

# Tenant Participation Strategy 2024 – 2027 Consultative Draft



ELTRP  
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## Welcome to East Lothian Council's sixth Tenant Participation

**Strategy**, which sets out how we plan to involve our tenants and make sure that they can influence and scrutinise the housing services we deliver. The Strategy sets out our commitment and the importance of involving tenants when we are developing and reviewing our housing policies.

We want to continue to build on our achievements over the last few years, supporting tenants and working in partnership with them and [East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel \(ELTRP\)](#).

We will remove any barriers so that tenant participation is accessible to all. We want to develop new ways of interacting and participating with our tenants, with the shift to online communication, whilst maximising tenant involvement.

We will continue to make sure tenants are at the heart of our work, giving them a menu of options to choose from, so that they can get involved in a way that suits them.

We value our tenant volunteers and all the work that they do with us every day. We always strive to work together to provide excellent housing services. We hope this strategy reflects how much more we want to achieve and explains the steps we will be taking to involve tenants in the coming years.



Jim Herron,  
ELTRP Chairperson



Andy Forrest,  
Councillor and Cabinet  
Spokesperson for Housing  
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Our vision for tenant participation is to maximise the participation of all our tenants, by forming good working relationships, building trust and respect, whilst sharing information ideas and power. We will provide resources for tenant participation, give tenants time to consider proposals and involve them in our decision-making. We will continue to work in partnership with local tenants' and residents' groups and East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel to further develop our tenant participation and scrutiny activities.



Tenants have rights to be consulted, set up tenants' groups and participate in decisions that affect them. Landlords must take account of tenants' views, inform tenants of housing proposals, produce a [Tenant Participation Strategy](#), and set up a [register of tenant organisations](#). Our Strategy is a requirement of the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#) which introduced these rights for tenants.

We developed this strategy by reviewing our last strategy in partnership with ELTRP and our staff, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses, we considered good practice and what had worked well. We carried out an Equality Impact Assessment to make sure our strategy promotes equal opportunities. We consulted with tenants, staff and ELTRP on our draft strategy before finalising it.

The [Social Housing Charter](#) sets the standards and outcomes that social landlords should aim to achieve. We are required by the [Scottish Housing Regulator](#) to report on our housing service.

We produce a [Landlord Report to Tenants](#) each year to explain how we have performed in key areas of our service, for example repairs, maintenance, improvements, estate management, antisocial behaviour, a full list of the charter outcome can be found in the [Housing Charter](#).



## Benefits of Tenant Participation

We know it is good practice to involve tenants in our work and this strategy sets out how we will do this. It is important that tenants have independent support to make sure they can participate and get involved in our [tenant participation structures](#), whether this is as an individual, tenants' group or by being involved with ELTRP. Tenant Scrutiny helps our service become more tenant focussed and gives tenants the opportunity to make recommendations for improvement. Our Development Support Project provides, development, outreach, and administrative support to all our tenants, tenants groups and members of ELTRP. Some of the benefits to tenant participation are:



## Communication

We will consult with tenants and keep them informed of any proposed changes to our housing policies. We will make sure we give tenants enough time to tell us what they think. We will do this by offering tenants a variety of ways to get involved, for example by attending events, responding to consultations, through [estate inspections](#), arranging Focus Groups, online meetings, and events.

We will keep tenants informed of our work and give them opportunities to give us feedback using [Homefront](#), our tenants newsletter, social media, through our [website](#) and by contacting tenants by telephone, email, text message and in person at our events. We will look at new ways to involve tenants developing a digital strategy to support more tenants to get involved. We have changed the way that we communicate with our tenants, and we will continue to meet tenants online and face-to-face. We will use online platforms like *Near Me* and continue with the development of our online services and access to more digital services for tenants. Feedback we receive from tenants will always be considered by the council and we will explain our decisions.

We will continue to work with East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel who we consider to be our key partner in all the work that we do. We will support our local tenants and residents groups and help them to become [Registered Tenant Organisations](#) providing [grants for tenants groups](#) and other support like access to printing and photocopying and providing venues for meetings.

## Successes

We have celebrated a number of successes with tenants and tenants' groups getting involved in estate inspections, local initiatives and making improvements in their area. We have carried out tenant scrutiny activities which have looked at the process for reporting a repair, communication, signing-up a new tenant and carried out some mystery shopping in our local housing offices. These activities have led to improvements being made to our services.



ELTRP and local tenants' and residents' groups in East Lothian have received recognition for their work both locally through ELTRP Awards and nationally.

We will provide information, support and training to make sure tenant participation is successful, this support will be tailored to suit the tenant making sure their tenant participation experience is meaningful and rewarding. We know it is important to regularly review how we are performing and carrying out our tenant participation activities and we will monitor this through our Action Plan. (shown in Appendix One)



## Links to other strategies and services

We know that our tenant participation strategy links in with our council policies and strategies. We will work together with colleagues in other departments, Councillors, staff and tenant representatives in other councils across Scotland to learn from them and hear about their good practice. We will go on study visits and learn from good practice to improve our tenant participation activity.

Some of the Strategies which share our commitments are:

- ✓ East Lothian Council (ELC), Digital Strategy 2022-2027
- ✓ ELC, Customer Strategy, 2023-2028
- ✓ ELC, Council Plan, 2022-2027
- ✓ ELC, Equality Plan, 2021-2025
- ✓ ELC, Local Housing Strategy, 2023-2028
- ✓ Community Housing & Homelessness Service Plan 2024-25
- ✓ Children's and Young People's Service Plan 2023-26

If you would like to get in touch and find out more about tenant participation, please contact us:

Email; [tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0800 413 721

Visit: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)

East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel

Telephone: 0131 665 9304

Visit: [www.eltrp.co.uk](http://www.eltrp.co.uk)



## Appendix One – Action Plan

Our **Action Plan** explains what actions we will take to achieve our aims for tenant participation, we will monitor the Plan regularly through our TP Strategy Group.

### *Aim 1 ► form good working relationships*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Involve tenants and staff in our tenant scrutiny activities	2024-2027	ELC/ELTRP	Increase tenant involvement and improved services
Set up regular TP Strategy Group meetings involving both tenants and staff	2024	ELC/ ELTRP	Quarterly meetings, monitoring of our tenant participation activities
Include local housing staff when starting up new tenants’ groups	2024 – 2027	ELC/ELTRP	Increase communications between staff and groups
Restart TP Forum meetings with staff from other RSLs in East Lothian	2024 - 2027	ELC	Six monthly meetings, improved communications with our RSL partners

### *Aim 2 ► communicate and empower tenants*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Include ELTRP representatives in our Homefront (Tenants Newsletter) Editorial Group	2024-2027	ELC	ELTRP representatives influence content of our tenants’ newsletter
Invite tenant representatives to be involved in our Communications Group	2024 – 2027	ELC/ ELTRP	ELTRP involvement in our planned communications with tenants
Encourage tenants and tenants’ groups to get involved in estate inspections and identifying local initiatives	2024 – 2027	ELC/ELTRP	Increase tenant participation in local areas and improvements

### *Aim 3 ► share information, ideas and power*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Invite ELTRP representatives to get involved in our Working Groups when we are developing or reviewing our housing policies	2024-2027	ELC	Makes sure our policies have a tenant perspective and influence
Publicise our tenant scrutiny work and encourage tenants to get involved	2024 – 2027	ELC/ ELTRP	Increase tenant scrutiny, improved services
Implement Tenant Participation Strategy 2004	2024 – 2027	ELC	Raise awareness of tenant participation

**Aim 4** ► *involve tenants in decision-making and make sure they have time to consider issues*

Action	Timescale	Owner	Outcome
Involve ELTRP representatives in our Rent Consultation Group	2024-2027	ELC	Tenants involved in our annual rent consultation
Work in partnership with ELTRP to agree how we will consult with tenants	2024 – 2027	ELC	Tenants influence the design of our consultations

**Aim 5** ► *provide resources for tenants' groups*

Action	Timescale	Owner	Outcome
Provide independent development support, information and advice to ELTRP, tenants' groups and tenants	2024-2027	ELC	Maximise tenant involvement by providing support and advice to tenants to encourage participation
Help and support the setting up a new tenants' and residents groups	2024 – 2027	ELC	Increase in local group activity
Offer grants to tenants' groups	2024 – 2027	ELC	Enable local groups to operate independently
Provide meeting venues, and other in-kind support to tenants' groups (e.g. access to printing and photocopying facilities)	2024-2027	ELC	Support local groups
Provide ELTRP with an office base and delegated budget	2024-2027	ELC	Support ELTRP to operate as an independent organisation

**Aim 6** ► *set the agenda with tenants*

Action	Timescale	Owner	Outcome
Work in partnership with ELTRP and local tenants groups to help raise issues with ELC Managers at Business Plan Meetings	2024-2027	ELC/ ELTRP	Tenants' issues are listened too, working together to find solutions
Carry out Point of Service Surveys and respond to tenants' feedback	2024-2027	ELC	Listen to tenant's feedback and make changes to our procedures
Work in partnership with ELTRP on tenant scrutiny activities	2024-2027	ELC/ELTRP	Carry out tenant-led scrutiny activities to improve services



## *Aim 7 ► build trust and respect and work in partnership with tenants*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Recognise the success of tenant participation through local events and awards	2024-2027	ELC/ELTRP	Celebrate the success of ELTRP, tenants' groups and tenants
Publicise the results of our tenant consultations and explain the reasons for our decisions	2024 – 2027	ELC	Provide information to tenants on consultations and subsequent decisions
Nominate tenants and tenants' groups for national awards and local recognition	2024 – 2027	ELC	Celebrate and raise awareness of tenant participation activity in East Lothian
Work in partnership with ELTRP to produce our annual Landlord Report to Tenants	2024-2027	ELC/ELTRP	Provide information to tenants on how we are performing as their Landlord

## *Aim 8 ► create equal values and opportunities*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Encourage all tenants to get involved in tenant participation by providing different methods of involvement	2024-2027	ELC	Maximise tenant involvement
Provide information in a range of different ways on request	2024 – 2027	ELC	Provide information to tenants in the format that suits them
Develop our Digital Strategy in partnership with ELTRP when communicating with tenants	2024 – 2027	ELC/ELTRP	Maximise the range of ways tenants can get involved
Create through our Development Support Project innovative ways to engage with all tenants including under-represented groups	2024-2027	ELC/ELTRP	Maximise tenant participation removing any barriers to involvement
Proactively engage with young people/children to encourage participation	2024-2027	ELC/ELTRP	Ensure children and young people are valued contributors in their communities
Develop our online services through the implementation of a new Housing Management System	2024-2027	ELC/ELTRP	Offer tenants more online services
Carry out an Equality Impact Assessment on our TP Strategy to make sure we are achieving improved equality	2024-2027	ELC	TP Policy meets equalities legislation, and all tenants have the right to participate