



Midlothian Council Tenant Participation Strategy: 2024-2027



Midlothian Council recognises that involving tenants and service users is an essential part of our decision-making process. We are committed to making sure there are opportunities for all tenants and service users to participate in design and delivery of our housing services.



Welcome to Midlothian Council's Tenant Participation Strategy covering the period 2024-27. This strategy has been developed by the close working partnership with the Tenants groups and partners. Tenant participation is about putting our tenants and service users at the heart of Housing Services. We want you to have a say regarding

the services received and to be a voice in the community. The progress we have made since our first Tenant Participation Strategy has made a significant difference in how we are involving communities in the development of housing services through consultation. We remain committed to working together with you to promote meaningful involvement within the neighbourhoods across Midlothian. We will look to develop our existing tenant involvement structures that will offer, a greater opportunity to influence housing services and more importantly reflect your housing priorities and needs.

The Strategy takes account of the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) and the role of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. Midlothian Council recognises that involving tenants is an essential part of our decision-making process and we are committed to making sure that there are opportunities for all tenants to participate in the design and delivery of our Housing Service.

Background

Midlothian lies to the south of Edinburgh and covers an area of 355 square kilometres. The northern half of the local authority area is predominantly urban with more rural communities to the south. The principal population centres in Midlothian are Dalkeith, Penicuik, Bonnyrigg, Loanhead, Mayfield and Gorebridge.

Midlothian Council owns 7170 homes. Housing Services functions are provided within the Place directorate. Housing Services purpose is to provide a comprehensive and effective homelessness, temporary accommodation, housing allocations and housing management service. To promote tenancy sustainment to support the wellbeing of our residents and sustainment of our communities. We ensure that the council's statutory responsibilities are met in terms within the policy and legislation. We manage all resources for an efficient and cost-effective service.

Key statistics for 2023/24:

- 4,713 housing applicants;
- Allocated 552 homes;
- Property types – houses 37%, flats 29% and four in a block at 34%;
- Property sizes – 1 bed 28%, 2 bed 49%, 3 bed 19% and 4 bed 20%;

Housing Services vision is that individuals and families will be able to access housing that is affordable and of good quality in sustainable communities.

Tenant participation

Tenant participation is about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies; housing conditions; and housing services. It is a two-way process which involves the sharing of information, ideas and knowledge. Its aim is to improve the standard of housing conditions and services.

We have developed a range of both formal and informal methods to allow a variety of participation opportunities, from individual contact through to involvement at a strategic level.

This strategy reflects our commitment to maximize opportunities for consultation, involvement and scrutiny from our tenants and residents to improve and enhance the performance, decision making and development of housing and related services.



Tenant participation strategy

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 created a legal requirement for social landlords (Council's and Housing Association's/Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)), to actively develop and support tenant participation.

Tenant Participation Strategy's enable "continuous improvement in landlords' performance in supporting and enabling tenants to participate".

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) requires social landlords to ensure that tenants and other groups find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-november-2022

The Scottish Housing Regulator promotes tenant participation and the importance of tenants and social landlords scrutinising services together to improve performance and ensure value for money.

www.housingregulator.gov.scot

Our strategy outlines Midlothian Council's commitment to tenant participation and highlights the range of opportunities available to tenants, service users and other customers to become involved. It gives an opportunity to empower tenants and makes Midlothian Council more accountable for our actions. The strategy explains how tenant participation will be carried out between 2024-2027.

Our Aims

We will raise awareness about tenant participation, provide opportunities to participate and influence housing services and develop and support new and existing tenant groups.

We will do this by:

- Keeping tenants and service users informed via social media platforms
- Supporting existing and encourage new tenants' groups including supported accommodation and older persons housing
- Attending community events
- Carrying out scrutiny activities in Housing Services
- Joint meetings
- Estate Walkabout
- Tenant pop ups
- Publish annual performance report to tenants
- Review and update Tenant Packs, newsletters and leaflets
- Consultation, survey, and reviews

This work provides opportunities, for better service delivery and improved value for money. Opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills by building a mutual understanding. Communicating to informed knowledge to increase tenant satisfaction within homes and community.

Tenant Participation activities for Tenants and Service Users to get involved:

Midlothian Tenant Panel

Membership of the Panel is open to all Midlothian Council tenants. It is a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO), representing all Council tenants across Midlothian.

The Panel is regularly consulted by the Council when it is reviewing policies, scrutiny and performance to provide opportunities to independently review how services are being delivered, identify what works well and if there are any recommendations for improvements.

Midlothian Council will share the following information with the Panel and no personal data is shared:

- Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- Tenant satisfaction information
- Complaints and suggestions

We realise that not all tenants can attend the panel meetings we hold but we forward the agenda papers to panel members and take their responses into consideration and pass their views forward at the meetings.

We provide training to give individuals the tools, skills, and confidence required to carry out participation activities.

The key principles of Tenant panel are:

- Trust, respect, and partnership
- Sharing information ideas and knowledge
- Dedicated time to consider matters
- Decision making
- Recognition
- Equal opportunities

Tenants Groups

A group of tenants who live in the same area, who will work together to represent the views of all tenants in the area to help make their neighbourhood a better place to live. Tenants' groups are set up by volunteers. These volunteers live in the community and want to have a say in how it is run and make a difference. There may be a tenant's group already set up in your area. If you would like to set a group up, you could start by finding out if any of your neighbours are interested. We can support you to advertise the group and encourage others to get involved.

Process for becoming a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO)

All tenant groups in Midlothian are entitled to apply for registration with the Council, should they wish. 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

Walkabouts

These offer the opportunity for local residents, council staff, elected members and other interested community groups to work together to make their neighbourhoods a better place to live. The group choose an area within Midlothian to walk along the street and review if any improvements could be made. We aim to hold a walkabout once a month and local tenants are sent information a few weeks prior to the event through flyers displayed on lampposts. Local libraries and social media are also used to advertise these walkabouts.

Tenants can register interest if they are not able to attend and we will make contact directly.



Satisfaction survey

The council carries out a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey every three to five years.

The last survey was carried out in 2022 and this saw an overall improvement in the satisfaction that our tenants have with the housing services provided to them.

Midlothian Tenant Satisfaction Survey results reveal overall satisfaction | Midlothian Council

- 82% of respondents have overall satisfaction with the housing service. The Scottish council social housing average is currently 80%.
- 84% of respondents are happy with the quality of housing
- 72% of respondents are happy with the repairs service
- 81% of respondents feel that the housing service provides value for money
- 86% are happy with neighbourhood management
- 80% are happy that they are kept informed



Surveys

From time to time we will send out informal questionnaires to find out what you think of certain parts of the housing service.

Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)

Every year Midlothian Council complete an AAS. This confirms to the Scottish Housing Regulator that we comply with all relevant standards and outcomes in the SSHC. It also confirms that we meet all relevant legislative duties.

Monitoring performance

The Scottish Housing Network provide a briefing to Midlothian Council, elected members and members of the tenant's groups on our Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This briefing provides a detailed analysis of our performance against our peer group of similar sizes councils.

Newsletters

We produce quarterly newsletters available on social media platform which includes current topics within Housing, any new changes, events taking place in Midlothian our contact details and other relevant numbers. We also provide an annual report detailing our performance for the last year.

Tenant consultation register

The tenant consultation register is a list of interested tenants that have indicated that they would like to be consulted by post on housing issues that the Council is looking to consult tenants over. Tenants from the consultation register can also be contacted to attend focus groups when necessary.

Tenants attending the tenant conference provided their names and contact details to be added to the consultation register.

Consultation events

From time to time the Council will hold consultation events in local communities when it is consulting on changes to housing services. Tenants' comments at these events will help shape our final policies and we encourage all tenants to take part if they are invited.

Partnership working

Successful tenant participation involves working together across the partners to improve services and communities. Including linking in with TP officers from other local authorities. Midlothian Council takes every opportunity to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Housing Strategy link on our website:

www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/917/housing/323/housing_strategy_and_performance

Equality, inclusion, and Human Rights

An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been carried out when developing this strategy.

Midlothian Council ensures that equalities, inclusion and human rights are at the centre of everything we do enabling us to deliver positive outcomes for our people, applicants and tenants.

We will ensure it is easy for tenants and service users to communicate and get the information required.

Monitoring the strategy

To ensure the Tenant Participation Strategy is working as intended the following monitoring arrangements will be put in place:

- Providing quarterly updates to the Housing Forum on key tenant participation outcomes and achievements and progress of the tenant participation strategy action plan
- Providing regular progress updates at Midlothian Tenants Forum committee meetings
- Publishing annual tenant participation outcomes and achievements in the tenant newsletter

The tenant participation strategy and action plan will be reviewed every three years in consultation with the Midlothian Tenants Forum.

Ways to get involved

We want to hear your views on a variety of subjects such as rent levels, repairs, allocations and antisocial behaviour. We can look at specific parts of the housing service and we will periodically engage with tenants who are interested in these matters. If you wish to be involved, please let us know, we are always looking for new participants.

By email at **TenantParticipation@midlothian.gov.uk**

By mobile: **07502918630**

By phone: **0131 271 3394**

In writing: **Housing Services, Midlothian Council,
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