply for an operational grant of £100 minimum or 25p per council tenancy covered
- Catering, meeting room hire and publicity costs for meetings arranged by the Housing Service are covered in full
- Travel expenses to and from meetings will be reimbursed

### **Conferences**

- Annual Tenants Conference
- Annual RTO Conference
- Annual Tenants Information Service Conference (up to 6 delegates are funded by the Housing Service to attend)
- Further opportunities to attend local and national conferences
- Field trips

### **Training and Information**

- A full package of training is provided via the Tenants Information Service
- Information on new legislation, policies etc affecting housing will be provided to groups as it becomes available
- A tenants newsletter is circulated to all tenants biannually
- All tenants receive the tenants calendar packed full of housing and other relevant information

### **Independent Advice and Assistance**

- This is provided by the Tenants Information Service, an independent support agency for tenants organisations across Scotland

In 2006/2007 the Council has budgeted to spend £100,000 on tenant participation. The table below shows the areas in which that money will be spent. Staff costs are met from a separate budget.

## Tenant Participation Budget 2006/2007

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Grants and Expenses	£12,000
Conferences	£8,000
Training and Information	£53,000
Independent Advice and Assistance	£20,000
Establishing East Ayrshire Tenants Federation	£7,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£100,000</b>

## **Section 7 – Participation and Consultation Opportunities and Methods**

In order to encourage as many tenants as possible to participate, a range of methods are in place. This allows flexibility to enable tenants to participate at a level, time and place that suits them best.

Some of the methods of participation and consultation we have in place are:

- **Local Meetings** – We will always try to attend local meetings as and when invited
- **RTO Forums** – Representatives of the RTO's within a geographical area meet monthly with the Area Manager to address local issues
- **Newsletters** – We produce a biannual tenant's newsletter which is posted to all tenants and published on our website
- **Surveys / Questionnaires** – We conduct regular mini-surveys regarding our services in order that we have a continuing perception of our tenant's satisfaction levels
- **Annual Tenants Conference** – We hold an annual tenants conference to which all our tenants are invited via the tenants newsletter and local press
- **Working Groups** – Tenants will be invited to join staff in working groups to participate in policy and service reviews
- **Written Consultative Drafts** – RTO's will be asked to comment on written consultative drafts prior to their submission to Housing Committee for approval
- **Estate Walkabouts** – RTO committee members will conduct regular estate walkabouts with Housing staff and Inspectors to establish priority issues
- **Estate Action Plans** – RTO committee members input will be invited to inform Estate Action Plans and prioritise environmental spending

This is not an exhaustive list of the methods we employ to engage with our tenants but gives a flavour of the range of options.

## **Section 8 – Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Tenant Participation Strategy will be reviewed and its implementation will be monitored regularly.

It is envisaged that the Tenant Participation Strategy Working Group will evolve into the strategy implementation and review group. This group will establish a clear monitoring and review framework. To ensure the Strategy continues to be both relevant and applicable across East Ayrshire, the implementation, monitoring and review processes will include involvement of all stakeholders including:

- Tenants
- Registered Tenants Organisations,
- Non Registered Tenants and Residents Groups
- Elected members
- Staff

Appropriate training and information will be provided to tenants and tenants' representatives to fully participate in this process.

The review will evaluate the success of the Strategy in meeting its identified aims and objectives, as laid out in Section 5, Our Aims and Objectives and identify future actions to ensure that Tenant Participation practice continues to develop and evolve and strive to include all Council tenants and other stakeholders.

## Section 9 – Key Priorities and Action Plan

### Aim 1

Increase the number of democratically elected tenant and resident organisations in East Ayrshire in particular those achieving RTO (Registered Tenant Organisation) status, including supporting the development of groups particularly in areas or with sectors of the population that are traditionally not represented.

<b>Objective 1.1</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Inform tenants of the benefits of developing tenants and residents groups and assist in the establishment of groups in areas that are traditionally not represented	Complete Sept 06 w/ annual updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer liaison officers</li> <li>• TIS</li> <li>• Local housing staff</li> </ul>	<p>Increased awareness of TP opportunities</p> <p>Establishment of new groups</p>
<b>Objective 1.2</b>			
Increase the number of RTO's by 6	2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLO's</li> <li>• Local housing staff</li> <li>• TIS</li> </ul>	2 new groups per year
<b>Objective 1.3</b>			
Develop an East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation	March 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TIS</li> <li>• RTO's</li> <li>• Customer Liaison Officers</li> </ul>	Federation established and meeting regularly with senior housing staff and housing convener
<b>Objective 1.4</b>			
Establish an East Ayrshire Young Tenants Forum	Start June 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TIS</li> <li>• Customer Liaison Officers</li> <li>• Tenancy Support Team</li> <li>• Tenants</li> </ul>	<p>Young tenants identified and engagement commenced</p> <p>Forum set up</p> <p>Increased participation of young tenants</p>
<b>Objective 1.5</b>			
Develop tenants groups within sheltered housing complexes	Start Sept 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TIS</li> <li>• Customer</li> </ul>	Groups set up within complexes

		Liaison Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area managers</li> <li>• Wardens</li> <li>• Tenants</li> </ul>	Increased involvement of older people
<b>Objective 1.6</b>			
Review Register of Tenant Organisations	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Liaison Officers</li> </ul>	Review updated and published

## Aim 2

Increase opportunities for tenants and tenants and residents organisations to influence decisions taken in relation to their housing conditions and services, including increased awareness of TP opportunities and improved communication to tenants and tenants and residents groups.

<b>Objective 2.1</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Produce a new TP flyer for distribution via local offices, surgeries and tenancy sign – ups, including RTO list	Complete Sept 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TIS</li> </ul>	Flyers available  Increased tenant contact with staff and others
<b>Objective 2.2</b>			
Produce a TP information pack to be distributed to existing groups and to inform people thinking of setting up new groups	Complete Mar 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TIS</li> <li>• TPSG</li> <li>• CLO's</li> </ul>	Comprehensive information available to groups re. relevant contacts and support available
<b>Objective 2.3</b>			
Produce local area information sheets / area team newsletters	Start Oct 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area team</li> <li>• RTO Forums</li> <li>• Local TARA's</li> </ul>	Information to all tenants, groups and staff
<b>Objective 2.4</b>			
Develop a communications code of practice between the council and tenants and residents organizations and tenants	Complete Mar 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPSG</li> <li>• Senior staff</li> <li>• EA communications working group</li> <li>• EATRF</li> </ul>	Code agreed and implemented

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RTO's</li> <li>• Elected members</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective 2.5</b>			
Develop a calendar of participation and consultation opportunities jointly with tenants and tenants and residents organisations	Start Mar 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior housing staff</li> <li>• RTO's</li> <li>• TARA's</li> <li>• EATRF</li> </ul>	<p>Participation topics agreed, timescales set and training / support needs identified</p> <p>Participation sessions ongoing and feedback given to tenants</p>
<b>Objective 2.6</b>			
Conduct resource assessment with all groups	Start June 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLO's</li> <li>• TIS</li> <li>• RTO's / TARA's</li> <li>• EATRF</li> <li>• Housing staff</li> <li>• Housing Committee</li> </ul>	<p>Group / EATF resources agreed</p> <p>TP Budget agreed</p>

### Aim 3

Ensure that TP is integral to all aspects of the housing service.

<b>Objective 3.1</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Develop Registered Tenant Organisation Forums throughout the authority	Complete April 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area managers</li> <li>• Housing officers</li> <li>• RTO's</li> <li>• TIS</li> </ul>	<p>Regular RTO Forum meetings established across EA</p> <p>Increased tenant influence on local service delivery issues and environmental budget spend</p> <p>Issues, concerns and solutions identified jointly between tenants and staff</p>
<b>Objective 3.2</b>			
Develop Estate Action Plans to include Estate Walkabouts	Start Sept 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing staff reps</li> </ul>	Minutes and reports circulated

(EAP's) jointly with tenants representatives and other service providers and agencies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other departments</li> </ul>	<p>Other departments commitment to EAP's</p> <p>RTO's / TARA's in pilot areas involved in developing EAP's</p> <p>Increase in areas covered by EAP's</p>
<b>Objective 3.3</b>			
Ensure the joint staff / tenant working group approach to service reviews	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing / council staff,</li> <li>RTO's</li> <li>EATRF</li> <li>Elected members</li> </ul>	Increased tenant influence in service delivery and policy development
<b>Objective 3.4</b>			
Ensure there is tenant representation on each of the SRF groups	Complete April 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing staff</li> <li>RTO's</li> <li>EATRF</li> </ul>	Increased tenant involvement in service delivery and policy making
<b>Objective 3.5</b>			
Consult tenants and tenants and residents groups on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals relating to Housing Management</li> <li>Standards of Service</li> <li>Tenant Participation Strategy</li> </ul>	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EAC</li> <li>RTO's</li> <li>TARA's</li> <li>RTO forums</li> <li>EATRF</li> <li>Elected members</li> <li>ITA (where required)</li> </ul>	<p>Increased tenant involvement in decision making</p> <p>EA Quality Standard agreed</p> <p>Working group on capital programme operational &amp; programme agreed</p> <p>Local expenditure and service levels agreed</p> <p>Increased understanding and influence in policy development &amp; reviews</p>
<b>Objective 3.6</b>			
Ensure Tenant Participation is a regular agenda item at Area Housing team meetings	Standard item at all meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLO's</li> </ul>	Increased understanding of TP both at local and national levels

<b>Objective 3.7</b>			
Develop and deliver joint tenant / staff training and information sessions	Start Sept 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RTO's</li> <li>• TARA's</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>	<p>Training delivered and evaluated</p> <p>Joint solutions to issues agreed</p>

## Aim 4

Establish a tenant participation strategy monitoring and implementation group and framework.

<b>Objective 4.1</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Agree membership and role of monitoring and implementation group	Complete Dec 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working group</li> <li>• Senior housing staff</li> <li>• Elected members</li> <li>• TIS</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul>	Group established and meeting dates agreed
<b>Objective 4.2</b>			
Agree monitoring framework and timescales in partnership with all stakeholders	Complete Dec 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>	Monitoring and reviews carried out and details published

## Appendix 1

### TP Strategy – risks associated with the action plan

Objective	Detail	Risks
1.1 Inform tenants of the benefits of developing tenants and residents groups and assist in the establishment of groups in areas that are not traditionally represented.	Take a proactive approach to promoting Tenant Participation	Tenants and residents may not be interested in forming groups
1.2 Increase the number of RTO's by 2 per year	Promote RTO status to existing and new groups	Groups may choose not to register
1.3 Develop an East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation	Encourage existing and new groups to support and join the federation	<p>Groups may choose not to join</p> <p>Federation may not be representative of all East Ayrshire</p> <p>May have difficulty resourcing a federation in terms of funding, staff and accommodation</p>
1.4 Establish an East Ayrshire Young Tenants Forum	Identify young tenants and support and encourage them to form a youth forum	<p>Difficulty in identifying young tenants</p> <p>Apathy towards participation</p>
1.5 Develop tenants groups within sheltered housing complexes	Actively encourage groups in Sheltered Housing complexes	<p>Apathy towards participation</p> <p>Sustaining membership</p>
1.6 Review the Register of Tenants Organisations	Conduct annual review of RTO activity	May lead to some RTO's being removed from register
2.1 Produce a new TP flyer for distribution via local offices, surgeries and tenancy sign ups, including RTO list	Produce flyer with Tenants groups, RTO's and staff to promote TP	Flyer might not reach all tenants
2.2 Produce a TP information pack to be distributed to existing groups and to inform people thinking of starting up	Produce pack with Tenants groups, RTO's and staff to promote TP	Pack might be expensive to produce

a group		
2.3 Produce local area team information sheets	Produce area team newsletters	Time resources of staff
2.4 Develop a communications code of practice between the council and tenants and residents organisations and tenants.	Produce code with Tenants Groups and RTO's	Other departments might not adhere to code
2.5 Develop a calendar of participation and consultation opportunities jointly with tenants and tenants and residents organisations	Develop calendar	Timescales might slip
2.6 Conduct resource assessment with all groups	Review group funding	Council may not afford what groups want
3.1 Develop RTO forums throughout the authority	Initial 5 RTO forums to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kilmarnock</li> <li>• Northern Area</li> <li>• Irvine Valley</li> <li>• Cumnock</li> <li>• Doon Valley</li> </ul>	Unequal representation across authority
3.2 Develop Estate Action Plans (EAP's), to include estate walkabouts, jointly with tenants representatives and other service providers and agencies	Develop Estate Action Plans to cover all estates in East Ayrshire	Other service providers and agencies may not be committed to process
3.3 Ensure there is a joint staff / tenant working group approach to service reviews	All service reviews to include staff and tenant representatives	Time resources of staff and tenants
3.4 Ensure there is tenant representation on each of the SRF groups	All SRF groups to include tenant representation	Time resources of tenants Lack of interest in some groups
3.5 Consult tenants and tenants and residents groups on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposals relating to housing management</li> <li>• Standards of service</li> </ul>	Consult tenants and tenants and residents groups in line with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001	Time resources of tenants People may not respond to consultations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant Participation Strategy</li> </ul>		
3.6 Make Tenant Participation a regular agenda item at Area Housing team meetings	Customer Liaison Officers to attend and provide updates biannually	Staff will not readily accept additional agenda item
3.7 Develop and deliver joint tenant / staff training and information sessions	Joint training delivered	Time resources of staff and tenants  Lack of support for joint sessions
4.1 Agree membership and role of Monitoring and implementation group		
4.2 Agree monitoring framework and timescales in partnership with all stakeholders		

## Appendix 2

### Council Structures

#### Chief Executive

Fiona Lees

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#### Corporate Support

Elizabeth Morton

#### Administrative & Legal Services

#### Corporate Development & Communications

#### Finance Service

#### IT Services

#### Personnel Services

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#### Neighbourhood Services

William Stafford

#### Housing Services

#### Protective Services

(Including cleansing, environmental health, Licensing, community safety & Trading Standards)

#### Leisure Services

#### Building & Works

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#### Educational & Development & Social Services

Graham Short

#### Educational Services

#### Social Services

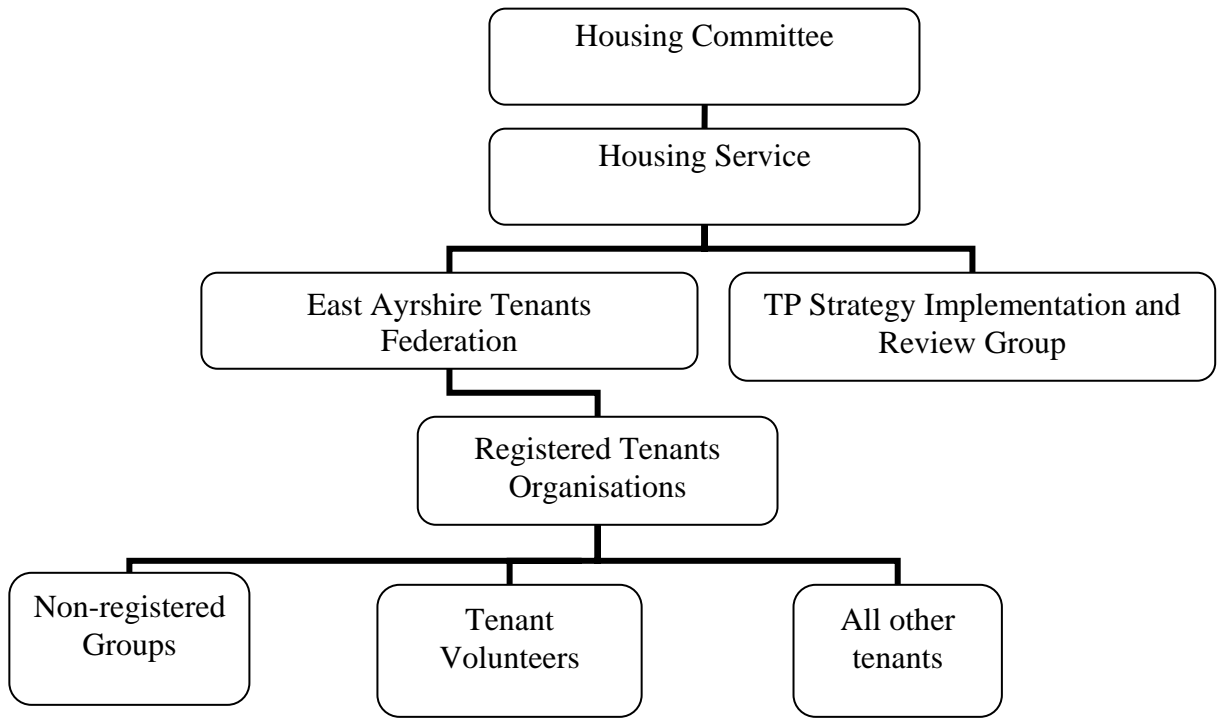
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#### Development & Property Services

#### Economic Development & Property Services

#### Planning, Development & Building Standards

# East Ayrshire Tenant Participation Structures (whole Council structures still to be added)



## Appendix 3

### Key Principles and National Standards for Community Engagement

The following key principles are adopted from Communities Scotland's National Standards for Community Engagement published in March 2005.

- Fairness, equality and inclusion must underpin all aspects of community engagement, and should be reflected in both community engagement policies and the way that everyone involved participates.
- Community engagement should have clear and agreed purposes, and methods that achieve these purposes.
- Improving the quality of community engagement requires commitment to learning from experience.
- Skill must be exercised in order to build communities, to ensure practise of equalities principles, to share ownership of the agenda, and to enable all viewpoints to be reflected.
- As all parties to community engagement possess knowledge based on study, experience, observation and reflection, effective engagement processes will share and use that knowledge.
- All participants should be given the opportunity to build on their knowledge and skills.
- Accurate, timely information is crucial for effective participation.

In summary, these principles highlight the importance of equality and recognising the diversity of people and communities; a clear sense of purpose; effective methods for achieving change; building on the skills and knowledge of all those involved and commitment to learning for continuous improvement.

Both the Council and the tenant and resident's representatives also fully endorse the National Standards for Community Engagement and are committed to striving to meet these standards outlined below.

## **National Standards for Community Engagement**

### **1. Involvement**

We will identify and involve the people and organizations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement.

### **2. Support**

We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.

### **3. Planning**

We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken.

### **4. Methods**

We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.

### **5. Working together**

We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently.

### **6. Sharing Information**

We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants.

### **7. Working with Others**

We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.

### **8. Improvement**

We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.

### **9. Feedback**

We will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.

### **10. Monitoring and Evaluation**

We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement.

# How to Set Up a Tenants and Residents Association

## Introduction

Tenant participation is about tenants taking part in the decision making processes and influencing decisions about:

- Housing policies
- Housing conditions, and
- Housing and related services

It is a two way process between tenants and landlords, which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power.

The aim of tenant participation is to improve the standard of housing conditions and services.

One of the main ways to ensure you have a voice and are able to influence the decisions that affect your home and your tenancy is to become involved in a tenants and residents association.

## Why set up an association?

There are many reasons why communities set up local tenants and residents groups including:

- You would like to work with your landlord on tenants issues.
- You would like to try to get your ideas taken up with your landlord.
- You want to have more of a say in how the housing service is delivered and how policies are developed.
- You wish to work with your landlord and other agencies to make your area more neighbourly.

## What can an association do?

Associations can perform a number of functions, including:

- To organize around issues that effect the majority of people in your community, i.e. some tenants may be unhappy about the standard of the repair service or there may be refurbishment work planned for your area that tenants want to be fully consulted on
- To have a representative voice
- To give accurate information and advice to tenants and residents
- To concentrate on tackling one particular issue or a range of issues over a period of time

## How to start

Most tenants'/residents' associations start with just a handful of people who are keen to do something for the area. It is quite easy to get started.

Contact your landlord and ask for assistance. You can either contact your local housing office or the centrally based Customer Liaison Officers (see Appendix 4 for contact details)

Find other interested people by:

- Talking to neighbours as they may share your concerns and be willing to help.
- Putting up notices locally to see if other tenants are also interested in setting up a tenants' association (your landlord will assist you with this)

## Small Planning Meeting

You may wish to arrange a small planning meeting with interested neighbours. The Customer Liaison Officers will provide assistance to do this, if you wish.

At this meeting consider the following:

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| ✓ What you want to achieve                   | ✓ What you want to do    |
| ✓ How to do it                               | ✓ Allocate tasks         |
| ✓ Share responsibility                       | ✓ Operate democratically |
| ✓ Find out who can give you help and support |                          |

## **Public Meeting**

Arrange a public meeting to test wider support for your ideas. If you miss out this stage you run the risk of assuming that your first small planning meeting actually represented everyone's views. You could misjudge how many people also feel the same way as your small group.

At the public meeting you can also formally launch the tenants'/residents' group and elect a committee.

At the meeting agree a date for a further meeting to discuss priorities and decide how to get things moving. Most groups delegate responsibility for this work to a group of people who form a working group or committee.

## **The Committee**

There are no hard and fast rules regarding organising a tenants/residents association. A committee is simply a way of bringing people together to consider problems and make decisions on behalf of the full membership of the association.

A committee has certain structures and functions. These will be outlined in your constitution. The Customer Liaison Officers or the Tenants Information Service will be on hand to assist you put together your constitution and plan for future meetings. It is important is that your group is open and accountable to your membership and that you involve everyone.

Remember that if you are going to apply for financial help from your landlord or other sources they will probably require you have a constitution.

## **Funding and support**

The Council will provide funding and support to assist your tenants group get started and keep going.

All tenants and residents groups are eligible for a "Start - Up Grant" of £150 and an annual administration grant of up to £100. (See Appendix 2 for full details)

The Council also provides regular support and assistance to groups through the Customer Liaison Team and the Tenants Information Service.

The Tenants Information Service also provides free training for all tenants groups on topics such as:

- The role of the committee
- Book keeping
- How to write newsletters
- How to complete funding applications
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Housing Policies etc

**Call the Customer Liaison Officer on tel. 01563 576839 or the Tenants Information Service on tel. 0141 248 1242 to find out more!**

### Tenants and Residents Group Funding

#### 1. What is a support grant?

A support grant is a sum paid to tenants groups to support them with ordinary running costs such as publicity, administration and resources.

Only one grant is payable in one year. Tenants groups can apply for another grant at the beginning of the year to cover each year.

#### 2. Who can apply for a support grant?

Any tenants and residents association within East Ayrshire Council can apply for a support grant

#### 3. What conditions are there to receive a grant?

The following conditions apply:

- a. The tenants group must apply in writing to the Customer Liaison Team, Housing Service by filling in the support grant application form. These application forms are available from Maxine McInnes or Ganes Dunlop on 01563 576859 and 01563 554854
- b. The tenants group must send to the Housing Service with the support grant application form a copy of their constitution which has been signed by an office bearer. The tenants group must provide to the Housing Service the names and addresses of office bearers and give notice of any changes to these.
- c. The tenants group must be non party political.
- d. The tenants group must show that it has made reasonable efforts to canvass local opinions and involve tenants in its organisation.
- e. The group must provide to the Housing Service notice of all its General Meetings.
- f. The tenants group must provide to the housing service accounts of how the money has been spent with receipts, for auditing by the Council.
- g. The tenants group must represent not less than 20 Council tenants.

### **How much money does the support grant provide?**

The amount of support grant depends on how many Council tenancies the tenants group represents. 20 pence is paid for each Council tenancy. A minimum grant of £100 is payable if the tenants group represents less than 250 tenancies. A one off start up grant of £150 is also payable to the tenants group as part of its first grant payment.

The maximum grant will normally be based on the amount of tenancies in the Ward within which the tenants group works. If a tenant group crosses ward boundaries, the support grant will only be eligible for tenancies within recognised community boundaries.

### **5. What other help can the Council provide?**

If you need advice about starting a tenants group, e.g. writing a constitution, publicising meetings and running meetings, contact Maxine or Ganes on 01563 576859 or 01563 554854.

The Councils Finance Service is also available to help with setting up financial books and will carry out auditing services. Contact Maxine or Ganes on 01563 576859 or 01563 554854 for details.

**Register of Recognised Tenants Organisations**

**The following tenants and residents organisations are currently registered with East Ayrshire Council as Recognised Tenants Organisations.**

**Barshare Tenants & Residents Association, Cumnock**

**Catrine Tenants & Residents Association**

**Gauchalland East Tenants & Residents Association, Galston**

**Hillcrest Resident and Tenants Group, Dalmellington**

**Lainshaw Tenants & Residents Association, Stewarton**

**Lower Gauchalland Tenants & Residents Association, Galston**

**Newton Tenants & Residents Association**

**Thorn Terrace Better Neighbourhood Group, Onthank, Kilmarnock**

## **East Ayrshire Council**

### **Registration of Tenant Organisations Procedure**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduces the idea of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs). The aim is to give tenants' and residents' associations, which meet certain criteria, a recognised role in the tenant participation process.

As part of the Tenant Participation Strategy every effort will be made by East Ayrshire Council to encourage the development of tenants' organisations. In the event that tenants' organisations do develop, the Act requires that they be registered.

Registration puts responsibilities on the Council as a landlord. It also shows which associations the Council will be required to consult with, for both tenants' associations and the Council. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on East Ayrshire Council to consult with Registered Tenants Organisations on issues that affect them. In addition, the Council is required to take notice, within a reasonable timescale, of the representations made by Registered Tenants' Organisations. These timescales will be agreed with the tenants.

East Ayrshire Council's register of tenants' organisations is to be a public document and will be available for inspection at all Housing Offices within East Ayrshire. Copies of the register will be sent to all Registered Tenants' Organisations on request. The register will also be published on the Council's web site, which can be accessed at [www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Tenants' and residents' associations which become registered with East Ayrshire Council will have the right to view published information in advance of publication and will be given the chance to comment on the accuracy of the information contained in the register.

In line with data protection sensitivities, the information to be made available to the public will consist of:

- ◆ the name of the RTO
- ◆ details of the RTO area of operation
- ◆ Contact details of the RTO including an address (this can be a box number if required) and email address (where possible)

New tenants' organisations will be supported through the registration process by the Tenants Information Service and the Customer Liaison Officers in the Housing Service.

## **REGISTRATION CRITERIA**

Set out below are the criteria that tenants' and residents' associations must meet to achieve registration.

### 1. Constitution

To become an RTO any tenant organisation must have a publicly available written constitution that sets out:

- its objectives and area of operation;
- how people can become members of the organisation;
- the way the committee will operate;
- how people can become committee members/office bearers;
- how the business of the organisation will be conducted;
- how decisions will be reached democratically;
- how funds will be managed;
- arrangements for public meetings;
- arrangements for an annual general meeting (AGM);
- how changes can be made to the constitution;
- its commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities and
- the promotion of East Ayrshire Council's tenants' interests in dealings with the Council on tenancy related matters.

East Ayrshire Council can provide developing RTOs with a model constitution.

### 2. Committee

The organisation must have a committee that:

- Members are elected onto at an annual general meeting. This would normally be done in the first year of operation;
- Members are required to stand down from after a period specified in the constitution;
- has at least three members;
- can co-opt others onto the committee during the course of the year;
- has elected office bearers;
- can demonstrate that decisions are reached democratically and
- promotes equal opportunities.

The Tenants Information Service and East Ayrshire Council can provide training in basic committee skills.

### 3. Area of Operation

The association must operate within:

- A defined geographical area which includes Housing Stock owned and managed by East Ayrshire Council or
- A defined geographical area which includes Housing Stock owned and managed by East Ayrshire Council and Housing Stock owned and managed by another Registered Social Landlords where appropriate.

### 4. Membership Policy

Membership of the association and participation in its activities must be open to all eligible tenants:

- of a house situated within the association's defined area of operation
- under a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) or Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST)
- within the area of operation who are over the age of sixteen years.

### 5. Accounting

The organisation must maintain proper and timely accounting records. It should present a financial report at each committee meeting and an annual financial statement showing income and expenditure to the AGM. This should include a statement of assets including cash in hand and money deposited in bank accounts. Liabilities, including outstanding invoices for goods received, should also be included in the statement. The statement should be independently validated by East Ayrshire Council's Finance staff, and be presented at its annual general meeting.

The Tenants Information Service and East Ayrshire Council will assist RTOs to establish appropriate accounting records and to produce an annual financial statement.

### 6. Consultation and Representation

The organisation must demonstrate to East Ayrshire Council that it is committed to representing the interests of its members and that it can represent the views of the tenants in its defined area of operation.

It is recognised that groups may comprise a mix of tenants and residents. There is nothing to prevent a mixed group of tenants and residents applying to become registered provided it meets the necessary criteria, and there is a mechanism in place within the group for the views of tenants to be given. This may be done through tenant only surveys or tenant sub-committees.

## PROCESS OF REGISTRATION

East Ayrshire Council seeks to encourage tenants' and residents' associations to register with the Council and to become Registered Tenants Organisations. The process of registration has been designed to be both clear and straightforward for tenants to follow. Assistance will be available at all stages of the process and applicants are encouraged to contact the Customer Liaison Officers in the Housing Service for assistance as required.

Tenants' and residents' associations within East Ayrshire can become RTOs through the following process:

1. The organisation must submit an application in writing to the Housing Service and include:
  - a copy of its written constitution;
  - names and addresses of committee members;
  - list of office bearers and the position held;
  - a description of the area of operation and
  - a statement setting out how the association plans to engage with its members and how it will represent their views.
2. On receipt of an RTO application, East Ayrshire Council will acknowledge receipt within 7 working days and process the application within 14 days but no longer than 21 days. The applicant will be advised in writing of the outcome of the application and where appropriate, will be offered guidance, assistance and support should this be required to meet the registration criteria.

Appropriate training, where required, will also be provided by the Tenants Information Service or Housing Services staff.
3. The RTO must continue to satisfy the criteria for registration detailed above. Any changes to the RTOs constitution, membership criteria, area of operation or office bearers must be notified to East Ayrshire Council within 28 days of the change. Registration will normally last for three years.
4. Any tenants' and residents' association may apply to register with more than one landlord with 20 tenancies within the association's area of operation. A separate application shall be sent to each landlord in writing. Details of each landlord's registration procedures can be obtained from the landlord directly. East Ayrshire Council seeks to encourage tenants' and residents' associations to register with other landlords. Assistance with applications to register with other landlords can be provided by the Customer Liaison Officers in the Housing Service.
5. Information provided to East Ayrshire Council for the purpose of registration will be made available to the public, with the agreement of the RTO, and only in a format prescribed by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Any information held by the Council will be subject to the conditions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

For groups which are in the early stages of development, East Ayrshire Council recognises that formal criteria may be a disincentive to tenants who may otherwise be interested in participation. The Council will waive these conditions temporarily where it will further the development of participation in the relevant area. The Council is also willing to work with informal groups in other circumstances. Where, for example, a group is made up of both tenants and residents, a situation apparently not covered by the legislation, the Council seeks to include this type of group in the participation process.

## **REMOVAL FROM THE REGISTER**

Tenants' and residents' associations which have successfully applied for registration with East Ayrshire Council can be removed from our Register in any of the following circumstances:

- the organisation no longer meets the registration criteria; or
- the organisation ceases to exist or does not operate; or
- there is a mutual agreement between the organisation and East Ayrshire Council

Removal from the Register will only take place after 21 days notice. Notice will be served in writing to all registered committee members of the organisation, setting out the reasons and the effective date of removal.

*In appropriate circumstances, prior to removal, East Ayrshire Council Housing Service will offer support to the association thus alleviating the need to remove the organisation from the register.*

In the case of an RTO which appears to the Council to have ceased to exist, notice of de-registration will be deemed to have been given to the association if it is served at the last known address known to the Council to be the principle place of business of that organisation.

Where an RTO makes a written application to the Council to be removed from the Register, the Council will require to receive a copy of the minute of the meeting at which this was agreed. The Council will reply to such a request within 14 days.

In the case of an appeal against removal, the removal will be suspended until the appeals procedure has been exhausted.

## **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

In terms of the registration process, tenants' and residents' associations and RTOs retain the right to appeal against decisions taken about them by East Ayrshire Council.

An association may appeal against the Councils decision to:

- not register the organisation; or
- remove the organisation from the Register; or

- not remove the organisation from the Register.

In the first instance, any appeal by an organisation must be made in writing to the Head of Housing.

East Ayrshire Council will consider the appeal and any supporting evidence within one month of receipt of the organisation's appeal and respond in writing to the organisation. The appeal will be considered by the Head of Housing. There will be an opportunity for an oral hearing if requested.

Following the completion of the Council's internal appeal procedures, an organisation has the right to appeal to Communities Scotland. The Regulation and Inspection Division of Communities Scotland will consider such appeals on behalf of Scottish Ministers. Appeals should only be made to Communities Scotland after East Ayrshire Council's appeal procedures have been exhausted.

During the appeals process where an RTO is already registered, it will remain registered until the outcome of the appeal is known.

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE REGISTER**

RTOs are required to inform East Ayrshire Council if:

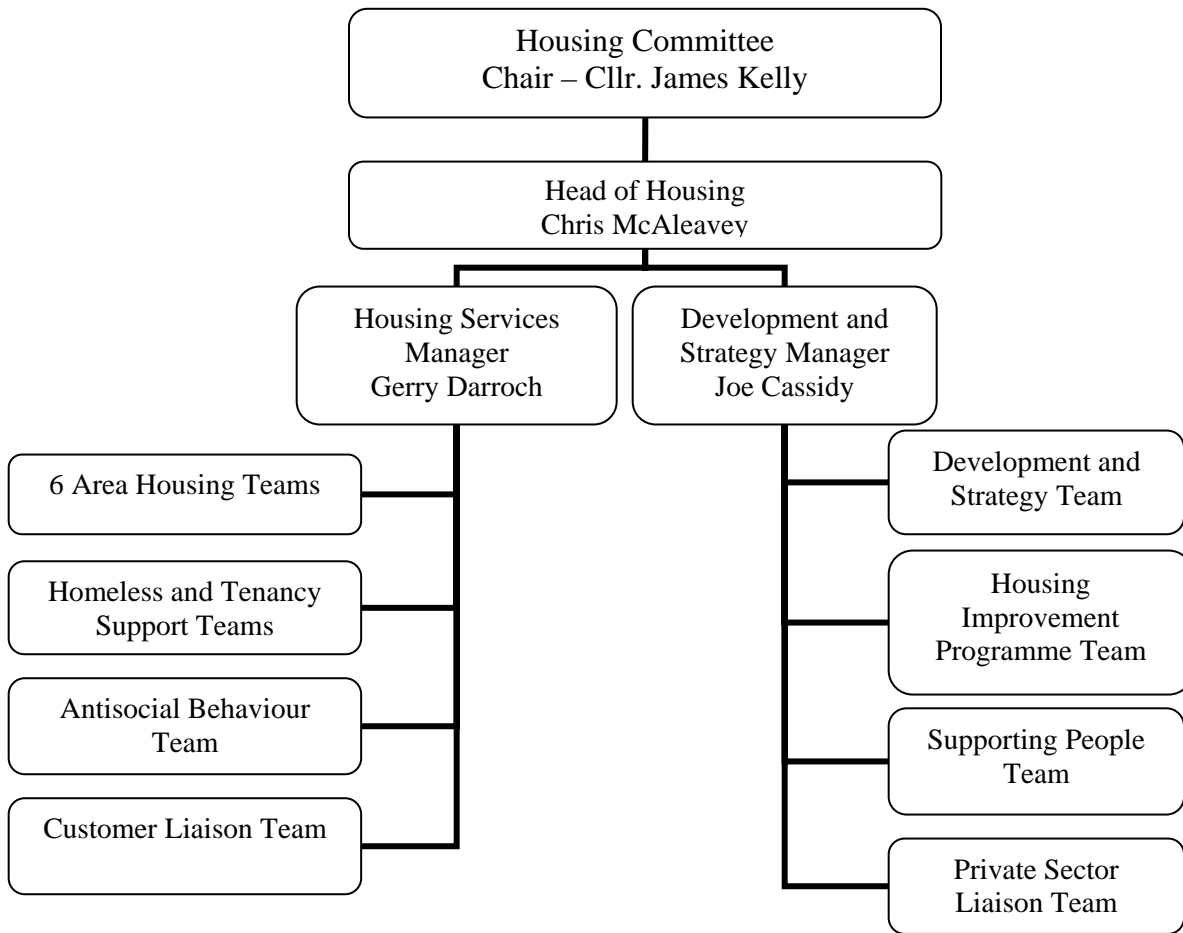
- ◆ there is any alteration to their constitution;
- ◆ there is any change to their office bearers;
- ◆ there is any alteration to their membership criteria or
- ◆ there is any change to their area of operation.

Changes to the above which do not affect the registration criteria will be recorded in the Register. Should any notified changes affect the ability of a RTO to meet the registration criteria, the organisation will be notified in writing by the Council, as these may constitute grounds for de-registration.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

These procedures will be reviewed every three years in full consultation with Registered Tenants' Organisations.

### East Ayrshire Council Area Office Structure and Contact Details



## Area Office Structure and Contact Details

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Head of Housing</b> Chris McAleavey John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 554878 Fax: 01563 554890</p>	
<p><b>Housing Services Manager</b> (overall responsibility for teams listed below) Gerry Darroch John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 554831 Fax: 01563 554890</p>	<p><b>Strategy and Development Manager</b> (overall responsibility for teams listed below) Joe Cassidy John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 576614 Fax: 01563 554843</p>
<p><b>Housing Options</b> (Homeless and Tenancy Support Services) 16 College Wynd Kilmarnock KA1 1HN Tel: 01563 554554 Fax: 01563 576636</p>	<p><b>Strategy and Development Team</b> John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 576614 Fax: 01563 554843</p>
<p><b>Antisocial Behaviour Team</b> John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 576841 Fax: 01563 576526</p>	<p><b>Housing Improvement Programme Team</b> John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 576962 Fax: 01563 554879</p>
<p><b>Customer Liaison Team</b> John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 576839 or 554854 Fax: 01563 554890</p>	<p><b>Supporting People Team</b> John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 576747 Fax: 01563 554843</p>
<p><b>Kilmarnock Central Area Team</b> John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 576618 Fax: 01563 576659</p>	<p><b>Private Sector Liaison Team</b> John Dickie Street Kilmarnock KA1 1BY Tel: 01563 558180 or 554850 Fax: 01563 554843</p>

<b>Kilmarnock Northwest Area Team</b> 54/56 Western Road Kilmarnock KA3 1LB Tel: 01563 555670 Fax: 01563 538001	<b>Cumnock Area Team</b> 25 Ayr Road Cumnock KA18 1EA Tel: 01563 555428 or 555429 Fax: 01563 555421
<b>Kilmarnock South Area Team</b> 64/66 Caprington Avenue Kilmarnock KA1 4SQ Tel: 01563 554102 Fax: 01563 554117	<b>Doon Valley Area Team</b> Dalmellington Area Centre 33 High Street Dalmellington KA6 7QL Tel: 01292 552885 Fax: 01292 552932
<b>Irvine Valley Area Team</b> 51 Academy Street Hurlford KA1 5BU Tel: 01563 554650 Fax: 01563 554665	

## Contacting your Local Councillor

Your local Councillor can be contacted via Members' services. This section of the Council provides support to your local councillor to enable them to communicate more effectively with their constituents.

Each Political Party has an office within member services and your local Councillor can be contacted at the relevant group office.

<b>Labour Group Office</b>	<b>SNP Group Office</b>	<b>Conservative Group Office</b>
Members' Services London Road Kilmarnock KA3 7BU Tel: 01563 576073 Fax: 01563 576275	Members' Services London Road Kilmarnock KA3 7BU Tel: 01563 576056 Fax: 01563 576280	Members' Services London Road Kilmarnock KA3 7BU Tel: 01563 576137 Fax: 01563 576245

## Glossary of Terms

The following details some useful housing language to assist you to clearly understand the Tenant participation Strategy as well as some of the commonly used terms and acronyms frequently employed within the housing service and tenants organisations.

<b>Key Organisations</b>	
<b>Communities Scotland</b>	A government agency that regulates landlords, provides funding for new build housing, carries out research on housing issues, and provides support to landlords and tenants on tenant participation.
<b>East Ayrshire Council</b>	The Statutory provider of Council homes in East Ayrshire.
<b>East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation</b>	The umbrella organisation for tenants and residents associations in East Ayrshire.
<b>Scottish Executive</b>	This is a collective term for Scottish government that includes Ministers and civil servants.
<b>Tenants Information Service</b>	A national organisation, run by a board of tenant directors that provides independent information, advice and training to tenants across Scotland.

<b>Key Words</b>	
<b>Acronyms</b>	The initials of a phrase that spell a word – e.g. EAC = East Ayrshire Council.
<b>Action Plan</b>	A list of things a landlord or tenants organisation must do in order to meet aims and objectives.
<b>Administration Grant</b>	An amount of money that East Ayrshire council pays to tenants' organisations to assist with administration costs.
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	Housing that is either rented by a <b>local authority</b> or <b>Registered Social Landlord (RSL)</b> . <b>Low cost home ownership</b> is another form of affordable housing.
<b>Bench Marking</b>	A system used by landlords to compare the cost and how a

	service is provided with similar organisations, with a view to adopting best practice. This is sometimes called a <b>Peer Review</b> .
<b>Best Value Review</b>	A review of services that takes into account the principles of <b>Best Value</b> .
<b>Briefing Paper</b>	A short explanation of a policy. Briefing papers should always be in <b>Plain English</b> .
<b>Budget</b>	An estimate of all income and expenditure over a set period.
<b>Business Plan</b>	A landlord or tenants' organisation will produce this to show activities against how it expects to spend money in its <b>Budget</b> .
<b>Capacity to Influence</b>	The skills (such as public speaking or negotiation), information (on specific issues), and ability, experience and confidence, members of a tenants' organisation have to influence decisions taken by its landlord.
<b>Capital Programme</b>	The programme of planned repairs or replacements that a landlord undertakes to keep the houses in good quality (such as kitchen replacements).
<b>Code of Practice</b>	A document setting out processes and procedures, which if followed should result in achieving objectives in a proper manner.

<b>Committee Reports</b>	A report that is tabled at Council Committees (meetings of Councillors) explaining background so councillors can take informed decisions.
<b>Communications Code of Practice</b>	A Code of practice developed by East Ayrshire TPSG and EAC that sets out how good communication should happen between the Council and tenants organisations and tenants.
<b>Consultation</b>	A landlord produces draft proposals, talks and listens to people affected before taking a decision. Tenant consultation means having a chance to comment on proposals prepared by the landlord and have your views taken into account.
<b>Delegated Power</b>	Authority for some decisions to be taken by local area offices in East Ayrshire Council, rather than by managers centrally in Kilmarnock.
<b>Development Support</b>	Support for tenants' organisations that assists them to

	effectively influence their landlords. Development support can include things like providing information, training and advice such as assisting with a constitution, organising meetings, planning for action, reviewing progress and training and support to influence policy development or reviews.
<b>Elected Members</b>	Councillors that have been elected in Local Government Elections.
<b>Estate Action Plans</b>	A service level agreement negotiated between tenants and residents in an area and the Council and other service providers. Estate Action Plans provide a formal means for tenants and residents to influence local services.
<b>Equal Opportunities</b>	Not discriminating against a person on the basis of things like race, disability, sex, religion, sexual orientation, age and so on. All landlords and tenants' organisations are required to have a commitment to equal opportunities under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
<b>Focus Group</b>	A method of gaining opinion from a group of people that may have an issue in common. For example a landlord may convene a focus group of tenants that have recently used its repairs service to find out how tenants perceive the service. Focus Groups are not democratically elected.
<b>Framework</b>	A document that explains the practical details for how tenant participation will be implemented and monitored.

<b>Housing Conditions</b>	The condition of a landlord's housing stock (e.g. the state of repair).
<b>Housing Officers</b>	Council Staff in the community housing section that are responsible for the allocation of tenancies, estate management and other duties
<b>Housing Policies</b>	Documents about specific issues (like allocating houses) that explain how the Council will deliver its service in this area.
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	The account in local authority that covers all the day to day income and expenditure on council housing.
<b>Housing (Scotland) Act 2001</b>	A document written in legal language agreed by the Scottish Parliament. It sets out the law regarding specific issues of housing.

<b>Interpretation</b>	Providing information and support for people in the format they find most useful e.g. Braille, audio tape, other languages, etc
<b>Key Principles</b>	The underlying principles that are required for good tenant participation to take place. These were agreed by tenants, landlords and the Scottish Executive in their publication <b>Partners in Participation</b> .
<b>Local Authority</b>	A local council that owns and manages council houses.
<b>Low Cost Home Ownership</b>	Houses built and sold at a cheaper price because they are subsidised.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation Framework</b>	The way the council and tenants will check how tenant participation is being delivered.
<b>National Strategy for Tenant Participation</b>	A document written by the Scottish Executive that explains how tenant participation should work.

<b>Objective</b>	Things a landlord or tenants organisations wants to achieve
<b>Outputs</b>	Measurable item that is produced as result of action and can be used to evaluate progress (e.g. production of a document by an agreed timescale)
<b>Partners for Participation</b>	A document written by the Scottish Executive that explains how tenant participation should work.
<b>Partnership Working</b>	Landlords, tenants and other agencies working together to achieve a common <b>objective</b> .
<b>Peer Review Process</b>	A system used by landlords to compare the cost and how a service is provided with similar organisations, with a view to adopting best practice. This is also called <b>bench marking</b> .
<b>Performance Information</b>	Information that explains how a landlord has performed against an agreed set of priorities (e.g. the number of repairs completed on time). Landlords must provide tenants with performance information.
<b>Performance Monitoring</b>	The way that landlord's <b>performance information</b> is checked. This can also be used to highlight areas where progress is being made or improvements required.

<b>Procurement Procedure</b>	The way that a landlord buys in services from an outside agency (e.g. building contractor)
<b>Registered Social Landlord</b>	A non-profit landlord that is registered with and monitored by Communities Scotland. (e.g. a housing association or housing co-operative)
<b>Register of Tenant's Organisations</b>	A register a landlord has to keep, which list the number of <b>Registered Tenants' Organisations.</b>
<b>Registered Tenants Organisation</b>	A tenants group that has registered with its' landlord and can demonstrate that it is democratic and represents the views of tenants.
<b>Registered Tenants Organisation Forum</b>	Joint meetings of all RTO's in a specific area meeting with the area housing manager and other officers to address common issues and concerns, including agreeing the expenditure on local environmental projects.
<b>Resources</b>	Money or "in - kind" facilities that are made available to tenant organisations.
<b>Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)</b>	The standard that all council and RSL houses must meet by 2015.
<b>Service Standards</b>	A suite of indicators that reflect acceptable standards of service.
<b>Supported Accommodation</b>	A house linked to onsite staff that provide support to a tenant, to help him / her manage a home.
<b>Standard Delivery Plan (SDP)</b>	The plan that demonstrates how the Council will ensure that all houses will meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.
<b>Start up Grant</b>	A grant that the Council provides to tenants groups when they set up.
<b>Statement of Resources</b>	Information that a landlord has to provide as part of its' <b>tenant participation strategy</b> outlining how much money and "in - kind" resources it will provide to assist <b>tenant participation.</b>
<b>Tenancy Support Services</b>	The section of the housing service with responsibility for providing support to tenants' to assist them maintain their tenancies.

<b>Tenant Participation Structures</b>	The way that landlords and tenants' organisations are set up to ensure tenants can influence their landlord.
<b>Tenants Movement</b>	An organised and democratic structure that includes local tenants groups and EATRF.
<b>Tenants and Residents Association</b>	Democratically elected group set up to represent tenants' views.
<b>Tenant Participation Steering Group</b>	EA wide group made up of representatives of tenants and residents associations and individual tenants as part of the Council's commitment to developing <b>tenant participation</b> activities.
<b>Translation</b>	Written support for those, whose first language is not English, provided in their own language.

### East Ayrshire Council Complaints Procedure

**It's Better to Listen** – A guide to making comments, suggestions or complaints

Any comments, suggestions or complaints you make to the Council will be viewed as an opportunity for us to improve the services we provide. If you think that something can be done better, let us know so that we can try to improve it. If you think we have done something well, please tell us so that we know we are on the right track.

If you have a difficulty with a service or have a complaint to make, the quickest way to get it resolved is to talk to the staff responsible for that particular service. This might be the head teacher of a school or staff at your local office.

If you're not sure who to contact, call the Council on 01563 576000.

#### How to register a formal complaint

If the staff you have been dealing with have not been able to provide a response that you consider to be satisfactory, or if you would like to register a formal complaint, either:

- Call in at any Council Office to collect a leaflet, or
- Write to the Council at

Council Headquarters  
London Road  
Kilmarnock  
KA3 7BR

#### How a department will respond

A response will be provided within 7 working days of receiving full details of the issues you raise. If you are dissatisfied with this formal response, you are entitled to ask for the Director of the Department to review your complaint. You will receive a written complaint response from the Director within 14 working days of receiving your request for a review.

#### Review by the Chief Executive

If the Director of the Department cannot resolve the complaint to your satisfaction, you can ask for the Chief Executive of the Council to review your complaint. A response from the Chief Executive will be issued within 21 working days of receipt of your request for a review.

## **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

If you remain dissatisfied with the Council's response, you have the right to take your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. You can write to the Ombudsman at:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman  
Freepost EH641  
Edinburgh  
EH3 0BR

Website: [www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk)

East Ayrshire  
Tenant Participation Steering Group

Tenant Participation  
Communication Code of Practice  
For  
All Tenants & Residents Groups  
In  
East Ayrshire

A Consultation Document

Revised 29<sup>th</sup> June 06

East Ayrshire Tenant Participation Steering Group - Draft for discussion and agreement with all tenants and residents groups and East Ayrshire Council.

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## **Preface**

This draft communications code of practice sets out a framework for effective communication practice between East Ayrshire Council's Housing Service and:

- East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Groups (Registered Tenants Organisation's – [ **RTO's** ] in particular)
- Individual tenants
- East Ayrshire Tenant Participation Steering Group (**EATPSG**)
- East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation (**EATRF** - when established)

This document was drafted and agreed by the East Ayrshire Tenant Participation Steering Group for wider consultation and agreement with all tenants and residents groups across the authority and East Ayrshire Council.

The main objectives of this code of practice are to:

- Clarify how the East Ayrshire Housing Service will meet the information, consultation and participation needs of tenants
- Promote recognition of the East Ayrshire Tenant Participation Steering Group (TPSG) and in future the East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation (EATRF) as the representative organisation for tenants and residents groups across East Ayrshire
- Encourage the development of effective and consistent communications between the Housing Service and EATPSG, EATRF and individual tenants
- Ensure tenant influence in all aspects of housing decision making both at local and strategic levels
- Assist tenant involvement in shaping the future housing service at all levels
- Ensure that the tenant participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 are implemented inline with all aspects of the Equal Opportunities Legislation and the National Standards for Community Engagement

## **National Tenant Participation Strategy - Key Principles**

**Partners in Participation – the national strategy for tenant participation, underpin tenant participation practice in East Ayrshire and in particular by the key principles detailed below.**

1. Tenant participation requires a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, elected and committee / board members, and housing officers at all levels, working together towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services.
2. Tenant participation should be seen as a continuous process where information, ideas and power are shared, common understandings of problems are striven for and a consensus is worked out.
3. Good tenant participation allows all parties to contribute to the agenda. All participants require to have all the information needed to consider the issues properly; that information requires to be clear timely and accessible and to take account of equal opportunities concerns.
4. Processes of decision making should be open, clear and accountable.
5. Adequate time should be given to tenant representatives to consider the issues properly. Tenants should have the opportunity to work out a common view in advance of meeting landlord's representatives.
6. Good tenant participation requires the landlord to recognise the independence of tenants' organisations.
7. Good working relationships evolve gradually and are flexible to adapt to local circumstances.
8. Tenants organisations require adequate resources for organisation, training and support
9. Tenant participation in rural areas must be tailored to suit the particular needs of tenants in such communities.
10. Tenant participation must meet the requirements of the legislation surrounding equal opportunities. Good practice in participation removes barriers to effective participation arising from ethnicity, geographic location, special needs, and language difficulties, learning difficulties, age, sexual orientation or disability.

***Scottish Executive 1999***

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 East Ayrshire Council is committed to encouraging and supporting tenants, residents and all service users to

participate actively in all areas of our work.

This document sets out minimum standards that the Housing Service will meet when consulting and involving tenants in policy development. We will ensure that we meet the statutory requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in respect of our tenants'. We will also and carry out more detailed work during Strategy implementation to develop clear, cross departmental procedures and appropriate ways of consulting all services users in line with the Council's Community Engagement Strategy. We will ensure that existing "good practice" informs the development of any future guidance.

1.2 It is important to note that there is already a wide range of approaches to consultation and tenant participation in operation at local level with tenants and residents groups, at area umbrella group level through the Tenant participation Steering Group (TPSG). It is also intended that there will be a strategic and authority wide level of consultation and participation with the East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation / Network when it is firmly established.

1.3 Following on from the introduction of the National Tenant Participation Strategy, "Partners in Participation" in 1999, the Scottish Executive produced five codes of practice on different aspects of tenant participation. These codes describe how to apply the key principles of the National Strategy (see page 2)

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Guidance on Tenant Participation reminds us that the new legislation

rather than replacing the National Strategy, underpins it and we must apply its principles and the associated Codes of Practice in relation to our statutory duties under the new Act. The Codes of Practice are as follows:

- Tenant participation at Local Level
- Tenant participation at Best Value
- Tenant participation in Regeneration
- Tenant participation at Stock Transfers
- Tenant participation at Rural Areas

1.4 The East Ayrshire Council Housing Service will apply the principles of the National Tenant Participation Strategy and the associated codes of practice in relation to our statutory duties under the new Housing Act. In addition we meet the following minimum standards.

## 2. Information

2.1 In addition to the Tenants' Handbook, we will provide the following information on our policies, procedures and rules as a landlord *on request*;

- The terms of the tenancy agreement
- Right to buy rules
- Rent setting and charging policies and procedures
- The housing allocations policy
- Repairs and maintenance
- The Tenant Participation Strategy; and
- Decision making structures and procedures

2.2 We will ensure that new tenants are provided with information on tenants and residents groups operating in their area.

- 2.3 When writing we will make all our letters clear and easy to understand as stated in our *Customer Care Charter*.
- 2.4 We will acknowledge receipt of your letters or e-mails within 5 working days and will answer your letters and e-mails within 10 working days of receiving them, or keep you updated if an answer will take longer.
- 2.5 Using a variety of services / agencies as appropriate, we will arrange for letters to be translated, interpreted over the phone or made available in large print, audio tape or Braille if you ask us.
- 2.6 All tenants will be issued with an *annual* Housing Services newsletter. Copies of the newsletter will be made available in a variety of formats on request.
- 2.7 The newsletter will be used, as required, to notify all tenants and tenants and residents groups in advance and provide information on forthcoming tenant participation and consultation issues and opportunities that will affect them or their tenancy.
- 2.8 All existing and new tenants will be issued with a copy of the Tenant's Handbook that includes details of tenants' rights under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This information will be available in a variety of formats as required.
- 2.9 All existing and new tenants and residents will be issued with a copy of the East Ayrshire Council Complaints Procedure.
- 2.10 Registered tenants organisations (RTO's) will be notified and provided with information on any consultation proposals affecting their area by letter. Individual tenants will be notified via the Tenants Newsletter or specific letter as appropriate.
- 2.11 RTO's will be provided with information on Council Housing Committee meetings, Full Council Committee meetings and any other relevant meetings that may arise. RTO's will also be provided with a contact number of other Council committees and dates and times of when those committees meet as per the Council's Annual Calendar.
- 2.12 RTO's will be provided with an East Ayrshire wide contact list for Key Housing staff. This will be regularly updated. A centrally based Customer Liaison Officer will be assigned the task of updating this list. We will inform RTO's and TPSG members of any staff changes as soon as practically possible.
- 2.13 RTO's will be provided with information on all capital works and will be notified prior to any major works commencing in their area of operation
- 2.14 Annually RTO's will receive information on performance (specific to their area and East Ayrshire wide), the management of empty homes, any satisfaction survey reports published and other relevant research findings. Performance information will also be published in the tenants' newsletter. We will develop performance procedures to enable tenants (local and East Ayrshire wide) to participate in monitoring. This will include Estate walkabouts and local RTO Forums in each local housing office catchments areas.
- 2.15 More generally East Ayrshire Council staff will be required to follow Council guidelines when providing information, particularly with respect to equalities issues.

### 3. Consultation

3.1 Annually we will contact all RTO's and tenants by personal letter to ask what East Ayrshire wide policy issues they want to have discussed during the year and advise them of any areas of work on which we are considering developing proposals.

3.2 Taking account of responses received we will agree, in consultation with the TPSG and the East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation, a timetable of main events, including deadlines for responses by tenants. This will be published in the Tenants' newsletter and by individual letter to all persons who participated.

3.3 We will consult with tenants through registered tenants organisations (RTO's), and individually on:

- Any changes we propose to make to your Tenancy Agreement
- Any modernisation or improvements we are planning to make to your home
- Any changes to how we manage our service to you, for example, how you report a repair or repair responsibilities
- How we plan to involve tenants in decision-making
- Any proposals to transfer management and ownership of housing to a new landlord, and
- Any proposals for demolition in your area

3.4 Where we have proposals to consult on, we will notify registered tenants' organisations and individual tenants by letter or via the Tenants Newsletter. Home visits will be offered to those who require specific assistance where appropriate.

3.5 We will encourage a variety of approaches to consulting with both RTO's and individuals, for example using the Tenant Newsletter, leaflets / posters, public meetings, conferences / seminars, open days, home visits, questionnaires / surveys and through our web-site. The method of consultation agreed will depend on the scale and significance of the project and the resources required.

3.6 Detailed information will be provided to RTO's and tenants on any proposals we are consulting on, including:

- How and when the final decision will be taken
- How the proposal will affect tenants
- How and within what timescales tenants can make their views known to us
- The contact officer dealing with the consultation
- Information on how and where to complain

We will have due regard of the views expressed by and RTO's tenants.

3.7 Where possible **Registered Tenant Organisation's** will be given not less than **12 weeks** to respond to any proposals made. If for any reason we have to give a shorter timescale we will explain why. A written summary report of the outcome of any consultation, detailing how registered tenants organisations views have been taken into account and why these views have either been incorporated or disregarded will be sent directly to those Registered Tenant Organisation's that respond. The report will also be provided to the Tenant Participation Strategy Implementation Group.

3.8 The views of Registered Tenant Organisation's, councillors and

individual tenants will be sought from the outset of proposal development including views on the consultation methods required and timescales. A consultation plan and timetable will be developed and agreed with Registered Tenant Organisation's and local councillors.

3.9 In some cases a proposal will only affect certain tenants in certain areas, for example a proposal to modernise a particular block of housing. All Registered Tenant Organisation's will be consulted on the broader improvement work and the Registered Tenant Organisation's representing the area concerned will be consulted on the local specifics.

3.10 Registered Tenant Organisation's will be provided with more detailed briefings and copies of relevant Council reports on request. Registered Tenant Organisation's will have the right to approach the Convenor for Housing to ask that a report be delayed for further consultation if it is felt that the consultation process has been inadequate.

3.11 We will take into account the fact that Registered Tenant Organisation's may wish to obtain independent advice on proposals and will ensure reasonable time is allowed for this to happen and provide resources, where appropriate, as required.

3.12 When developed, representatives from the East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation will be invited to attend quarterly meetings with the Housing Convenor and appropriate officers to jointly review Housing activity and consider future work. Involving organised groups in the political process will assist us to

identify areas of agreement, difference and shared concern.

3.13 Where possible **individuals** will be given not less than **4 weeks** to respond to proposals. Consultation exercise results will be reported in future editions of the Tenants Newsletter. If for any reason we have to give a shorter timescale we will explain why.

3.14 Section 25 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires us to give each tenant not less than **4 weeks** notice, in writing, before increasing rents or other charges. If we propose to increase our rents we will first consult with those tenants who will be affected.

3.15 Should new issues arise requiring consultation, tenants and **RTO's** will be given, where possible, not less than 4 weeks working notice. If for any reason we have to give a shorter timescale we will explain why.

## 4. Participation

4.1 East Ayrshire Council tenants will be encouraged to participate in a variety of ways, for example:

- locally in estate walkabouts and area specific RTO Forums
- meetings with the local area manager, and /or regular meetings with local staff
- local authority wide working with officers in specific joint working groups and also on working groups with officers (for example developing and implementing the TP strategy) and
- through our annual tenants conference. We will continue to build on good practice work involving tenants in policy formulation

4.2 The Council will encourage a variety of approaches, for example

- task focussed working groups involving tenants, councillors and officials to develop policy
- seminars / conferences to discuss proposals
- Estate walkabouts and specific tenant / officer groups to review services.

The method of participation chosen will depend on the scale and significance of the project and resources required. The approach will be developed and agreed in conjunction with relevant RTO's (including local RTO Forums and the East Ayrshire Federation).

4.3 We will involve tenants at the earliest agenda setting stage, seeking views on what we should be discussing as well as views on any proposals we may already have (see Consultation 1). We will develop and refine ways of working to assist tenants to identify issues of concern, develop proposals and participate in working groups.

4.4 Working Groups are a tried and tested method of involving tenants. At the start of any working group, guidelines will be discussed and agreed with the RTO's and any individual tenants to ensure adequate tenant representation and influence as well as clarity of purpose and focus, including:

- Membership of the group
- Continuity of membership or fully briefed replacements
- Who will chair
- Who will produce minutes and agenda
- Role and remit including decision making powers
- When and where meetings will be held

- Access to independent advice, and
- Timetable

4.5 Where a working group is set up to review policy, the TPSG and / or East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation will be offered membership. The Group can recommend changes to the policy with the TPSG and / or East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation having the opportunity to endorse them or come up with alternatives. The views of the TPSG and / or the East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation's will be reported to the Housing Committee and the full Council.

***(NOTE as the EA federation is not developed yet the TPSG will continue to be the main vehicle for this work until the Federation is established. The following section will also be more relevant when the federation is set up)***

## **5. East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation (EATRF)**

5.1 EATRF is recognised by East Ayrshire Council as the authority wide representative body for its tenants.

5.2 We are fully committed to consulting EATRF, at the earliest stage, on all authority wide housing issues where there are proposals to develop or change housing services that affect tenants. This will include service delivery, policy development and day-to-day housing management issues. EATRF can also request that consultation take place on issues of concern.

5.3 EATRF is also an RTO and the above standards apply

5.4 Quarterly meetings of the EATRF, the Housing Convenor and Council Officers will be held to discuss issues of concern and progress practical work

agreed by the Tenant Participation Strategy Implementation Group.

5.5 EATRF's membership and the groups registered with the council overlap. We will liaise with EATRF on planned consultation to ensure that we make the best use of our resources and to avoid duplication of effort.

5.6 We will continue to build on good practice participation work with the Federation and will ensure that this informs future work development.

## **6. Meetings**

Meetings are an important way of consulting and involving tenants. The following procedures will apply:

6.1 If an RTO wishes to invite councillors or officials to a meeting, the RTO should provide details of the time, place and purpose of the meeting, including any issues on which a decision will be required (at least ten working days in advance where possible). RTOs will use a meeting proforma to inform the invited person about the arrangements for the meeting and information required.

6.2 The Housing Service will confirm which officials will attend ensuring that they are fully briefed and, where possible, with sufficient seniority to take decisions at the meeting without reference. If it is not possible for a decision to be made the official will agree a timescale of no more than 10 working days for a response to be made.

6.3 If the Housing Service wishes to invite tenants to a meeting, it will provide details of the time, place and purpose of the meeting ten working days in advance where possible. RTO's will confirm whether or not they will attend.

6.4 RTO's will be asked to provide officials and councillors with copies of any minutes taken of meetings attended.

6.5 Crèche facilities, interpreting services and other support services will be made available on request at meetings organised by the Housing Service where possible. All meetings will be held in fully accessible venues.

## **7. Non – Registered RTO's**

7.1 East Ayrshire Council will continue to consult with non-registered groups and organisations with housing interests but this will be out with the legislative framework. We will advise groups that registration strengthens their organisations' rights to information and to be consulted on proposals relating to issues that affect them.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

8.1 A Tenant Participation Strategy Implementation Group, will be established and meet quarterly to maintain and oversee participation work in East Ayrshire and co-ordinate the evaluation and monitoring procedures described in Part 6 of the Tenant participation Strategy. This Code of Conduct will be reviewed as part of the review of the Tenant Participation Strategy.

## Appendix 1

### Community Engagement Key Principles

The following key principles are adopted from Communities Scotland's National Standards for Community Engagement published in March 2005.

- Fairness, equality and inclusion must underpin all aspects of community engagement, and should be reflected in both community engagement policies and the way that everyone involved participates.
- Community engagement should have clear and agreed purposes, and methods that achieve these purposes.
- Improving the quality of community engagement requires commitment to learning from experience.
- Skill must be exercised in order to build communities, to ensure practise of equalities principles, to share ownership of the agenda, and to enable all viewpoints to be reflected.
- As all parties to community engagement possess knowledge based on study, experience, observation and reflection, effective engagement processes will share and use that knowledge.
- All participants should be given the opportunity to build on their knowledge and skills.
- Accurate, timely information is crucial for effective participation.

In summary, these principles highlight the importance of equality and recognising the diversity of people and communities; a clear sense of purpose; effective methods for achieving change; building on the skills and knowledge of all those involved and commitment to learning for continuous improvement.

Both the Council and the tenant and resident's representatives also fully endorse the National Standards for Community Engagement and are committed to strive to meet these standards.

## Appendix 2

### National Standards for Community Engagement

1. **Involvement**  
We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement.
2. **Support**  
We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.
3. **Planning**  
We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken.
4. **Methods**  
We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.
5. **Working Together**  
We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently.
6. **Sharing Information**  
We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants.
7. **Working with Others**  
We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement.
8. **Improvement**  
We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants.
9. **Feedback**  
We will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected.
10. **Monitoring and Evaluation**  
We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement.

## Appendix 3

### Equal Opportunities

The Housing and Property Services will strive to encourage equal opportunities and diversity, responding to the different needs and service requirements of people, regardless of sex, race, colour, disability, age, nationality, marital status, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment.

To enable this aim to be met, they will:

- Consult regularly with different groups and communities to find out if services are appropriate and accessible.
- Regularly review and improve services to ensure equality standards are being met.
- Share information and good practice amongst those who work in partnership with the council to help eliminate discrimination.
- Ensure that the department's policy is understood by groups and organisations.
- Ensure all our information leaflets are available in other formats on request including, audio tape, Braille, community languages and large print.
- Ensure that Housing Offices and other local offices are equipped with the most up to date facilities to assist people with disabilities.
- Arrange for signers or interpreters, as appropriate to be present at interviews with customers who have hearing difficulties.
- Make appropriate arrangements for communicating with customers who have special needs such as learning difficulties.
- Provide the services of an interpreter for non English speaking customers.