

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 12 June 2012

BY: Executive Director (Services for Communities)

SUBJECT: Tenant Participation Strategy 2012-2015

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Council's Tenant Participation Strategy as the basis for effective tenant participation between now and June 2015.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorses the Tenant Participation Strategy publication in line with its legal requirements under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recognises that the Strategy is a living document and that as such the action plan in particular will evolve as consultation with tenants and tenant organisations help inform the Council's future plans in this area.
- 2.3 That Cabinet notes that the success of the Strategy is dependent on good relationships being developed between the tenants' movement and Elected Members. To this end Elected Members will be invited to specific tenant participation training events in 2012/13 and are encouraged to attend.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced new rights for tenants and obligations for social landlords in relation to tenant participation and consultation.
- 3.2 These duties include:
- Councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) must prepare and publish a Tenant Participation Strategy. The Strategy must include an assessment of resources required to ensure effective tenant participation. The Strategy should show how the Council intends to take the views of tenants into account, what matters the Council is

likely to consult tenants about and the information that it will provide to tenants.

- The requirement to set up a publicly available Register of Tenants Organisations (RTO's) in line with guidance from the Scottish Executive.
 - Landlords must ensure that the Tenant Participation Strategy complies with equal opportunities requirements.
- 3.3 Council gave approval for the 2007-2010 Tenant Participation Strategy in November 2007.
 - 3.4 Prior to the conclusion of the 2007-2010 Strategy it was agreed with East Lothian Tenant's and Residents Panel (ELTRP), who are the umbrella organisation for tenants and residents groups in East Lothian, that the 2007-10 Strategy should first be reviewed before embarking on the development of a new Strategy.
 - 3.5 This review of the 2007-2010 Strategy started in March 2010 and involved the Tenant Participation Strategy Group comprising both Council staff and Tenant representatives looking at the successes and challenges of the old Strategy.
 - 3.6 The review of the Strategy included, but was not restricted to, consultation with tenants, tenant groups and staff which was highlighted in the rent consultation letter. A Tenants Survey that was sent out with Homefront. A Tenants Open Day was held in November 2010 which asked tenants for their views on tenant participation and provided information on housing services.
 - 3.7 The new Strategy was similarly developed by the Tenant Participation Strategy Group building on previous successes within the approach taken to review the 2007-2010 Strategy, at the same time as recognising future challenges.
 - 3.8 The draft Strategy was fully consulted on during December 2011 and January 2012.
 - 3.9 Consultation methods used included, but were not limited to, letter, newsletter, questionnaire, website information, consultation events and a freephone service.
 - 3.10 Comments, views and opinions expressed during the consultation period were recorded and form part of the Tenant Participation Strategy Consultation Register. This register and a report on the consultation are publicly available on the Council's website or on request.
 - 3.11 There was strong support for the new Strategy. All views were considered by the Tenant Participation sub-group and where appropriate reflected in the new draft Strategy.

- 3.12 Subject to formal approval, the Strategy will be formally launched at the East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel Annual Conference on 30 June 2012.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Tenant Participation Strategy recognises, links to and underpins other Council Strategies, including the Local Housing Strategy.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and negative impacts have been found. Action has been taken to mitigate against these impacts. This document can be found using the link below.

http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/download/1128/equality_impact_assessment-community_services_department

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – The existing tenant participation budget will not be significantly impacted by the new Strategy.
- 6.2 Personnel – None.
- 6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 East Lothian Council Tenant Participation Strategy 2012-15 lodged in the Members' Library.
- 7.2 Tenant Participation Strategy Consultation Register & Report – available on the Council's website.

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