



Equality Relevance Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Policy title	Tenant Participation Strategy
Lead officer	Siobhan Mullen, Customer Services Manager
Date relevance considered	09/03/2016
2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will, or may potentially:	
General Duties	Impact on equality (Yes or No)
Reduce or increase discrimination, victimisation or harassment against people covered by the equality protected characteristics?	Yes
Reduce or increase equality of opportunity between people who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	Yes
Provide opportunity to improve good relations between those who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	Yes
4. Equality impact assessment required? (Two Yes above = full assessment necessary)	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Decision rationale	
<p>This strategy will reduce discrimination and increase equality as it covers how tenants and residents from all backgrounds are enabled to share their views and concerns equally. Our customers are given the opportunity to engage through whatever method is most comfortable for them. We have the social element of our groups, networks and panel and distance involvement through postal surveys and electronic methods of contact.</p> <p>Full assessment is therefore recommended due to the importance of ensuring our engagement practices are accessible and inclusive for individuals covered by the protected characteristics of the Equality Act</p>	

- No assessment required – process ends
- Assessment required – continue to next section

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Details of proposal

Details of others involved	Kenny Selbie - Service Development Officer; Caroline Hannah - Quality Development Officer Dyann Weir, Gillian Stewart and Mark Barnes - Customer Participation Officers
Date assessment conducted	09/03/2016

2. Aims of the proposed change to council policy or resources

OUR AIMS

The following aims have been developed in partnership with staff and tenants to ensure there is the opportunity to scrutinise and influence the delivery of housing services at all levels:

BEING FAIR

- the council wants to ensure tenant participation is open and accessible to everyone who wishes to become involved. It is our aim to ensure every tenant has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect

CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

- meet and exceed all legal responsibilities when carrying out consultation, using clear communication methods
- use effective methods of consultation to gather views and use these to develop better services, whilst achieving value for money

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & FEEDBACK

- provide good quality information and feedback on consultation through all means available
- INVOLVEMENT
- provide a range of opportunities for tenant involvement
- ensure tenants are actively involved in influencing, shaping and improving services

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- provide appropriate resources to support the aims of the strategy
- offer opportunities to all those involved to help develop knowledge, skills and encourage participation
- support staff to develop active tenant participation in their local area
- supporting existing local tenant and resident groups
- support and encourage the development of individuals in all aspects of tenant participation

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND SCRUTINY

- meet the outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter
- involve tenants in the review of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)
- scrutinise regular performance reporting on service delivery
- develop and encourage the use of effective scrutiny in activities tenants participate in
- monitor performance against the Tenant Participation Action Plan

3. What equality data, research or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?

In the absence of any specific equalities data on all West Lothian Council tenants we have assumed that national figures are representative of our communities and referenced these.

Measures are being developed to collect better equality data on all West Lothian tenants. Plans to move to 250 property patch areas for housing officers will enable more direct links between individual tenants and the service, and customer information including diversity data will be collected through this. In addition, 2016 will see the launch of the new Tenants Online Service which will eventually enable self-declaration of diversity information. This data will enable more informed consideration of particular groups to be targeted in relation to Tenant Participation in the future.

4. Details of consultation and involvement

The strategy has been part of a broad consultation plan. It has been reviewed by:

- Tenants Panel
- Editorial Panel
- Local Housing Staff and Managers
- Senior Managers
- Random selection of Tenants drawn from those who signalled their wish to be involved through the Annual Tenants Satisfaction survey

Publicised through online channels (2):

The Council website; the Council Facebook

Housing Networks (3):

Five Sisters Housing Network; Cairnbrock Housing Network; Homeless Housing Network

Registered Tenant Organisations (3):

Marchwood & Bathgate East T&R; Boghall T&R; The Riggs T&R

Other Local Authorities (7):

North Ayrshire; South Lanarkshire; East Renfrewshire; East Ayrshire Council; East Dunbartonshire; Aberdeen City Council; Edinburgh Council

Housing Associations (2):

Maryhill HA; Dunedin Canmore

While no specific equality related consultation is being conducted, a variety of tenants involved in the existing consultation plans will be covered by the protected characteristics and we will take on board any specific feedback related to providing a more inclusive service.

5. Issues identified and 'protected characteristics' impact

(Covering: age; disability; gender; gender identity; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief and sexual orientation equality)

West Lothian Council is fortunate to have a good ratio of staff to tenants involved in groups and activities. This allows us to use a very personal and individual approach for customers. We invite customers who wish to engage with us to inform us of any requirements so that we can adapt activities for them to avoid exclusion. Examples of this are outlined in our strategy which covers aspects like childcare and transport or use of our loop system and our ability to produce documentation in alternate formats.

While we are content we have a good gender balance we know our age demographic for groups is weighted to ages 50+. In order to encourage a broader age representation, we will be using approaches that allow us to engage with audiences up to the age of 50. Current plans include approaching young people through schools and to increase the use of social/online media.

We are also aware there are no ethnic minority representatives. Given the lack of data our intention is to engage with each of the West Lothian Equality groups during 2016 to identify any additional actions they the representatives believe we should be considering to increase the diversity of our tenant representations

6. What measures are in place to monitor the actual impact following implementation?

We will monitor this once the strategy is scheduled for review at the end of its lifecycle

7. Recommendation

- Implement proposal with no amendments
- Implement proposal taking account of mitigating actions (as outlined below)
- Reject proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality

8. Mitigating actions and additional outputs

As well as our intention to approach young people through schools and to increase the use of social/online media, we are keen to engage with forums representing people with protected characteristics. We plan to approach the Race, Disability, LGBT and Women's forums to ask if they feel there are any further actions we can take to ensure that all groups are involved.

- **Equality impact assessment completed**
- **Final assessment must be published on the council website:**
[Council EQIA Publication Page](#)
- **Link must be included in "Background References" section of committee/ management reports**