

Horizon Housing Association Resident Improvement Group Scrutiny Report

Tenant Participation Strategy Review

January 2019



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Acknowledgements

“The members of the Resident Improvement Group would like to thank Horizon Housing Association Staff who assisted them throughout the Scrutiny Project, through the provision of support, information and for organising and taking part in research activities and meetings”

1.0. Horizon Housing Association Scrutiny

1.1 Horizon Housing Association Customer Scrutiny

Horizon Housing Association (Horizon) has an established relationship with the Resident Improvement Group (RIG) which was formed in 2016. RIG has a current membership of 8 active members, see Appendix One and forms the central point for scrutiny within Horizon Housing Association which empowers customers to:

- Oversee a range of scrutiny activities
- Integrate these activities with the wider self-assessment activities of the Association
- Make recommendations to challenge and improve the activities of senior officers and members of the governing body.

RIG receives Independent Tenant Advice and Development Support from the Tenant Information Service (TIS).

1.2. Agreeing a Topic for Scrutiny

RIG members heard presentation and received information on performance management and the Annual Return on the Charter. A review of the information provided, as well as consideration of Horizon policies due for review led the group to agree a scrutiny project to review Horizon Housing Association Tenant Participation Strategy.

2.0. Resident Improvement Group Tenant Participation Strategy Scrutiny Project

2.1. Resident Improvement Group Meetings

RIG members met from May to December 2018, a total of five times. Meetings were facilitated by Lynda Johnstone, Development Director, TIS and were also attended by Horizon staff. The Tenant Participation Scrutiny Project followed an agreed detailed work plan which is included in Appendix 2.

Areas of work included:

- Considering the legislative context
- A review of the existing Tenant Participation Strategy
- Taking part in a discussion workshop with staff to evaluate past resident participation and consider priorities for the future
- Desk top analysis of Tenant and Resident Participation Strategies from other Housing Associations
- Staff and Board survey to gather views and opinion on Tenant Participation
- Consultation with Horizon residents at the “Big Blether” Residents Conference in December 2018

The Strategy was reviewed and redrafted in line with:

- The Scottish Government National Strategy, Partners in Participation
www2.gov.scot/Publications/2002/09/15487/11222
- The National Standards for Community Engagement
<http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/>

3.0. Scrutiny of the Tenant Participation Strategy Findings and Suggestions for Change

3.1 Good Practice

The review activities allowed RIG to determine the following good practice.

- i. The review of the existing Tenant Participation Strategy was timely and fulfilled the statutory requirement introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- ii. Staff, residents and Management Board were involved in reviewing the Strategy and participation policy and practice
- iii. Horizon aims to ensure participation activities are central its work
- iv. Residents are kept up to date on participation activities and opportunities through the newsletter and website
- v. Horizon provides a good level of information to residents. There is a wide range of information, RIG is involved in agreeing the content of some publications and information is provided in a range of formats
- vi. Board members are kept up to date on participation activities and opportunities through reports
- vii. Residents can participate with Horizon through “armchair” activities eg surveys
- viii. Participation training is available to staff
- ix. RIG is an open group, which welcomes new members and provides an opportunity for residents to be involved in the scrutiny of Horizon performance and self-assessment
- x. There are opportunities for Horizon to consult with individual tenants as well as RIG
- xi. Opportunities exist for Horizon to work with residents to improve services. This is evident though information, support and good working relationships

- xii. Residents are given enough time and support to give their views in policy consultations
- xiii. Horizon know which areas have little or no resident participation
- xiv. Horizon involve residents in reviewing how they communicate with residents
- xv. Horizon promotes equal opportunities and embraces diversity and aims to eliminate discrimination.

3.2. Suggestions for Change

The scrutiny activities and review of the Tenant Participation Strategy allowed the RIG to determine suggestions for change. These suggestions have been reflected in the draft Participation Strategy 2019-22 which represents a first for Horizon Housing Association and its residents – it has been written and developed by RIG in consultation with the wider tenant, resident and customer body, staff and the Management Board.

- i. The reviewed Tenant Participation Strategy should be known as a Resident Participation Strategy to reflect the customer base of Horizon and its relationship with the Resident Improvement Group and Strategic Scrutiny Framework
- ii. The revised Strategy outlines the legal context about how Horizon will fulfil tenant participation introduced by the 2001, 2010 and 2014 Housing (Scotland) Acts and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- iii. Reference is made to the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes relating to equalities, communication and participation
- iv. The Strategy is developed in an accessible document that is freely available to Horizon residents
- v. The Strategy is designed in a similar format to Horizon newsletters: bight, colourful and with photographs
- vi. The Strategy offers a healthy level of involvement opportunities at an individual and collective level
- vii. Current estate inspections allow residents to influence their neighbourhood but the approach should be reviewed
- viii. Consideration is given to new participation activities aimed at involving residents

- ix. An organised timetable for participation is jointly agreed with residents and is included in the Strategy annual action plan. This should include sufficient time for participation and resident priorities
- x. As Horizon covers a wide geographical area there is a broad range of communities. Horizon is aware of the challenges for engaging with different age groups, disabilities and ethnic backgrounds. Traditionally excluded groups should be specifically considered in future participation activity
- xi. All staff are kept up to date on participation activities and opportunities
- xii. Staff are supported to take on a formal sustained and structured role to facilitate and support participation activities
- xiii. Resident participation is included with senior management and staff team meetings to share good practice, identify challenges and solutions and to ensure staff accountability
- xiv. Participation training is available to interested residents and staff
- xv. Tenants receive independent advice when appropriate
- xvi. Detailed feedback is given to residents after consultation exercises
- xvii. Residents receive information on how to:
 - Jointly plan participation
 - Access to decision makers in Horizon
 - Become members of Horizon
 - Get involved with the Board of Horizon.
- xviii. Residents become familiar with the Diary of Participation Events
- xix. Horizon continue to fully resource resident participation
- xx. Horizon staff and residents develop a clear plan for how the Strategy will be delivered. The annual action plan is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited (SMART).
- xxi. A joint working group of residents and staff is established to monitor the action plan.
- xxii. If space allows, the final designed Strategy includes a glossary of terms.

4.0. Next Steps

The final agreed report will be submitted to Horizon Housing Association alongside Resident Participation Strategy 2019-2022 and associated annual action plan.

5.0. Monitoring and Evaluation

It is essential that the Resident Participation Strategy is jointly monitored by staff and residents monitored and evaluated against the agreed action plan. Monitoring meeting will take place every four months and residents will receive regular updates on progress.

An annual review report will be presented to the Management Board.

APPENDIX ONE

The Horizon Housing Association tenants and customers involved in this Scrutiny Project were:

Ina Bright	Erskine
Margaret Croal	Dunfermline
Mary Dickson	Whitburn
William Durham	Carntyne
Edith Harrow	Erskine
Gina Healy	Coatbridge
Agnes O'Brien	Blantyre
Andrew Perry	Dunfermline

APPENDIX TWO

HORIZON HOUSING ASSOCIATION RESIDENT IMPROVEMENT GROUP (RIG)

REVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF THE TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

Area of Review	Specific Work Activity	Who
Setting the Scene - 2nd August 2018		
Tenant Participation (TP) in Scotland – Legislative Context	1. Presentation to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and its TP requirements • The Regulatory Framework, TP and the Scottish Social Housing Charter • TP Principles and Landlord Duties 	TIS
TP in Horizon Housing Association	2. Presentation to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How HHA supports and resources TP • Levels of tenant and customer satisfaction regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to participate and have their say • Communications with HHA • The TP Strategy and links to other HHA Strategies/Policies including the Scrutiny Framework. 	HHA
What does a TP Strategy need to look like	3. Presentation and group activity to understand the content and components which must be included in a TP strategy. 4. A look at the current HHA TP Strategy.	TIS
Area of Review	Specific Work Activity	Who
Reality Checking - What happens in practice? – 6th September 2018		
A review of TP in HHA	1. Joint discussion/workshop session with selection of staff and RIG members to look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and priorities for TP in HHA.	All
Determining the views of tenants and other customers.	2. RIG to plan a short survey for tenants and customers. The survey will be conducted by email, text, face to face with housing officers and telephone. The results will be considered at the October 2018 meeting.	TIS
TP in other Housing Associations	3. A look at the TP Strategies of other organisations. RIG to identify strengths and what they would like to see included in the reviewed HHA TP Strategy.	TIS

Shaping the Reviewed Strategy – 4th October 2018		
What tenants and customers said!	1. Presentation to show the results of the scrutiny survey. 2. Presentation of the findings of the Horizon HA Tenant Satisfaction Survey	HHA
The TP Strategy Action Plan	3. Group discussion and feedback on the draft action plan which will include: priorities, actions, responsibilities and timescales and could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting achievable goals • Develop a structure with clear functions at the strategic, area, and local levels • Further developing individual methods of involvement, both at the local and area levels • Resources allocation • Performance management • Digital inclusion and technology 	HHA
Monitoring the Strategy	4. Agree approaches to monitor and evaluate the strategy annually.	HHA
The Draft TP Strategy 2018-2021 – 1st November 2018 and 6th December 2018		
Agreeing the content and layout of the draft strategy	1. Group discussion on the draft strategy	TIS
Consultation on the Draft Strategy	2. Planning the approach to gather customers views and opinion on the Draft Strategy – Tenants Conference on 1 st December 2018	TIS
Agreeing the Strategy	3. “You said, we did”. Circulate the final draft to RIG members to be signed off by post in December 2018.	HHA