



Tenant Participation Annual Report 2010 – 2011

Housing, Construction
and Building Services



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Council

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Introduction

Welcome to the first annual report for Tenant Participation (TP) in West Lothian.

2010/2011 was a very busy year for the tenant representatives and staff who play an active role in shaping and improving the services tenants and service users receive. Over the last 12 months they have been invited to and participated in many events at both local and national levels.

In West Lothian we believe that Tenant Participation is fundamental to the success of delivering first class services. It requires mutual trust, respect and partnership working between those who use our services, staff and elected members – all working together towards a common aim of better housing conditions and housing related services.

Some notable achievements for the year include:

- TPAS Tenant Representative of the Year, awarded to Danny Mullen from Whitburn, for his outstanding contribution to tenant participation, both locally and nationally
- Gaining the prestigious TPAS Accreditation, with several areas of good practice being highlighted by TPAS
- Tenants Information Day – attended by nearly 300 tenants and service users from all over West Lothian
- Street Environmental Improvement Project – running for the 2nd year, with some exciting projects being approved by tenant representatives from our Tenants Panel.



Tenants Information Day held in the new Civic Centre Reception

Working Groups

(tenants, service users and staff, work together on specific issues)

■ Tenant Participation Development Working Group

Following the recent Tenant Led Inspection into Tenant Participation (TP) this working group was formed to take the development of TP in West Lothian forward. A development plan has been drawn-up by the group, comprising the actions from the TLI. This development work will form an integral part of the forthcoming review of the new TP Strategy in late 2011.

A development plan has been drawn-up and agreed with group members. The tasks identified as having the highest priority for the group are:

Tenants Training
Editorial Panel
Tenants Website

Tenant Led Inspection Framework
Mini Rapid Improvement Event
Register of Interested Tenants

TP Budget
Rent Setting

All tasks have planned completion dates between April 2010 and March 2011.

■ Quality Improvement Team

Tenants were involved with staff from Housing, Construction and Building Services on several Quality Improvement Teams, looking at updating and improving the information contained in the following. These were:

Satisfaction Surveys
Allocations Policy
Repairs Handbook

■ Rapid Improvement Events

Tenants were involved with staff from Housing, Construction and Building Services on two Rapid Improvement Events. They looked at all the processes and procedures involved and worked on streamlining and improving these two services:

Community Safety Unit
Assessment & Review Adaptations

■ Tenants Information Day Working Group

Following on from the successful Tenants Information Day, the working group met to discuss:

- What worked
- What did not work
- Suggestions for 2011

The planning has been started for the 2011 event and the date has been set as Saturday 8th October 2011. The venue will again be the Civic Centre, Livingston.

■ Editorial Panel

The Editorial Panel has recently been re-established. Procedures have been developed for the members and training has been delivered in partnership with Adult Basic Education.

The main aim of the panel is to ensure all information going to tenants and service users is understandable – written in plain language, useful and free from jargon. The Panel is drawing up a work plan for the remainder of the year on the publications they wish to review. These will include the following:

- Tenants News - produced three times a year and delivered to every tenant in West Lothian
- Applicants News - produced annually for everyone on our allocations waiting list
- Standard Letters and Information Leaflets

The 'Tenant Approved' stamp will be added to any new documentation once the panel have approved its content, ensuring it is Plain Language, Clear and Helpful.

Editorial Panel members busy looking over the summer edition



Groups and Networks

■ Registered Tenant Organisations

In West Lothian we currently have nine registered groups. These groups are supported by local housing staff within the group's area of operation. The groups work on mainly local issues and initiatives, but several of the groups have members who also attend the Housing Network meetings and other Tenant Participation initiatives.

Name of Group	Area of Operation
Boghall Tenants and Residents Group	Boghall, Bathgate
Braehead Residents' Group	Linlithgow
Bridgend Tenants and Residents Association	Bridgend
East Knightsridge Tenants and Residents Association	Knightsridge, Livingston
Fauldhouse Central Tenants' and Residents' Group	Fauldhouse
Kirkhill Residents Forum	Broxburn
LOBS Tenant and Residents' Association	Whitburn
Marchwood and Bathgate East Tenants' and Residents' Association	Bathgate
Riddochhill Drive Tenants and Residents' Association	Blackburn

Here are a few examples of achievements from some of our groups:

- ***East Knightsridge Tenants & Residents Association, Livingston***
Carried out two clean-up campaigns and highlighted many local issues, including dog fouling and problems with litter. The members of the group work closely with their local primary school and youth group in the area. In 2010 they ran a very successful poster campaign, attracting over 200 applications from local children and young people.
- ***LOBS Tenants & Residents Association, Whitburn***
Submitted an application for the Street Environmental Improvement Project, which was successful. This will see an existing car-parking area being improved and upgraded for the benefit of tenants and residents in their area.
- ***Church Place Tenants & Residents Association, Fauldhouse***
The members of this group also submitted an application for the Street Environmental Improvement Project for an area in Church Place. This will see improvements to the landscaping and overall appearance of the area.



East Knightsridge Spring Clean

■ Housing Networks

In West Lothian we have two Housing Networks that are attended by representatives from our Registered Tenant Organisations and individual interested tenants and service users.

The two Networks operate to cover different areas within West Lothian, as shown below:

Cairn Brock Housing Network	Five Sisters Housing Network
Linlithgow Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh Livingston North Livingston South East Livingston and East Calder	Armadale and Blackridge Bathgate Whitburn and Blackburn Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley

The Networks meet monthly either individually or jointly with each other to discuss areas of performance from our service and be consulted on our Housing Initiatives set under our Management Plan. They also look at other local and national issues.

A consultation plan was agreed with the networks at the beginning of 2010, and areas for consultation that were agreed included:

- Modernising Agenda
- Community Safety Unit
- Contingency Strategy
- TPAS Accreditation
- Capital Programme and Scottish Housing Quality Standard
- Anti-social Behaviour
- Contingency Strategy
- Mobile and Flexible Working
- New Build policy – phase 1 and phase 2

Members of the Housing Networks are also active in attending external conferences and events throughout Scotland.

Tenants Information Service Annual Conference	Four Delegates from Five Sisters Housing Network
Tenant Participation Advisory Service Annual Conference	Seven Delegates from Five Sisters and Cairn Brock Housing Networks
Chartered Institute of Housing Annual Conference	Two Delegates from Five Sisters Housing Network
Scottish Social Housing Charter Events	Several delegates attended different sessions held by the Scottish Government
Central Regional Network Events	Several delegates attended different sessions in Livingston and Stirling

Joint Housing Network Meeting at Uphall Community Centre



Initiatives

■ Tenant Led Inspections (TLI's)

Our Inspectors carried out four inspections into different areas of our service. These were:

- **Enhanced Estates Management**
- **Equalities 'A customer journey'**
- **Youth Homelessness**
- **Tenant Participation**

Following on from the inspections, Action Plans have been developed, improvements and recommendations agreed with the Inspectors and work is ongoing to implement these.

Tenant Led inspections have been highlighted as best practise throughout Scotland and the inspectors have either visited or played host to several other local authorities to give practical demonstrations on how our process works. A 'taster session' has been developed with our Tenant Led Inspectors, to help others understand the process. Here are some of the organisations we have assisted:

East Dunbartonshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
North Lanarkshire
Falkirk Council

North Lanarkshire Tenants Conference
West of Scotland Tenant Participation Network
TPAS Involving All Conference

Training before the Inspections started



Inspectors looking over policies and procedures



Street Environmental Improvement Project

2011 saw an increase in the applications received for this project. The first year's projects are well under way with several local communities benefitting from these improvements. Here are some of the main projects approved by the members of the Tenants Panel:

2009-2010 Completed Projects

Broxburn	Repairs to wall and painting of metal railings in Almondell Road
Armadale	Create a large Community Garden in Mayfield
Whitburn	Improvement to Bin Areas in Craig Avenue & West Main Street and install roll-top fencing around boundaries of flatted properties

2010/2011 Projects In Progress

Mid Calder	convert a large grassed area to approximately six car-parking spaces
Armadale	replace house numbering in several areas, carry out work to improve the rear area of several properties
Broxburn	upgrade the communal drying area
Bathgate	Improving the area around the flatted properties – ramped access, upgrading railings
Whitburn	upgrade parking area by removing broken slabs and replacing with tarmac

Improvement to Bin Area and Drying Greens Craig Avenue & West Main Street, Whitburn



Before



After

Railings sanded and re-painted in Almondell Road, Broxburn



Before



After

■ Your Home for Keeps

This exciting new initiative is a combination of partnership working with staff from Housing, Building Services and Adult Basic Education. They have worked together with service users to develop a new training programme, with the sole aim of helping to support and develop new skills for tenants to sustain their tenancies, many of them young people in their first home.

'My home for Keeps' was piloted in March 2011 with those from either supported or homeless accommodation being involved. The training programme looks at many of the things a responsible tenant requires to do to keep their tenancy.

It includes useful hints and tips on topics such as:

- understanding forms and how to complete them
- looking after your money and what bills you'll need to pay
- type of house you can be offered and what is the responsibility of the tenant and the landlord

■ Good Neighbour

Several nominations were received this year and the judging panel were very impressed with the quality of entries received.

The winning entry was nominated because of the help he offered to all his neighbours. His thoughtfulness and kindness to others was rewarded with a bouquet of flowers, a framed Good Neighbour Award Certificate from the Head of Housing, Construction and Building Services and £50 worth of shopping vouchers.

All those nominated received a Certificate and bouquet of flowers.



Mr Martin with his Good Neighbour Award

Performance Monitoring

Tenants Panel

Our Tenants Panel continue to meet on a monthly basis. We alternatively hold 'Performance' and 'Full Senior Management' meetings.

Tenants Panel Performance Meetings

These meetings are attended by tenant members and senior managers (depending on the performance item on the agenda).

In 2010/2011 the topics, chosen by the Tenant Panel Representatives, covered:

■ May 2010	■ Neighbourhood Response Team, Safer Neighbourhood Team ■ Allocations
■ August 2010	■ Complaints
■ October 2010	■ Asset Management - Repairs, Planned Maintenance, Optitime/Mobile Working
■ January 2011	■ Finance Reporting - Housing Management, Arrears, Rent, Planned Maintenance
■ March 2011	■ Rent Strategy and Tenants Priorities ■ Repairs and Building Services Performance

Full Tenants Panel Meetings

Tenant Panel Representatives, Elected Members and Senior Managers meet to discuss various items arising. These items are either suggested by staff or tenant representatives and cover a wide range of topics affecting Housing, Construction and Building Services. A sample agenda is shown below:

Tenants Panel Meeting - Agenda – 3rd February 2011

1. Previous Minutes
2. Matters Arising
3. Impact on Changes to Housing Benefit
4. Street Environmental Improvement Project
5. Update on Phase 2 New Build
6. Contingency Strategy – update
7. AOCB
8. Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 3rd March 2011 (Whitburn Resource Centre)

Tenants Panel Performance Meeting at the Whitburn Tenants Resource Centre



Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

We currently have two dedicated tenant representatives who participate in the work of the PDSP. The members attend on behalf of Five Sisters Housing Network, and use this opportunity to take the views and opinions of their Housing Network to the PDSP meetings.

The meetings are held approximately every six weeks and the tenant representatives regularly attend and have a valuable input to the discussions and recommendations made.

Satisfaction Levels

This year's annual satisfaction survey, which is delivered to every council tenancy in West Lothian, saw a return of 900 surveys. Every year we offer two prizes of £50 as an incentive to return the survey.

Here is a comparison of the results relating to Tenant Participation from 2009 – 2010. You will see that most of these have dropped. We are working hard to improve these for next year.

Survey Question	2009	2010
■ Are you kept informed about Housing & Building Services?	■ 84.4% Agreed	■ 81.8% Agreed
■ Do you feel you are consulted on changes to the housing services?	73.2% Agreed	■ 72.8% Agreed
■ Overall how satisfied are you with the housing services you receive?	■ 83.8% Agreed	■ 85.5% Agreed
■ How do you rate the service you get for the rent you pay?	■ 90.3% Agreed	91.6% Agreed

King George IV Park, Blackburn, gets a makeover



East Knightsridge Tenants & Residents Association on an Estate Walkabout

Awards

■ TPAS Accreditation

In October Housing, Construction and Building Services were delighted to receive the TPAS Accreditation Award. This was received by staff working in partnership with tenant representatives from across West Lothian.

The Accreditation involved completing a self-assessment framework explaining how we as an organisation involve tenants and service users in improving and delivering our services. The framework contained 11 competencies that had to be passed. We had to explain how we met each competency and provide documentary evidence to support our claim.

TPAS also met with several tenant representatives and staff to ensure we met their criteria for involvement.

A feedback report was prepared by TPAS, identifying any strengths or weaknesses. This report also highlighted several areas of good practice in West Lothian.

■ TPAS Tenant Representative of the Year

Danny Mullen from Whitburn was nominated by his Tenant Participation Officers for the prestigious TPAS Tenant Representative of the year Award 2010.

Danny, who has worked tirelessly as a tenant representative both locally and nationally for many years, achieved recognition for all his hard work, when he was presented with this award at our Tenants Information Day, by Jamie Ballantine from TPAS.

Two other nominations for TPAS Awards were also submitted from West Lothian. These were Alison Kerr for the 'Best Practice' Award and East Knightsridge Tenants and Residents Group for 'Tenant Group of the Year' Award. Both nominations were shortlisted, but unfortunately unsuccessful on the day.

The Council and Tenant Representatives
accept
TPAS Accreditation Award



Danny Mullen accepts his
Tenant
Of the Year Award

Events

■ Tenants Information Day

The annual Tenants Fun and Information Day was held on 16th October 2010 in the council's new purpose built Civic Centre building. The day was organised by tenant representatives and the Tenant Participation Team and brought together around 300 tenants and residents from throughout West Lothian.

The day was a tremendous success for all those who came along, including all the partner services that were there to offer advice and showcase their particular areas of expertise. These included:

Carers of West Lothian	The Food Train	West Lothian Drug & Alcohol Service
West Lothian Apprentices	Youth Action	Lothian & Borders Police
Applying for a House	Tenants Website	Scottish Social Housing Charter
Tenants Website	Waste Management	Lovell New Build Partners

On offer were tours around the new Civic Centre, which took in the impressive Council Chambers, Courts and the Court Cells where prisoners are held by Reliance before and after their appearance in court. These tours proved to be very popular and all tours were booked up very quickly!

Holding the venue in the Civic Centre building proved to be a very cost effective exercise as costs were limited to catering and staff costs.

The Tenants Information Day working group has met and gone over the feedback received and has agreed on a date for the 2011 event, which will again be held in the Civic Centre.

The date is Saturday 8th October 2011.

Information Stalls having a busy time!



Jewellery makers hard at work!



Watch those blocks are about to go!



■ Consultation on New Build/Regeneration Projects

In 2010/11 Strategy and Development undertook a number of tenant and resident consultations on new build Council housing and on regeneration proposals for high density housing.

New Build Council Housing

In summer 2010 we held pre-planning application consultations for the larger new build sites. These are Eliburn and Inveralmond in Livingston, Little Boghead in Bathgate and Dixon Terrace in Whitburn.

We made use of Opinion Taker to get the views of new tenants on their homes. The comments made by tenants helped inform us in developing a second phase of new build.

We also attended Housing Network meetings to update on new build proposals for phase two.

Regeneration Projects

Consultation events were held in January, February and March 2011 to discuss proposals to address issues on high density housing at several sites:

- **Bents** - **Burnlea Place, Redcroft Place and Meadow Place**
- **Armadale** - **Bathville Cross**
- **Winchburgh** - **Glendevon Park**
- **Fauldhouse** - **Fallas Place**

Foundations in place, now we just need the walls!



Some new Build Tenants Comments:

- Nice views, nice finishes
- Everything
- Quality - very, very happy
- Plenty sockets, very happy
- New Build Home pack useful
- Bike Store

New Build Bungalow in Boghall

