Summary of Tenant and Resident Participation Strategy action plan update for year one

Action Plan

August 2023

A review of progress with Falkirk Council’s Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2022 – 2025) took place throughout the summer of 2023. The review focused mainly on how the action plan that supports the strategy is embedded within service delivery, across the various teams that make up Housing Services.

In some cases, direct discussion took place between the Community Engagement Co-ordinator and other co-ordinators/managers responsible for the actions that flow from the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2022 – 2025). It should be noted that some actions are the direct

responsibility of one particular area of the service, whilst others are common themes that apply to all aspects of service delivery and therefore the various teams involved.

For ease, the following summary of progress with the action plan, follows the same themes set out in the strategy.

*Key points to note:*

Communication

* Community Engagement covered in induction training for new staff and/or graduates, although part of a wider induction program, is much shorter than

induction/training/shadowing that took place previously.

* Staff across the Housing Service & some from the Building Maintenance Division were made aware of the strategy through a series of online workshops. Others were made aware of the Strategy at the Council-wide Community Engagement Action Team (CEAT) meetings.
* The Tenant Satisfaction Survey (2021/22) identified tenants’ preferred methods of communication. Work towards taking individual tenants’ views into account is underway, albeit slowly, with the introduction of the Housing Online portal.
* Some progress is being made with officers issuing direct dial telephone numbers on all

correspondence with tenants and customer, in response to tenant & customer frustrations with the 506070 number delays, and 90% of tenants’ preferred option to contact Housing Services by telephone *(Source: Tenant Satisfaction Survey (2021/22).*

* Digital communication being promoted by involving tenants in testing the Housing Online Portal, provision of digital devices through the Connecting Scotland award, promotional

advert/articles in the Tenant Talk magazine, frontline officers supporting tenants to create a Housing Online account and/or use of the portal etc.

* Communicating the outcomes of consultations is an area of weakness, and therefore an area for improvement. This was underlined in the recent external BSI audit, and is a theme carried forward across the Council from the Audit Scotland Reports *(dates TBC).*

Engagement

* Tenant Participation continues to be discussed during ‘Settling In’ visits with new tenants, although the information provided at this stage, is under review. It is unclear if there is one

simple question about participation, or if the range of options for involvement are discussed, as was previously the case.

* There is some evidence of tenuous links between large-scale Tenant Satisfaction Survey, use of transactional surveys and how information gathered from these is embedded into service plans, alongside other feedback (i.e., complaints etc.).
* Evidence of how complaints are used to inform service improvements is weak. There is some work to be done in relation to joining up customer feedback, particularly from complaints etc. alongside other feedback from surveys etc. to provide a holistic view of customer experience and areas for improvement. This may include developing work around the Customer First Team notifying teams of trends in complaints before further consultation is undertaken.
* Estate Walkabout’s area sporadic and often driven by Housing Operations staff rather than RTOs (in areas where there is one).

Participation

* Support for RTOs from the Housing Operations area of the service is variable.
* A wide variety of options for participation is offered, although options chosen for any given consultation are adapted, depending on the consultation requirements. The Tenant Satisfaction Survey of 2021/22 told us that 98% of tenants are satisfied with the options offered them to participate.

Scrutiny

* Tenants approved the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) in May 2023.
* The tenants’ Scrutiny Panel scrutinize Charter indicators throughout the year, most recently looking at Ind.17 which concerns tenant satisfaction with the landlord’s contribution to the management of their estate. The group is led by TPAS or some other selected, independent support organization, to give neutrality, and therefore more credibility, to the scrutiny process.
* A variety of scrutiny opportunities are offered, including performance information online (including in DVD format), publication of performance information in the Tenant Talk

magazine, the annual Landlord Report to Tenants and being part of the tenants’ Scrutiny Panel.

In summary, and in a general sense, there is some progress with the specific areas of implementation of the Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy (2022 – 2025) Action Plan, whilst other areas have

significant amounts of work still to be done. These areas for improvement include drawing on a

variety of sources of customer feedback information (i.e., complaints, surveys etc.) when considering changes to services, and consistency amongst officers providing their direct dial telephone numbers on all correspondence with tenants/customers. Other areas include, improving working relationships between Housing Operations and Registered Tenants’ Organisations, particularly in terms of Estate Walkabouts. Finally, more could be done across the service, to provide feedback on consultations, both in terms of results of the consultation and how the information gathered has been used to

improve services.