

ANGUS COUNCIL  
TENANT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION  
STRATEGY  
2023 – 2027

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## FOREWORD

Welcome to the Angus Council Tenant and Community Participation Strategy 2023 – 2027. The publication of a new Strategy gives us the chance to reflect on where we were when the last one was published. In 2019, we were unaware of the seismic effect the COVID-19 pandemic would have on all of us and across all parts of our lives. We had ambitious plans for the development of our tenant participation services and a solid foundation from which to build. Tenant participation, which relies much more than most other services on social interaction, was severely affected by the pandemic and the harsh restrictions on meeting up which prevented much of our work for the next couple of years.

So, we've had to take a couple of steps back to re-engage with tenants and push forward electronically, which isn't what all tenants would like. There may come a time in the future where most of our services can happen face-to-face, but I suspect the world has shifted a bit more permanently away from that – we shall see.

In recognition of the fact that we're having to "go back to basics" in many respects, this strategy will be a 5 year one, to give the necessary time to redevelop our services and relationships with tenants in the post-pandemic world. Technologically, we're in a much better place than we were, with Microsoft Teams and availability of information technology resources to help tenants engage, and this also allows tenants with restricted mobility to engage much more easily, and across all the six burghs without having to transport themselves to a central point. These are the positives from the very dark times from which we're now emerging.

John Morrow, Service Leader – Housing

## INTRODUCTION

This is Angus Council's Angus Tenant & Community Engagement Strategy for 2023-2027. In this document, when we say "we", we mean Angus Council, and when we say "you" we mean tenants.

This strategy clearly sets out how we plan to support you to make a difference to where you live, help improve services and have a say about how housing services are delivered.

Our Change Programme explores different ways of delivering services and considers ways to improve how we do business with customers. We are committed to working with our communities in new and different ways.

Tenant participation is a two-way process, which involves sharing ideas and information and influencing decision-making processes to improve housing services.

We acknowledge that tenant participation is an important part of our service development process and we aim to ensure that all tenants are given the opportunity to have their say in the planning and provision of our services. We value your feedback. We use it to improve and develop the services we deliver, but if we don't know what's not working, we can't fix it.

We want to focus on the needs of our customers, whilst being transparent and accountable. We want to be inclusive and give opportunities for everyone to get involved, whilst making best use of the resources and assets available to us. This strategy is designed to reflect these values and encourage you to become involved in a way that suits you.

## WHY DO WE NEED A TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY? - THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the first legal tenant participation duties for all Scottish social landlords. The Act requires us to have a tenant participation strategy that sets out how we engage with tenants and involve them in the way we take decisions about housing services. We must also set out how we will work with registered tenant organisations and keep a publicly available register of tenant organisations. We must consult with tenants and registered tenant organisations when we make a change to housing services or policies that will have an impact on tenants. We must give information to tenants on the level of service they will receive.

### Housing (Scotland) Acts 2010 & 2014

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 created the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants, housing applicants, homeless people and other customers of social landlords. The Regulator assesses how well social landlords perform against outcomes and standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter and reports this on its website. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 brought in duties to consult tenants on changes to group structures and mergers, antisocial behaviour and housing allocations.

### Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was introduced in 2012 and reviewed in 2017. It is a series of outcomes and standards that all social landlords should achieve for their tenants. Each year, all Scottish social landlords complete a self-assessment called the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) that explains how they have performed. This allows performance to be compared against other social landlords and against national averages. There are three Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes that relate specifically to tenant participation:

- Participation: Tenants and other customers find it easy to take part and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.
- Communication: Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
- Equalities: Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

## KEEPING YOU INFORMED

We will provide you with meaningful information in plain language, to help you understand what we mean, so you can take part in influencing housing policies and make informed choices.

As a digital council, we engage through digital media where possible, but we also communicate using other means available, such as:

- [Housing News blog](#): our blog has been running since 2015. It gives regular information on topics we believe are of interest and help to our tenants.
- Social media: we use social media as a tool to communicate with our tenants and communities, as well as linking into existing local networks.
- Angus-wide tenant participation meetings: we continue to work with our tenants and communities to bring together groups from around Angus to discuss housing issues. We will promote information on tenant and community events to ensure as many people as possible can engage with us.
- Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs): we will keep our RTOs informed of new or upcoming changes to our services and support them to communicate and interact with their local communities.
- Non-registered tenants & resident groups, community groups & networks: we continue to link in with other community groups, to ensure we reach out to more tenants through improved communication.
- Email: we continue to communicate with a proportion of our tenants by email, where that is the best method of communication
- Posters & flyers: we continue to advertise opportunities to get involved across all our communities.
- Local newspapers: we use local newspapers, when appropriate, through press releases, although we recognise the popularity of this medium is declining.

We recognise that not all tenants have access to information technology and internet provision, so we will make a limited number of devices available to tenants to help them with this.

## GETTING INVOLVED

We have four Communities Officers (Pride & Place) based in our four localities, who can give you advice and support and help you get involved in a way that suits you.

Our localities are:

- Arbroath
- Carnoustie, Monifieth & Sidlaw
- Forfar & Kirriemuir
- Brechin & Montrose

Please contact them at [tenantparticipation@angus.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@angus.gov.uk) or call ACCESSLine on 03452 777 778.

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## HOW WE WILL HELP YOU PARTICIPATE

We want to support the work of tenants, service users and staff to meet this strategy's priorities.

We will:

- Work in partnership with services, including those from the voluntary sector, to support tenants' and residents' groups.
- Give tenants learning opportunities and information sessions.
- Produce and publicise news about housing and related issues and make it available to all our tenants.
- Give advice, training and support to help tenants set up and run a tenants and residents group or Registered Tenants Organisation.
- Give start-up and annual grant funding to Registered Tenants Organisations.
- Recruit new tenant volunteers.
- Help tenants and residents respond to consultations.
- Give tenants and service users the skills, knowledge, and confidence to take part.
- Give tenants information in a format that is relevant to them.
- Pursue opportunities to set up tenants' groups.
- Increase the number of neighbourhood walkabouts.
- Engage with hard-to-reach groups of tenants and give safe spaces for Involvement.
- Provide accessible venues for tenants and residents meetings.
- Cover expenses associated with participation.

## OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2023 - 2027

We have agreed these key priorities with our tenant representatives:

- Listening: We will provide opportunities for tenants to give their views
- Involvement: We will provide opportunities to get involved in shaping the Housing service
- Information: We will give information in plain language and in whatever format is needed to make sure all tenants can take part
- Organisation: We will support tenants to organise themselves at local and service-wide levels
- Skills: We will give education and training to tenants and potential tenants to help them get as involved as they want to be

Our Action Plan gives full details of how we plan to deliver on each of these priorities in the next five years.

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## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We want tenant participation to be open and accessible to all tenants who want to get involved in a way that suits them.

We will make sure every tenant has their individual needs recognised and is treated fairly and with respect. We will not unlawfully discriminate against anyone on the grounds of their age, disability, gender, marital status, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender status.

We understand that there are sometimes barriers to participation that can stop individuals from taking part and we will work together to overcome these.

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## GLOSSARY

Here is a fuller explanation of some of the terms used in this Strategy

### **Change Programme**

Angus Council programme for managing change to make the Council better, stronger, sustainable and smaller.

### **Tenants and Residents Groups including Registered tenant Organisations (RTOs)**

A tenants' and residents' group is a community group for tenants and residents in a defined area.

Groups can become more formal by registering with the council and becoming a Registered Tenant's Organisation (RTO).

### **Equality**

Is about being fair – sometimes this means giving extra help to those who need it the most, to give people who are vulnerable or do not have a voice, the opportunity to have their views heard.

### **Neighbourhood Walkabout**

This is a tour around the local neighbourhood, identifying any issues and concerns, and working together to create an action plan for solutions.

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APPENDIX 1 – ANGUS TENANT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2023-2027 ACTION PLAN

YEAR 1

<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Listening: We will provide opportunities for tenants to give their views</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Tenants are satisfied with opportunities to get involved in Tenant Participation	Satisfaction question for Arbroath locality initiative  PR plan for 12 month period including use of social media, communications from Housing (letters) and staff presence at local events, such as coffee mornings, gala days  Establish PR sub group	Communities	Customer Satisfaction Survey  No of Facebook followers
E Panel members engage in local and national consultations and surveys	12 month programme of consultations developed based on E Panel survey of issues that they wish to know more about or be involved in and identified by other Council services	Communities	Number of consultation responses  Number of E-panel members
Tenants are consulted on the deployment of resources to address post-COVID recovery and cost of living crisis	Support Housing in recovery funding programme development & delivery	Communities	Number of localities taking part  Number of tenants taking part

	Include in Forfar & Kirriemuir Place Standard incentivised sessions		
Establish pilot Community Hub in Brechin	Identify suitable property Establish hub Review after 12 months	Housing and Communities	
Tenants receive responses to queries raised through tenant participation activity	Agree protocol with Community Housing Teams and other services Offer 'Housing Officer' time before or after strategic TP group meeting	Communities and Housing	Number of queries dealt with satisfactorily
Performance is monitored, evaluated and reported through appropriate channels	Ensure agreed outcomes are realistic and achievable Use Pentana to reflect new strategy Use Hanlon to capture tenant participation activity as well as added Value for Money of tenants engaging in all Vibrant Communities team activities	Communities	

	Individual pieces of work undergo CLD HGIO case study and quality evaluations		
<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Involvement: We will provide opportunities to get involved in shaping the Housing service</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Tenant Strategy Group is operational and representative of all towns in Angus	Roll out e-devices programme across all towns  Give training to users  Carry out meetings	Communities	No of meetings held online  Attendance at meetings
More tenants are participating in groups and activities	Arrange patch plans and walkabouts – Forfar and Kirriemuir  Pilot Arbroath Open Consultation Programme	Housing and Communities	Number taking part (data from Hanlon)  Number of tenants groups
More tenants are engaging in decision-making processes	Carry out additional, small scale Place Standard workshops to focus on Housing in at least one council area in each locality  Carry out one additional incentivised session in South Brechin to support larger scale regeneration project	Communities	Number participating in each initiative

	Promote Participatory budgeting opportunities and events more widely, targeting those most hard to reach		
Communities are supported to identify local needs and priorities and to define and seek support to find solutions	Establish campaign to identify impact of fuel costs and the cost-of-living crisis	Communities with input from Assets and other services	Number of Local action plans developed from walkabouts and other activity
Consultations and engagements on housing services, such as Rent Setting, Scrutiny & Performance, SHIP, New Build Developments and the Common Allocation Policy take place	Run engagement sessions	Communities and Housing	Percentage of requests for support fulfilled
<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Information: We will provide information in plain language and in whatever format is needed to make sure all tenants can take part</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Tenants are better informed by a planned 12 month media strategy to showcase what the Council is doing, for example, New Build, investment, Community Housing Teams, Tenant Participation	Establish a communications working group	Communities	Number of news articles covered over 12 month  % of weeks with news stories being released  Number of services contributing to media plan

Poorer tenants are more aware of and accessing Cost of Living Crisis support	Liaise with other departments such as Welfare Rights and engage with child poverty strategy delivery Close partnership with rest of team and Community Learning and Develop offer to improve life chances  Develop local initiatives such as upcycling, food growing,	Communities	Uptake of support from Housing Hardship Fund and Fuel Poverty Fund
All tenant participation activity is clear in its purpose: Information, consultation, engagement, influence and control.	Prepare Project Plans at the onset of each project	Communities	
<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Organisation: We will support tenants to organise themselves at local and service-wide levels</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Existing Tenants Groups are supported	Ensure staff support for existing tenants groups	Communities	
External Funding opportunities are coordinated and maximised	Tay Cities – South Brechin Year 1 & 2, for example the Regeneration Capital Grant Place Based Investment Fund  Promote and coordinate appropriate tenant participation related external	Communities and Assets	Number of applications made by Vibrant Communities team  Number of community applications supported by Vibrant Communities team  Value of all tenant-related external funding attracted to

	funding opportunities with Vibrant Communities team		Angus as a result of Vibrant Communities support
<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Skills: We will provide education and training to tenants and potential tenants to help them get as involved as they want to be</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Vulnerable and young people have the necessary skills to sustain tenancies	Make Lifeskills including tenancy management available to target groups and high schools across Angus, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 1 Montrose and Brechin area</li> </ul>	Communities	Number of schools and other services being offered Lifeskills  No of young people taking part in Lifeskills
Tenants' engagement with other Vibrant Communities services are maximised and recorded	Promote Vibrant Communities services through all tenant participation work	Communities	Number of tenants taking part in mainstream Adult Learning, Youth Work and Community development work delivered by the Vibrant Communities team (taken from Hanlon)
Tenant representatives have the necessary skills to participate in a meaningful way	Tenant representatives and groups are supported to identify training needs  Learning opportunities are promoted to representatives and groups.  Groups and representatives are supported to undertake	Communities	Number of tenants groups consulted on training needs  Number of tenants and groups receiving training



	training and learning opportunities		
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YEARS 2- 5

<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Listening: We will provide opportunities for tenants to give their views</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Our services take affordability into account	Increase participation in the rent setting consultation  Engage in national tenant participation activity around affordability  Participate in benchmarking, finance & affordability  Scrutiny around Housing Revenue Account  Review info to tenants with Strategy Group	Communities and Housing	Number of localities taking part  Number of tenants taking part
Housing staff and services are easily accessible	Hold weekly online sessions with Housing Officer and communities	Communities and Housing	Customer Satisfaction Survey
<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Involvement: We will provide opportunities to get involved in shaping the Housing service</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>

Tenants can influence decisions	Tenants participate in Community Learning Development and other consultations, and other local democratic processes  Encourage Participatory Budgeting approach at local level – our service, housing service and others	Communities	Number of opportunities promoted through Tenant Participation  % of tenants who have participated in one or more process
Tenants and tenant groups have an appropriate level of information and opportunity to influence capital investment	Make Capital programme open and transparent and enable strategic tenants groups to influence investment criteria (including new build)	Assets	
<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Organisation: We will support tenants to organise themselves at local and service-wide levels</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Annual tenant conferences are held which bring together tenants across Angus to build relationships, share experiences and participate collectively	Arrange tenant conferences	Communities	No of tenants attending  Number of partners and other agencies participating  % of tenants who reported that the event was worthwhile

Strategic Priority:	Skills: We will provide education and training to tenants and potential tenants to help them get as involved as they want to be		
Outcome	Action	Lead Agency	Indicator(s)
<p>Tenant representatives and groups build relationships with other 'community voice' bodies such as Community Councils, Resilience Forum, Federation of Village Halls, other tenant participation forums (e.g. other landlords in Angus, groups in other areas, national groups)</p>	<p>Identify key tenant participation personnel from Registered Social Landlords and explore the possibility of Angus-wide tenant participation Officer group</p> <p>Vibrant Communities staff hold conversations with groups to identify appropriate bodies to engage with</p>	<p>Communities</p>	<p>Number of collaborations</p>

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