Midlothian Council
Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy
2012 - 2015
Communicating Loud and Clear

We are happy to translate on request and provide information and publications in other formats, including Braille, tape or large print.

Contact 0131 270 7500 or
e-mail: enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk
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**Appendix**

i. Action Plan

ii. MTF application form
Midlothian Council recognises that involving tenants is an essential part of our decision-making process and we are committed to making sure there are opportunities for all tenants to participate in the design and delivery of our housing services.

This Strategy sets out what the Council and its partners are planning to do, in order that the level of tenant participation and customer engagement is increased over the next three years. We want to work with you to ensure that we can increase the role for tenants in helping to shape housing policies, services and standards at Midlothian Council.

Councillor Jim Muirhead  
Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety  
Midlothian Council
1. Introduction

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to have a Tenant Participation Strategy for promoting the participation of their tenants in the development of proposals relating to housing management and services.

Tenant Participation is about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions. Tenant participation requires a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, councillors and housing officers working towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services. All participants require to have all the information needed to consider the issues properly; that information requires to be clear, timely and accessible and to take account of equal opportunities concerns.

Tenants should be involved in:
- housing policies which have an impact on tenants.
- housing conditions and how housing and related services are delivered to tenants.
- sharing of information, ideas and power.

The three key objectives for this Strategy are to:
- Increase opportunities for tenant involvement.
- Ensure all tenants are informed about the performance of the Housing Service.
- Ensure tenants are involved at all levels of decision making by improving consultation and broadening consultation methods.

We have considered activities which will enable us to achieve these key aims:
- Providing a range of different options for tenants to get involved.
- Involving tenants at all levels of decision making.
- Working with tenant groups.
- Involving individual tenants.
- Involving under-represented service users.
- Providing good information and feedback to tenants.
- Removing barriers to participation.
- Providing support and resources for tenant participation.
2. The strategy development

The Council’s previous Tenant Participation Strategy was written in 2008. The 2012 strategy takes into consideration the work which has been accomplished since then, acknowledges what is good practice in other areas and continues to work on the recommendations made by the Scottish Housing Regulator in 2008.

We have formal tenant participation arrangements in place and we currently work with Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs). These arrangements have been developed jointly with tenants’ representatives and are designed to ensure that tenants have sufficient opportunity to make an effective contribution to the development of the housing service.

Midlothian Council used a number of methods to engage with tenants between 2008 and 2010. These included:

- Estate Walkabouts
- Midlothian Tenants Forum Annual Conference
- Midlothian Annual Tenants Newsletter
- Register of Interested Tenants
- Rent Consultation with tenants
- Midlothian News
- Representation at events
- Education in schools
- Website and Published Materials

The Council continues to use these methods but it also wants to explore and extend the variety of activities it carries out in order to improve participation and engagement in Midlothian.

The Action Plan was devised by the Housing & Community Safety Management Team within Midlothian Council working with Registered Tenant Organisation partners in order that shared priorities were jointly agreed for the next five years.
In terms of funding for tenant participation activity, the Council generally spends in the region of £40,000 to £50,000 on tenant participation activity every year. This can fluctuate depending on activities that are taking place, but this budget covers things like:

- Staff costs for tenant participation
- Expenses for Registered Tenants Organisations
- Producing and delivering newsletters
- Room hire for Meetings and Events
3. Midlothian Customer Service Charter

We care about our customers and endeavour to get things right first time. We have standards in place which set the level of service customers can expect to receive, as we want to make contact with us a positive experience.

We will keep tenants informed about day to day services. This information will be provided using leaflets, posters, newsletters, the council’s web page, information packs and tenant’s handbooks issued to new tenants at tenancy agreement signings. We treat our customers with respect and expect to be treated the same way in return.

If you contact us by phone we will:

- Endeavour to answer your call within 5 rings.
- Identify ourselves by name and the service we work in.
- Help you with your enquiry there and then if we can.
- If we can’t help you we will direct you to someone that can or arrange for the relevant staff member to call you back.
- Support you with form filling and/or navigation of the Midlothian Council website for online applications etc

If you contact us by email/letter we will:

- Use plain English in responses and avoid the use of jargon. If requested we will respond in your preferred language, large print or Braille.
- Respond to you within 10 working days.

Sometimes we will need longer than 10 working days to gather information. If this is the case we will contact you and keep you updated.

If you visit our offices we will:

- Provide welcoming offices with clean and tidy reception areas.
- Wear identity badges.
- Have clear signs on buildings that provide customer service, including opening times.
- Make our offices accessible for everyone.
- Provide areas where private conversations can take place.
- Help you fill in forms or use our self service options.

**Keeping Tenants Informed:**

We will ensure that tenants have the opportunity to have a say in how the housing service should be delivered. We will also ensure tenants are kept updated on service changes and on how their views have been taken on board.

We have set ourselves standards of service delivery for the provision of information to tenants groups. Our performance against these standards will be measured through our customer satisfaction surveys.

We have also made a number of commitments to ensure that tenants are kept fully informed about proposals or projects which may directly affect their home or local environment. We provide tenants with the opportunity to indicate whether or not we have adhered to these commitments through customer satisfaction surveys.
4. Services Feedback

Should you wish to complain, compliment or comment about any of the services you receive, you can ‘feedback’ to us by:

- phone 0131 561 5444
- e-mail feedback@midlothian.gov.uk
- online via our Website www.midlothian.gov.uk
- visiting one of our public offices and feedback verbally to a member of staff or request a paper form to complete your feedback.

If you are complaining we will try and resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible we will respond within 10 working days in line with the feedback procedures.
5. Midlothian Tenant Participation Officer

In recognition of the need for Midlothian Council to engage more effectively with its tenants a Tenant Participation Officer was recruited in 2011. Prior to establishing this post the Council had appointed the Tenant Participation Advisory Service to provide support for the Midlothian Tenants Forum to help work on tenant participation activities. Lesley Connell (pictured below) now works as the Council’s Tenant Participation Officer and is here to help improve the housing services for tenants and services in a variety of ways:

- Coordinating activities, events and conferences for tenants.
- Providing information, advice and support to tenants and Registered Tenants Organisations.
- Co-ordinating the Tenants Newsletter.
- Developing innovative approaches to encourage greater participation.
- Acting on feedback that comes from service users.
- Training for staff on working with tenants.
- Engaging with hard to reach equalities groups.

Lesley said “I am enjoying my new post and look forward to working with tenants throughout Midlothian in order that we can agree priorities for improvement and ensure that the housing service provides an excellent service to tenants and potential tenants.”

Get in touch with Lesley:

Telephone: 0131 271 3611

Email: lesley.connell@midlothian.gov.uk

Post: Lesley Connell
Freepost RLUR-SKBA-EZEC
Midlothian Council
PO BOX 28974
Dalkeith
EH22 1WX
6. Midlothian Tenants Forum

The Midlothian Tenants Forum acts as a voice for council tenants on a range of housing issues and helps to influence the decisions on housing services. The Council has a statutory duty to provide information about housing services that an RTO asks for, such as repairs and maintenance and setting of rent levels.

Membership of the Forum is free to all Council tenants and each year members elect a committee to carry out the business of the Forum. The committee meets on a monthly basis and twice a year they hold open meetings. The Council engage with forum members in a number of ways, including through: forum members participation and organisation of estate walkabouts, the Tenants Day, the annual tenant’s newsletter, attending meetings on specific issues and attending committee meetings.

Chair of the Midlothian Tenant Forum, Alex Robertson (pictured below) says:
We would like to encourage all tenants to become more involved in the housing services that they receive. There are many ways to get involved. You could come to open meetings which we hold regularly, which you do not have to be a member to attend. You could join our register of interested tenants to receive information, surveys and invites to attend events. If you want to know more about how you can get involved with Midlothian Tenants Forum, take a look at our website www.midlothiantenants.co.uk or contact Lesley Connell, the Council’s Tenant Participation Officer on tel: 0131 271 3611, email: tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk
Midlothian Tenants Forum Committee meetings take place each month and council staff are often asked to attend to discuss specific issues such as in April 2011, when the Forum received a presentation about the repairs service as they were interested in finding out more information.

A great way of keeping up to date with the activities of Midlothian Tenants Forum is through their website, which has details of future events and topics of interest to tenants www.midlothiantenants.co.uk
What are Estate Walkabouts?

Estate walkabouts help to give residents the chance to work together to make your neighbourhood a better place to live. It involves a walk around a selected area of Midlothian where a significant number of council houses are, to identify if there are issues affecting an area and identifying solutions to problems.

Who is involved?

Members of an RTO and interested tenants are joined by the Housing Officer for the area and the Tenant Participation Officer, and sometimes other key staff who can help make improvements. Local Elected Councillors can also attend.

What happens on an Estate Walkabout?

- before the walkabout, leaflets are distributed to the area we plan to visit. The leaflets ask Midlothian Council tenants to inform us if they know of any trouble spots or areas which require our attention.
- a briefing session - a short meeting before the walkabout will set out a route, agree how long the walkabout should take and set priorities for the walkabout.
- a tour of the specific town, village or streets - residents and officers will walk the estate together looking for anything which may make the estate look unsightly such as:
  - Untidy gardens
  - Cars parked on grass
  - Litter
  - Fly tipping
  - Unreported repairs
- a note of all the issues identified - during the walkabout the Housing Officer and Tenant Participation Officer will make a record of all the issues identified by residents.
- feedback – the council will provide information on what action has been taken and the timescales for action.
The Estate Walkabouts have proven to be useful in a variety of ways including helping us to note when a property has been abandoned, when a tenant’s garden is not being cared for satisfactorily and when non-housing matters need to be reported to other departments e.g. when roads or pavements need repaired.

The schedule for Estates Walkabouts are available on the Housing pages of the Council’s website: [www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk) and on the Midlothian Tenants Forum website [www.midlothiantenants.co.uk](http://www.midlothiantenants.co.uk) or you can phone Midlothian Council on 0131 271 3611 if you want to come along or raise issues you want looked at as part of a walkabout in your neighbourhood.

Example of a positive outcome for a tenant following an Estate Walkabout

During a walkabout the group met an elderly deaf tenant who had problems with rubbish in his garden and dampness in his home. He did not feel confident in reporting these repairs, but as a result of the walkabout, the rubbish was uplifted and the cause of the dampness fixed.
## 8. Midlothian Tenants Day

### What is Midlothian Tenants Day?

It is an annual event which welcomes all tenants to attend to learn about a range of council services which may be of interest to them. Guest speakers from the Council and speakers from other organisations are invited to this annual event. It also gives those tenants who do not want to attend regular meetings the chance to meet housing staff and ask questions about the housing service. They can also meet and get to know tenants on the committee of the Midlothian Tenants Forum. Lunch and refreshments are also provided.

In May 2010, a presentation on the Local Housing Strategy was discussed, a speaker from the Roads section came to talk about the snow clearances from the roads during the winter and a Question & Answer session took place on a range of topics.

### Stalls and lunch at the Tenant Conference in 2010

The 2011 Event had presentations on current housing matters including anti-social behaviour and new build council housing projects. A Question & Answer session was also held so tenants could ask questions about issues relevant to them. Information stalls were also provided by the Energy Savings Trust, the Libraries services, Midlothian Leisure and Midlothian Council’s Healthy Living Team.

The Council and Midlothian Tenants Forum are also interested to know what issues you think should be discussed at future conferences. Why not contact our Tenant
Participation Officer to discuss your views and find out when the next event takes place: 0131 271 3611 tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk.

Question & Answer Session at the Midlothian Tenants Day 2011
9. Keeping you informed

Annual Tenants Newsletter

The Council distributes the Annual Tenants Newsletter. Articles in the Autumn 2010 newsletter included:

- An update on the new build council housing programme
- Information about the Council’s housing information and advice service.
- Feedback from the Estate Walkabouts
- Information on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

From 2012, it is intended to improve the Council Tenants Newsletter bigger and better, with more information on how the Council is performing on its key performance targets and more information on issues that will affect tenants across Midlothian.

Screenshots of the Annual Tenants Newsletter
Kevin Anderson, Head of Housing and Community Safety says: “We aim for all our Tenants to find that the information in the Tenant Newsletter interesting and informative. It is a useful way of providing information on changes to policies and strategies which affect the way we deliver services to our tenants.”

If you did not receive a copy you can find the most recent copy on the housing pages at www.midlothian.gov.uk or on the Midlothian Tenants Forum website: www.midlothiantenants.co.uk.

If you have comments on what you think of the Newsletter, or suggestions about what you think should be included please contact the Council’s Tenant Participation Officer on 0131 271 3611 or email: tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk

Register of Interested Tenants
Not all tenants are interested in coming to public meetings but want to be kept informed and be directly consulted in relation to Council policies, procedures and events that are of interest to them. The Council holds a Register of Interested Tenants who are happy for the council to send them more information. Recent examples of items sent to tenants on the register include Equality Impact Assessments, the Local Housing Strategy Newsletter and invites to both the Fuel Poverty Awareness Day and Midlothian Tenants Day. If you are currently a Council tenant and would like to join this list then please contact the Council’s Tenant Participation Officer on 0131 271 3611 or email: tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk

Rent Consultation
Midlothian Council engages with service users when setting future rents, which continue to be among the lowest council house rents in Scotland. In March 2010, all tenants and waiting list applicants were consulted, with a range of options presented for the period April 2011 – 2016, suggesting increases from 4% - 7% and noting that the higher the rises, the greater the number of additional new build council homes could be built.

The results of this consultation were that 84% of those responding wanted more council homes to be built and 32% of respondents felt that an annual increase of 7% should be made to ensure the maximum number of new homes could be built. In 2011, the Council agreed to raise the rents by 6% per year to ensure a significant number of
homes could be built whilst ensuring that rents are affordable for all tenants in the long term. All tenants receive an annual update on their rent payments and information on how the rent charges pay for this service.

**Midlothian News**
Midlothian News is a useful way of providing information and advice to tenants and residents so we publish articles of interest to our tenants, such as the progress of our council house building and our performance.

**Information and Advice Leaflets**
We publish and distribute a wide range of leaflets for our tenants and other service users, such as advice to homeless people and how to deal with problems paying your rent. Leaflets are not only made available in the Council's housing office, but also at a range of other venues across Midlothian.

**Education in Schools**
Midlothian Council has worked with Midlothian’s six High Schools to develop a ‘Leaving Home’ education programme to raise awareness of the issues that young people will face with their housing options and to make them aware of the pitfalls of homelessness and ASB impact.

**Website and Written Materials**
You can find a range of advice and information materials on the Council website, including information on housing options, homelessness, repairs, advice for young people, policies and strategies and contact numbers for different parts of the service. See for yourself at [www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk). Internet access is available free at Midlothian Council libraries.
10. How are we doing?

Midlothian Council is committed to improving the services it provides to all who use its housing services. A useful way of finding out how we are doing is to ask our customers for feedback. One way of doing this is through surveys of tenants and other service users to see how they respond to the service provided to them.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

All council tenants were sent a survey in 2009, which asked a range of questions about the services, including asking tenant’s opinions on:

- Satisfaction with the opportunities for tenant participation
- Methods used to contact the Council
- Rent Charges
- Estate Management
- Repairs Service
- Satisfaction with the Housing Service Overall

The chart below shows some of the responses from the 341 Tenants who sent back their survey form. Tenants were asked to rate the service in the following areas on a scale of 1 to 5:

- 1 Very Unhappy
- 2 Unhappy
- 3 Neither Happy or Unhappy
- 4 Fairly Happy
- 5 Very Happy
The chart shows that the average response from tenants was around 4 for satisfaction with their neighbourhood, the quality of their home and housing services provided by the Council. However, a lower response was recorded for people being happy with the opportunities for participation in management of the service and decision making. This shows that we must provide more meaningful engagement with tenants so that they are more involved with how we manage the housing service. This Strategy aims to address this lower level of satisfaction through developing actions to increase the opportunity for engagement and participation.

It is planned that the Council will undertake a survey of all tenants every two years, with the next one taking place in February 2012. We will be able to see if our performance is improving by comparing the findings of our Tenant Survey in 2012 and 2014 with that of 2009. In 2009, 358 tenants completed the survey, which works out as 5.5% of all our tenants. We aim to increase the number of tenants that complete the tenant survey as it is important to get as the views of as many tenants as possible.

**Customer Satisfaction Survey**

We also carry out surveys that specifically ask service users if they were happy with the service that we provided. The following areas we do this for are:

- Homelessness Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Estates Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Temporary Accommodation Customer Satisfaction Survey
We monitor the feedback we get from these surveys every month so that we can respond to issues raised by our tenants and other service users and also so we can look at improving areas where service users have been unhappy.
11. Setting up a Tenants Group (Registered Tenants Organisation)

Midlothian Council currently provides support to groups which represents tenants across Midlothian and consults with them on a range of issues on a regular basis.

You may feel you would like to form your own tenants group. This may be because you want to deal with specific issues that are important to you and you may feel that other tenants would also be interested in participating. For example, you may want to form a tenants group that represents different areas or people, such as:

- Tenants in a specific village or town
- Young Tenants
- Elderly Tenants
- Tenants living in new build housing
- Tenants living in Temporary Accommodation
- Tenants from an Ethnic Minority background

Tenants groups have the right to register with the Council and may receive an annual grant to cover the cost of administration costs such as posting letters to their members. The advantage of registering is that we have a legal duty to consult with Registered Tenant Organisations over proposed changes to housing services. Registered Tenant Organisations are independent. They have written constitutions, their own committees and records of their accounts that are publicly available.

Can I set up a Registered Tenant Organisation in my local community?

All tenant groups within the boundary of Midlothian Council are entitled to apply for registration with the Council. The Council will provide support and advice on becoming registered. If you would like information on setting up a tenant group please contact the Council’s Tenant Participation Officer on 0131 271 3611 or email us at tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk

Process for becoming a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO)

The Council holds a register of all tenant organisations. To become registered with the Council a tenant group must have:
• A name
• A written constitution
• A clear description of the area your group covers

Your group must hold a publicly advertised inaugural general meeting (first meeting), to appoint office holders (chairperson, secretary and treasurer) and to agree the constitution or rules of conduct. After its first year it must hold a publicly advertised annual general meeting. A copy of the group’s constitution should be submitted to the Council and be made available for public inspection. It should contain the following information:

• The name of the group
• The group’s area of operation
• Rules of membership
• A statement on how the committee will conduct its business
• An explanation of procedures at meetings and how decisions will be taken
• A statement of how funds will be managed and audited
• The procedure for making changes to the constitution
• A statement supporting equal opportunities
• A statement setting out arrangements for the dissolution of the group

Application forms for the Midlothian Tenants Forum and to become a Registered Tenants Organisation are included at the end of the strategy.

We recognise that some tenant organisations may not wish to register. Where appropriate, we will consult with non registered groups, but these consultation arrangements will not be bound by the commitments set out in our strategy and the statutory provisions of the Act. Members of such groups who are council tenants will maintain their rights to be consulted as individuals.
12. Links to other Strategies and Plans

The Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy is one strand of important strategies and plans that the Council are in involved in development and implementation. The strategies listed below are of key importance to improving the quality of the lives for tenants in Midlothian.

Local Housing Strategy

All Councils in Scotland are required to develop a Local Housing Strategy which considers housing needs and issues and sets out an action plan to deal with these over a period of time. The Council is currently developing a new Local Housing Strategy for the period 2012 to 2015. Key areas of activity include objectives related to:

- Development of Affordable Housing
- Access to Housing
- Assisting Homeless Households and Preventing Homelessness
- Improving Stock Condition
- Ensuring those with particular needs are provided with support

Housing and Community Safety Service Plan

Service improvement planning is a key element in how the Housing and Community Safety Service prioritises activities carried out. Through service planning, the department is able to set objectives and improvement targets over the coming years in order that the Council delivers on its goals.

Single Outcome Agreement

The Single Outcome Agreement is an agreement between partners in Midlothian, including the Council, NHS and Police and sets out outcomes for improving the quality of life for people in Midlothian.

If you would like a copy of any of these documents they can be downloaded from the Councils website www.midlothian.gov.uk or contact the Council’s Tenant Participation Officer on 0131 271 3611 or via email at tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk
The key aims of the Tenant Participation and Customer Engagement Strategy are:

- Increase opportunities for tenant involvement.
- Ensure all tenants are informed about the performance of the Housing Service.
- Ensure tenants are involved at all levels of decision making by improving consultation and broadening consultation methods.

It is not just the Tenant Participation Officer who is responsible for making sure that tenants have their say and get good information. All staff in the housing department will consider tenants’ needs in their working arrangements and this will include:

- provision of information and advice about services they are responsible for delivering
- ensuring RTOs receive enough information and in a form which is easily read and understood about proposed service changes
- ensuring RTOs can take part in participation arrangements for proposed service changes in a way that minimises administrative burdens of their management committees and office bearers.

The Action Plan attached contains key actions that the Council, and its partners, will undertake to ensure the aims of the Strategy are achieved. The Council will assess and report on its performance in meeting these aims on an annual basis. The Strategy will be monitored in consultation with tenants and through RTO groups. They will receive regular performance and will be asked to provide feedback on how they feel we are doing in relation to the actions detailed above.

Other methods used to monitor the Strategy will include updates at the annual Midlothian Tenants Day and the publishing of tenant participation achievements in both the Midlothian News and the annual Tenants Newsletter.
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure Registered Tenants Organisations are promoted through the Annual Tenant Newsletter</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Increased awareness of the activities of Registered Tenants Organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch social networking opportunities for tenants and use of online surveys.</td>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Tenants and other service users use new media to engage with Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree annual consultation schedule</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Enables well planned consultation with tenants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase PR activity surrounding Midlothian Tenants Forum activities and Midlothian Council Tenant Participation in general.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Increased awareness and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of tenants and representatives in Registered Tenants Organisations.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Increased tenant participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of tenants on the Register of Interested Tenants.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities for young people to engage with the Housing Service.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Increased influence of young tenants and service users in the housing service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities for disabled people to engage with the service.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Increased influence for disabled people to participate in the housing service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities for Minority Ethnic (ME) Communities and Gypsy Traveller Communities to engage with the Service.</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Increased influence for ME and Gypsy/Travellers people to participate in the housing service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Estate Walkabouts to all tenants.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Greater participation in Estate Walkabout activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the numbers attending the annual tenant's conference.</td>
<td>May 2012, 2013</td>
<td>Increased tenant participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase engagement activity with waiting list applicants.</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Increased engagement with prospective tenants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase engagement activity with other organisations, including Housing Associations, Community Councils and the Voluntary Sector.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Wider range of community engagement activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities for tenants to attend events and seminars on housing issues.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Improved tenant understanding of housing issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the roll out of mobile phone text services to increase range of contact methods for all tenants.</td>
<td>August 2012</td>
<td>Improved accessibility of service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make application forms available online.</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce and send an annual tenant’s newsletter to all Council Tenants, which includes information on performance.</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>Improved communication between the Council and tenants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure performance information on the housing service is available on the Council’s website.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure performance information is available to the public in the reception area of the housing office.</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that Housing Polices and Strategies are available online and in print to members of the public.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Tenants have an improved understanding of the Council’s policy and procedures and future plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a Summary Leaflet of the Housing and Community Safety Service Plan and make it available on line and in the housing office.</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Tenants have an improved understanding of priorities for the Housing Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an Updated Tenants Information Pack for new tenants and make available on line.</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>Tenants and prospective tenants have comprehensive and up to date information about tenancies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop expanded Tenant Participation pages on the Council website.</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Information on Tenant Participation is more accessible to tenants and prospective tenants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update housing information and advice leaflets.</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>Tenants and members of the public have access to key information on housing services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Aim 3: Ensure tenants are involved at all levels of decision making by improving consultation and consultation methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publish the results of consultation and survey findings in a variety of formats including through the tenants newsletter and on the council website.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Tenants see that their feedback helps to inform housing services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake 12 Estate Walkabouts per annum.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Neighbourhoods are regularly monitored by staff and tenants and actions for improvements set out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake a Tenant Satisfaction Survey in 2012 and 2014 with an increased response rate.</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Council can monitor performance trends and identify areas of weakness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake Consultation on the Council’s Local Housing Strategy.</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Tenants and other service users have a key role in agreeing the aims of the Strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake Consultation on the Council’s Allocation Policy.</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Tenants and prospective tenants have a key role in agreeing a new allocation policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake Consultation with tenants and agree service priorities for the Housing and Community Safety Service Plan.</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Increased role for Tenants in setting targets and priorities for the Housing Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase joint working with relevant agencies/departments in order to improve consultation with under-represented groups.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Improved representation of the views of under-represented groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out Tenant Participation training session for all staff.</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Increased staff awareness on how to engage effectively with tenants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to undertake customer satisfaction surveys for individual services.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Improved service planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey all tenants living in new build council homes to assess their satisfaction.</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Improved information for future housing development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop mystery shopping exercises with tenants.</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Tenants given greater role in the assessment of services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase engagement activity with households in temporary accommodation.</td>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Improved engagement for underrepresented groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Application Form to Join the Midlothian Tenants Forum

Would you like to become a member of the Midlothian Tenants Forum? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name ....................................................................................................................................................

Address ...................................................................................................................................................

............................................................................................................................................................ Postcode..........................

Contact Telephone Number .........................................................................................................................

Email Address ................................................................................................................................................

The Consultation Register

Being a member of the Consultation Register allows you to be consulted on developments and proposals for Midlothian’s housing service.

Would you like to be added to the Consultation Register? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Estate Walkabouts

Estate walkabouts are an opportunity for tenants to raise any concerns about problems that exist on their estate, particularly with regards to the physical environment.

Would you like to be involved in Estate Walkabouts? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please complete and return by email to tenantparticipation@midlothian.gov.uk or post to MTF c/o Tenant Participation Officer, Buccleuch House, 1 White Hart Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1AE