



## TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST	
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Author:	TP Officer
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Approved by Management Board on:	
Approved by Cordale Management Committee on:	N/A
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KPIs / reporting arrangements implemented:	In place
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This document can also be provided in large print, braille, audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages

# Contents

<b>Page 1</b>	<b>Policy Checklist</b>
<b>Page 2</b>	<b>Contents Page</b>
<b>Page 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>– Legislation Housing Scotland Act 2001</b>
<b>Policies &amp; Strategies</b>	<b>Scottish Social Housing Charter Equal Opportunities Act 2010 Equality &amp; Diversity Policy Good Customer Service Strategy</b>
<b>Page 5</b>	<b>Benefits of Tenant Participation</b>
<b>Page 6</b>	<b>Opportunities to participate Resources and Support Role of the Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>Page 7 &amp; 8</b>	<b>Joining the Scrutiny Panel Scrutiny Panel Achievements Training for the panel How the Scrutiny Panel are kept informed</b>
<b>Page 9</b>	<b>How the Scrutiny Panel keep others informed Customer Consultation</b>
<b>Page 10</b>	<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>

## **What is Tenant Participation?**

Tenant Participation is about tenants getting involved with their landlord to help develop the best possible services. This Strategy sets out how we plan to support our tenants to make a difference. We realise that our tenants' lives, are very diverse and that there is no single 'right' way of involving people. Our approach to Tenant Participation will be about making sure there are a variety of ways for people to get involved. We aim to explore different approaches for involving people and suggestions from tenants and staff are welcome.

## **Legislation**

The legislative requirements include the following:

### **Housing Scotland Act 2001**

#### **Tenant Participation**

Every local authority landlord and registered social landlord must, by such time as the Scottish Ministers may direct, prepare a strategy (a "tenant participation strategy") for promoting the participation of tenants under a Scottish secure tenancy or a short Scottish secure tenancy in the formulation by the landlord of proposals in relation to the management of housing accommodation and the provision of related services by it, so far as such proposals are likely to affect such tenants.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed duties on social landlords to, for example, consult tenants and registered tenants groups on a range of housing issues and to have a tenant participation strategy. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 established the Scottish Social Housing Charter and provided the Scottish Housing Regulator with a new regime of inspection and regulation for all Scotland's social landlords. The Scottish Housing Regulator requires greater tenant involvement in the scrutiny of their landlord's performance.

### **Scottish Social Housing Charter**

We are required to meet the standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter - which is a standard for all social landlords introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. The Charter is about improving the quality and value of services tenants receive and sets out 16 standards that Caledonia must meet. The Charter aims to:

- State clearly the services tenants and other customers can expect, and help tenants hold their landlord to account.
- Encourage social landlords to focus on improving the services that matter most to their customers.
- Provide a basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess and report on how well social landlords are performing.

The Charter places a real importance on tenants being able to assess the quality of the services they receive, as well as landlords monitoring their own performance. This Strategy is about making sure tenants have the opportunity to influence on the services they receive. The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out four outcomes that directly relate to Tenant Participation, and this Strategy will support our achievement of these outcomes:

### **Charter Outcomes Relating to Tenant Participation**

**Outcome 2 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 the landlord provides

**Outcome 3 Participation:** Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with

**Outcome 14 & 15 Rents and service charges:** A balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them. Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants

The Charter requires us to provide a report about our performance against these and other measures to the Scottish Housing Regulator every year through the Annual Return on the Charter, as well as reporting on this to our tenants and other customers.

### **Equal Opportunities Act 2010**

We have a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 and The Charter also states that we should ensure *“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”*.

As part of the Equality Act 2010 we are committed to ensure that all tenants are given equal opportunities to get involved and any barriers that may prevent them doing so are removed where possible. In order to achieve this, we will make every effort to ensure that tenants can participate and have their say.

Examples include:

We will:

- Hold meetings, consultations and special events only in accessible venues
- Provide materials in a variety of formats and languages on request
- Offer free, accessible transportation to meetings where required
- Develop new ways of engaging with people who are less likely to participate
- Ensure all meetings adhere to the Code of Conduct and that all tenants treat each other with respect

### **Working in conjunction with these policies & strategies-**

- Equality and Diversity Policy 2015
- Good Customer Service Strategy 2017

### **Our responsibilities in involving tenants**

- To have a Tenant Participation Strategy
- Keep an up-to-date register of tenant's groups that have become Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs)
- Consult tenants and RTOs on rent setting, and significant changes to Housing Services.

### **Membership**

Caledonia will continue to promote membership of the Association to tenants/customers by issuing leaflets, providing articles in newsletters and discussing this issue at tenant group meetings.

Further to this, tenants/customers who are members of the Association will be entitled to and actively encouraged to stand for election to the Board in their own right.

## **Benefits of Tenant Participation**

### **Benefits to Tenant**

- Informs improvements to the services all tenants receive
- Gives tenants better knowledge and understanding of the associations processes
- Empowers tenants to influence decision-making on changes to services
- Improve the relationship between tenants and association staff
- Gives tenants the opportunity to scrutinise performance and processes
- Helps people build confidence and develop new skills
- Can help with social isolation and make positive contributions to their community
- Allows tenants to have their say on the design of properties and improvements

### **Benefits to Caledonia**

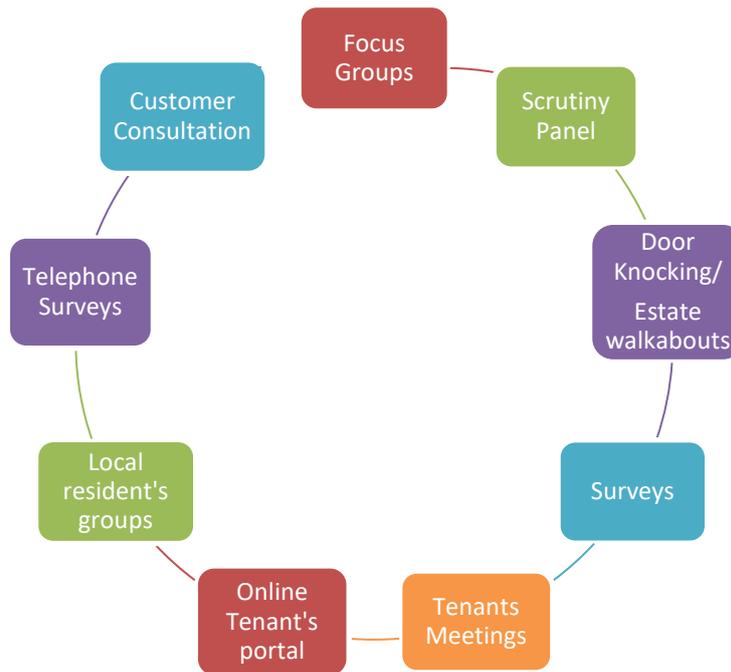
- Tenants provide information to the association about how things are working on the ground
- Tenant volunteers bring with them a lifetime of skills and experience, and can make a positive contribution to the work of the association
- Improves performance through tenant insight, scrutiny and suggestions
- Allows for communications, policies and procedures to be considered and reviewed by tenants to ensure these meet tenants' needs
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home & neighbourhood

### **How we consult?**

A range of approaches will be adopted to reflect the requirements of our tenants and to enable effective participation. It is important to acknowledge that there will be occasions when consultation and participation will be aimed at all tenants while at other times it will be more specific and targeted. Informal and personal contact is highly valued. In addition to this we will use a wide range of methods for consulting with tenants and keeping them informed including:

- Arrange a pre-tenancy meeting, with tenants who have been offered a property, with their Housing Officer
- Written Tenancy Agreement and Summary Agreement
- Tenants Handbook
- New tenant settling in visit and survey.
- Annual General meeting
- Annual Report
- Quarterly newsletters
- Estate walkabouts
- Tenants meetings

## Some of the other opportunities to participate



## Resources and Support

Dedicated Tenant Participation Officer will work with tenants and staff to achieve this Strategy's aims. This includes:

- Supporting the Scrutiny Panel
- Provide funding and advice on setting up and running a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO)
- Co-ordinate consultations with tenants
- Promote and engage with tenants using the various methods of involvement detailed in this strategy
- Produce articles for the Tenants Newsletter
- Review and update information

## Scrutiny Panel – Their Role

- Scrutinise regular performance through surveys
- Identify and carry out investigations to improve services to tenants
- Monitor and report on performance against the Tenant Participation Action Plan

We will also complete an independent, comprehensive, tenant satisfaction survey at least every three years to obtain tenants views on; the services we provide, value for money and their involvement with Caledonia Housing Association.

## **Joining the Scrutiny Panel**

The Tenant Participation Officer will actively encourage and support customers to get involved if and when they want to – at a level they feel comfortable. We encourage Caledonia staff to become familiar of the role of the Scrutiny Panel and encourage tenant involvement. The Scrutiny Panel as required will actively liaise with the Caledonia staff.

If a tenant wishes to join the scrutiny panel, they should complete an enquiry form which will be passed to panel. The scrutiny panel, will elect 2 members to meet with applicant and do an induction, only if the person is able to commit time, is able to use technology necessary to communicate, and if the panel feel there will be active involvement.. No one will join the panel when an investigation is on-going and new members will only join at the start of an investigation.

The Scrutiny Panel reviews, scrutinises and evaluates the information received from consultation and other general and performance information received from our Management board and staff. Tenants/residents can contact our Panel by using the following email address: [tenantparticipation@caledoniaha.co.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@caledoniaha.co.uk) or by writing to the Panel via the Tenant Participation Officer at our offices in Perth or Dundee. The Panel will carry out investigations and actively challenge the information that they receive from Caledonia to ensure it reflects customer priorities and their understanding of service delivery. We work closely with external partners and inform the Scrutiny Panel of any changes that may have an effect on our tenants. The involvement may be to invite the panel to tenant consultation events or meetings with the partner organisations.

The information and reports produced by the Panel should give staff/Board members a clear picture of priorities for service delivery and also ensure that reviewed policies are 'tenant/resident approved'. Any feedback/queries from the Panel regarding policy will be passed on to the Executive Management Team and the Operational Management Team will deal with any service delivery issues. This Panel will also review the annual tenant participation action plan and produce an annual update of Scrutiny Panel activities in the Caledonia Newsletter to be available to tenants/residents. The panel will review Caledonia Housing Association literature/leaflets and approve with a Scrutiny approved logo being added to the leaflet. Policies and procedures will also be circulated for review and the panel will have opportunities to comment and recommend changes.

The Panel meet on a monthly basis and receive support from the Operations Director and Tenant Participation Officer. They also meet quarterly with Board members on the Audit Committee to discuss performance information and annually to review their work plan. They will further meet annually with a Caledonia board member to discuss Scrutiny activities.

## **Scrutiny Panel Achievements**

This Tenant Participation Strategy builds on the many achievements already made by tenants and staff, working together to develop and improve tenant participation in Caledonia.

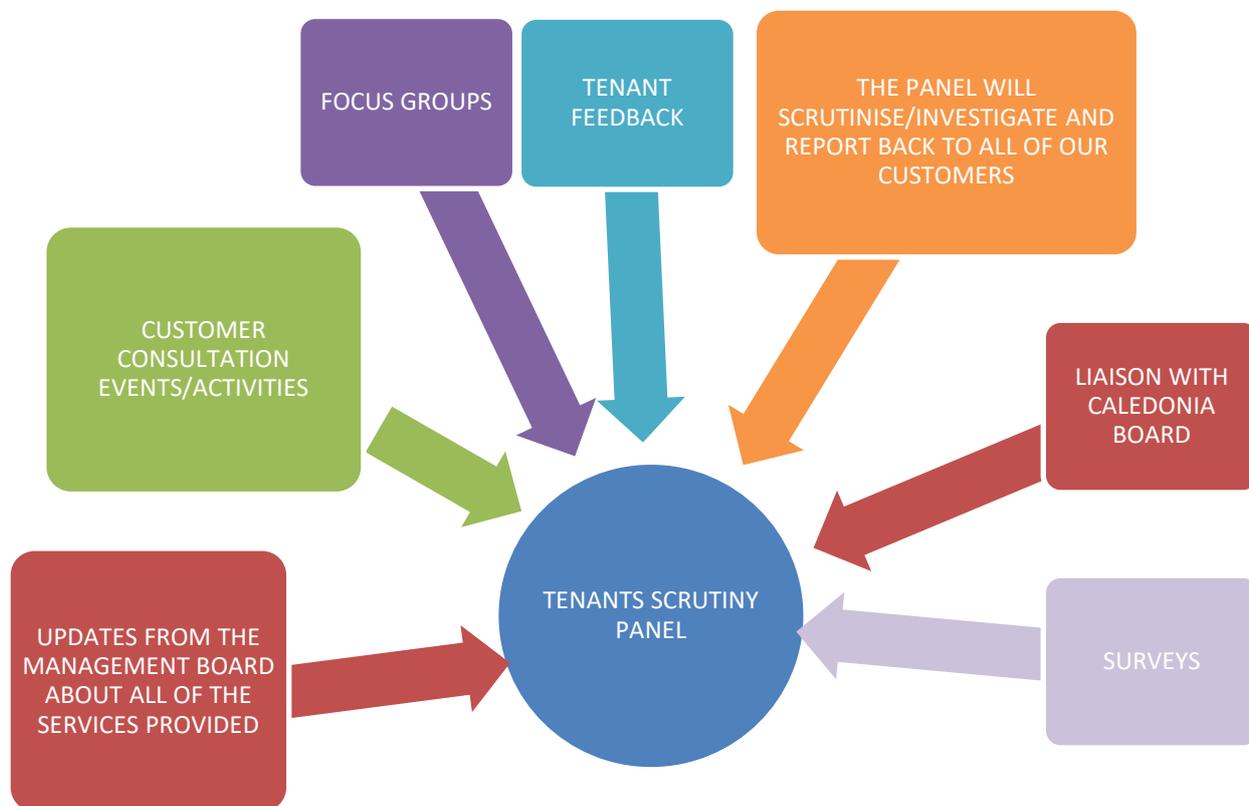
- Panel formed in 2013
- The Scrutiny Panel won an award from TPAS (Tenant Participatory Advisory Service) for Best Practice in Developing Scrutiny 2017
- 7 Tenants have completed the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 2 & 3 in Housing Practice and Tenant Scrutiny
- The Scrutiny panel have successfully completed 3 Investigations
- Panel work alongside other local panels, facilitated an event demonstrating good practice. The Tenant Participation Officer continues to promote the work of the panel at conferences and has given a presentation to other Housing Organisations about good practice in Tenant Scrutiny.

In addition, we will provide the panel with further training for the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel and work closely with the Tenant Participatory Advisory Service who provide support to Caledonia and independent advice, The TPAS training programme was a recent example of this, delivered to all the Scrutiny Panel members as a way of supporting the Tenant-Led Investigations of the association's services. Tenants and staff are also given the opportunity to attend local and national events, to learn from best practice and share our experience of delivering Tenant Participation with other social housing providers.

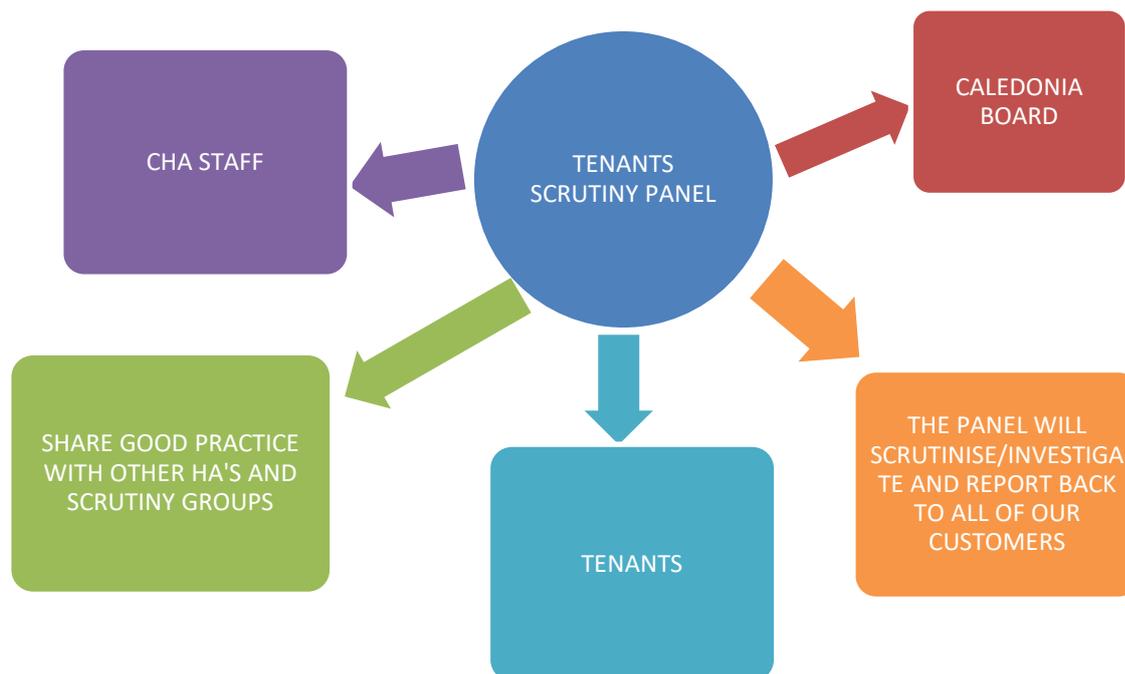
### Training for the Panel

Opportunities are available to undertake professional housing qualifications from the Chartered Institute of Housing to help aid their understanding of housing issues and benefit their role on the Panel Other.

### How the Scrutiny Panel are Kept Informed



## How the Scrutiny Panel Keep Others Informed About their Activities



### Customer Consultation Events/Activities

The most common reason to have a meeting or event is to discuss something face to face. It could be a new idea, a new opportunity, a problem or to reach a decision about something. But it all comes down to communication and 'face to face' interaction.

We have an annual timetable of policies to be reconsidered or updated. These policies state what Caledonia does and how they do it. The annual timetable is available on the Caledonia website/intranet or on request. The staff management team and Tenant's Scrutiny Panel will agree which policies require tenant/customer consultation and agreement, in line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

We will ensure that tenants are provided with a variety of ways to consult with us and this will be their preferred option. We consult with all registered tenant's organisations and tenant groups, offer opportunities for tenants to attend focus groups, receive feedback online, attend face to face meetings, offer feedback by mail and feedback by the use of Caledonia social media platforms.

Focussing further digitally will give tenants opportunities to Connect with us by the new Tenant's portal (Connect). This is a more direct and cost-effective means of communication and will reach a wider audience as digital awareness improves. Tenant feedback is presented regularly in this way to us.



## Monitoring & Evaluation

The strategy will be reviewed every three years. An annual Action Plan will be developed in consultation with the Scrutiny Panel.

Progress on the various activities in the Action Plan will be reported on, monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. There will be regular Tenant Participation updates in CHA Newsletters and via social media. The Scrutiny Panel will also assist with these updates.

The updates will include information on recent tenant participation successes and failures and this will influence CHA priorities going forward.

## External monitoring

Scottish Housing Regulator: Performance against the Charter is reported annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The four Charter outcomes directly relate to Tenant Participation, in the areas of Communication, Participation and Rents/Service Charges. Independent Tenants' Organisations:

## Internal monitoring

- Involve tenants in the review of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)
- Number of newsletters issued
- Completion of home visits to new tenants
- Number of estate walkabouts
- Competitions to encourage tenant participation and involvement
- Responses to complaints/feedback
- Maintaining a consultation register

## Independent Tenants' Organisations

Caledonia is a member of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland (TPAS Scotland). This allows staff and tenants to learn from best practice elsewhere in the sector

