



# Tenant Participation performance report 2018/19

- ❖ 2 dedicated TP officers
- ❖ 9 Tenant & Resident Associations(TRAs)
- ❖ 1 Tenant Federation (WDTRO )
- ❖ 82 followers on FaceBook
- ❖ 58 tenants on Interested Tenants Register
- ❖ 1 Scrutiny exercise completed
- ❖ 3 consultations completed
- ❖ Good Practice Award for Involving Tenants in Rent received from TPAS
- ❖ Gold Accreditation Award received from TPAS
- ❖ £423,000 spent on tenant proposals through Tenant Priority Budget



All social landlords have a statutory duty to produce and adequately resource a Tenant Participation Strategy and ensure they involve tenants in shaping and improving housing services. Ours is called 'Involving You' and sets out how we support and promote tenant involvement.

We have a long history of active tenant involvement in West Dunbartonshire and we have continued to build on this strong foundation. This report is to outline progress in the last year and highlight the input tenants have had in decisions and service improvements.

There are 8 key aims in the TP Strategy with specific actions we had identified that would help us meet them. Below is the progress at the end of year 2 of the Strategy:

Tenant Participation Strategy 2017/20						Total
Progress at end of Year 2	10	31	0	0	0	<b>41</b>

Action Status	
	Cancelled
	Overdue; Neglected
	Unassigned; Check Progress
	Not Started; In Progress; Assigned
	Completed

## Key highlights.

### Gold TPAS Accreditation awarded

In March 2019, the Council was awarded a Gold Accreditation by TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service). This followed a robust scrutiny of our tenant participation provision and included TPAS examining our practices and interviewing tenants and staff. The Council scored an overall grade of 6 which equates to 'an excellent provision of tenant participation with outstanding sector leading strengths in the majority of standards.'

Communicating effectively and provide good quality accessible information for tenants is critical and as part of the Accreditation process, TPAS commended us on the quality of our communication with tenants and in particular our Tenant Participation Strategy and summary documents.

### Tenant Priority Budget

This is an existing £800,000 budget set aside for tenant priorities. This year we have improved transparency about how the Budget is spent and ensured that tenants decide how the budget is spent. Specific criteria were set out for the budget and the aim is to maximise the number of tenants benefitting from improvements and ensure the proposals are value for money. The criteria also ensure that work that should be done as a landlord responsibility gets done but not through this budget.

This Budget has helped new people get involved with Housing Services and we will continue to monopolise on this aspect, as well as encouraging the TRAs to make use of it to get local improvements made and to raise awareness of them. 48 proposals were received and assessed with £xx being spent on completed work and £xx for work ongoing.

We developed a **walkabout process** with tenants and housing staff – it's a good tool for tenants to use as a TRA, as an individual tenant or group of tenants. The walkabout is successfully used in many of the multi-storey flats and will be promoted to all tenants.

### Communication

We have continued to produce **TP updates** for tenant representatives, elected members and staff to maximise awareness of tenant participation activities and encourage them to increase tenant involvement.



is produced quarterly and delivered to all tenants as well as future tenants in temporary accommodation. We want the Housing News to be interesting for tenants and a good way to keep up to date. We have also encouraged our TRAs to make use of the Housing News to promote their activities and include as much community news as possible.

**Spring 2018 edition** - Lorraine Forbes of Overburn & Townend TRA featured in 'On the spot', TRA meeting dates and contacts included plus WDTRO's Tenant's voice.

**Summer 2018 edition** - annual tenant participation event at Clydebank Town Hall featured, Westbridgend Community Hall appeal plus WDTRO's Tenant's voice.

**Autumn 2018 edition** – New chairperson of WDTRO featured, TRA meeting dates and contacts included, article on Scrutiny Panel activities, promotion of Tenant Priority Budget plus WDTRO's Tenant's voice.

**Winter 2018 edition** – Joint Rent Group involvement in rent setting consultation plus the group receiving TPAS Good Practice award for involving tenants in rent setting. Tullichewan TRA's successful afternoon tea, Tenant Priority Budget improvements plus WDTRO's Tenant's voice.

We have a regular reader's competition to encourage people to read the paper and use the contact with the winners as an opportunity to speak to tenants and get their opinion on the Housing News and see if they want to get more involved.

We have created a **new Tenant Participation Leaflet**, which promotes the range options for participating. It is an easy to read leaflet, which will be included in the new tenant pack and circulated to Housing Officers to encourage existing tenants to get more involved. TRAs will also be able to make use of them.

Our Tenant Handbook, in partnership with tenants, was refreshed to include updated information and addresses. We also continually review the content of our TP webpages

and post on our Facebook page a couple of times per week, with information which is relevant to tenants.

### Tenant involvement in shaping and improving Housing Services

Our **Joint Rent Group** was developed in response to tenant dissatisfaction with their influence over rent setting. The group includes tenant volunteers, housing and finance staff and the Housing Convener. The focus is on jointly assessing the Council's compliance with HRA Guidance, as well as making budget processes more transparent. The progressive work of the Joint Rent Group was recognised in winning a TPAS Good Practice Award 2018 for Involving tenants in Rent.



*Janette Donlin and Harry McCormack receiving award on behalf of Joint Rent Group.*

The **Pre-HACC Forum** is another opportunity that tenants have to influence decisions made by the Housing & Community Committee. The Forum takes place two days before the Housing & Communities Committee meets and tenants can meet the Housing Convener and authors of the papers which are going to committee. Attendance at the Forum has been increasing and the Housing Convener feeds the tenants' views into the committee discussions. There is limited time between the papers being issued and the Committee meeting so tenants, with support from the Housing Convener, have been asking for reports to be written in easier to understand language. An easier to read versions of the 2 regular finance reports that go to committee have now been created and been positively received by tenants and the Housing Convener.

There have been 3 specific public consultations in the last reporting year, the **Review of the Design Standard**, Tenant Priority Budget and the annual rent setting consultation. The revised Design Standard was well received by tenants and provides a high specification for all new build properties built by the Council or a partner Housing Association. Comments by tenants during the consultation included maximising the number of wheelchair accessible properties and making homes as energy efficient as possible.



The **rent setting consultation** included involvement of the Joint Rent Group, a public meeting and a public vote on different rent options. The response rate was disappointingly lower than last year despite the voting cards being distributed with the winter edition of the Housing News.

Consulting in December is not ideal but needs to fit in around the February committee schedule. We will continue to work with the Joint Rent Group to make the rent setting

process more transparent to all tenants and make more use of housing staff to encourage tenants to have their say.

We publicise an annual consultation calendar but have also developed a Feedback and Outcome section for previous consultation so that there is a record of the outcomes to emphasise the impact tenant's views have.

**WDC/WDTRO Liaison meetings** continue every 2 months and are a good example of effective partnership working as the WDTR0 and staff can add to the agenda and the WDTR0 chairperson and Housing Convener take turns chairing the meetings.



### Scrutiny Panel progress

During 2018/19, the Scrutiny Panel completed their fourth scrutiny exercise looking at the Council's compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and the number of properties that are held in abeyance and the reasons for this. Two members of the Scrutiny Panel went to the Housing Improvement Board in November 2018 and presented their report in person. The Panel's recommendations were accepted and will be implemented throughout 2019. The Panel are currently recruiting for more members to help them in monitoring existing action plans as well as carrying out new scrutiny activities.

### Tenant Participation Budget - £71,216 for 2018/19

We continue to review the resources required to improve tenant participation and tenant scrutiny. During 2018/19 we have continued to support 9 TRAs, the WDTR0, Sheltered Housing Forum, Pre-HACC Forum and Scrutiny Panel to help them function effectively.

The cost of producing the Housing News comes out of our Tenant Participation Budget so that is the majority of our communication costs. 4 TRAs also have community flats that they operate from and the running costs for these are included in the costs for supporting TRA's along with annual and top up grants to cover their administration costs to support them functioning. Public liability insurance is also paid for each active TRA.

Transport costs to and from meetings are also covered to ensure no-one is put off attending meetings by costs and to ensure no tenant volunteer is out of pocket.

Sadly Duntocher TRA disbanded in February 2019 but their legacy is a thriving community run village hall which many of them are all still involved in.

### Training

We have also encouraged tenants to take advantage of many training opportunities which have included:

- funding four tenants to go to the TPAS tenant conference;
- provided independent HRA training to members of the WDTR0
- funded 2 Scrutiny Panel members to attend TPAS Participation Bootcamp - Tenant Scrutiny
- provided in-house treasurer training for new office bearers

- provided in-house PowerPoint training for Scrutiny Panel
- provided in-house HRA training for 2 new Joint Rent Group members

### Volunteering hours

We value and appreciate the time that tenants give coming to meetings and getting involved and started to count volunteering hours, so that we could measure the time that tenants give. 429 hours have been given to meetings with Housing Services through the WDC/WDTRO Liaison meetings, Joint Rent Group, Pre-HACC Forum, Scrutiny Panel, Sheltered Housing Forum and consultations. This is less than last year (469.5 hrs) and mainly due to slightly less numbers coming to the Liaison meetings and less consultations this year. The number of hours through the Joint Rent Group is the main area where the number of volunteering hours has increased and shows that this is a significant interest for tenants.

### **Year ahead**

#### Specifics actions for the coming year include:

- Review and update service standards
- Support TRAs to demonstrate their achievements locally
- Development of a Youth Housing Forum
- Develop tenant involvement in the decision making process of rent setting, Capital programmes and agreeing Business Plans
- Agree with tenants what Charter Indicators they want in the Tenant Report

Plans for **our annual tenant event** are also beginning and if you have any suggestions for what you would like us to include then please let us know.

### **Please give us your feedback.**

We want to continue to improve how we feedback to tenants and so will evolve this annual report over the coming years. Please let us know what you liked, what you didn't and what you want to see included in future.



***Thank you to all our tenant volunteers and housing staff who make tenant participation work***

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