

Building on Strong Foundations

Tenant Participation Strategy

2021 - 2024



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1 Melville Housing – Building on Strong Foundations



Welcome to 'Building on Strong Foundations' Melville's new Tenant Participation strategy, setting out how we plan to work with our customers over the next three years to develop and scrutinise our services.

Far from the beginning of our tenant participation journey, this strategy builds on the excellent work done in recent years working closely with tenants and developing a very constructive relationship with our tenant rep group in particular. During this time our reps have been instrumental in many important areas, monitoring our performance, having their say on key decisions such as the annual rent review and helping us explore a range of possible new services, taking in everything from affordable flooring to sustainable transport. Without input from our tenant reps many of the exciting initiatives that we've recently undertaken would never have got off the ground.

It is fair to say that this strategy has been some time in the making as we were determined to get it right, and not just pay lip service to participation. It is ambitious and celebrates the positive work we have already done while at the same time recognising that there are areas for improvement.

This strategy will ensure we continue to develop new ideas and approach the years to come with a renewed focus, exploring ways to widen participation, making best use of technology and communicating effectively. It is a living document that will be reviewed annually and, as with all our policies, strategies and services, we welcome any feedback on it.

Above everything else this strategy and our approach to tenant participation is about helping us deliver the best services and homes possible. We truly believe that by working with our tenants and other customers, we can make real and meaningful changes to benefit tenants, Melville and the wider communities that we serve.

John McMorrow, Chief Executive

2 Our Approach to Tenant Participation

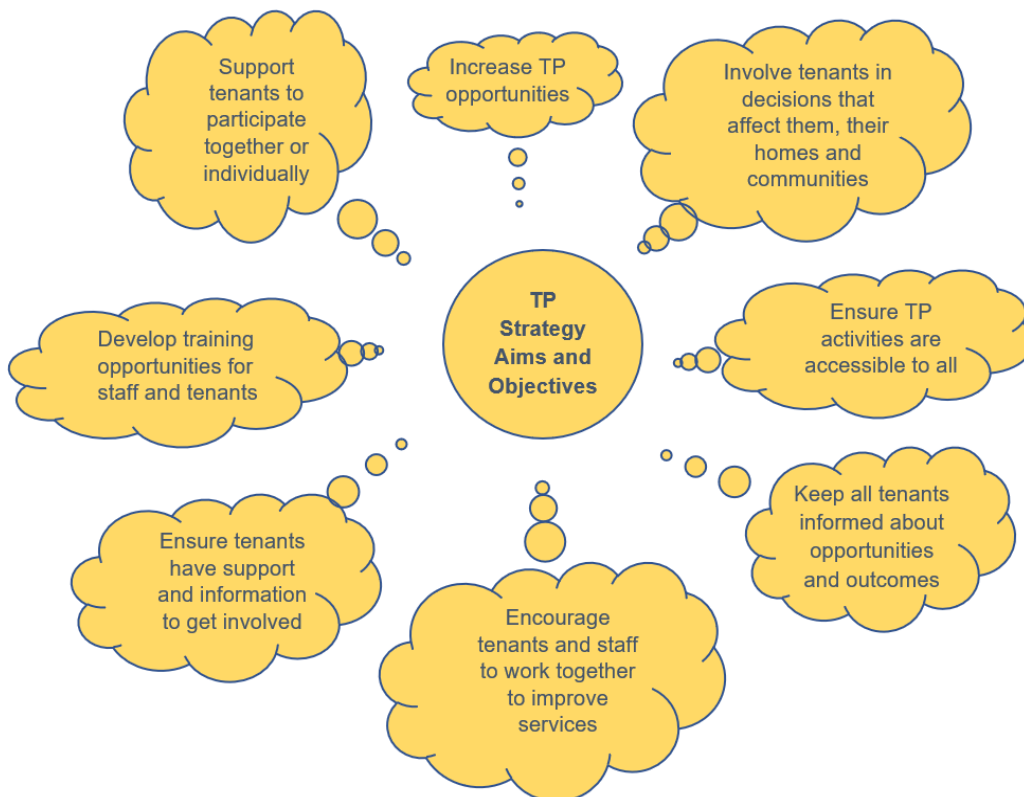
Our customers are at the heart of everything we do and this strategy for tenant participation sets out how, over the next three years, we plan to work with and involve tenants in the delivery of quality services and the management of our performance.

The introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 created a legal requirement for social landlords such as Melville to actively develop and support tenant participation. It says that:

All registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities in Scotland must have a tenant participation strategy which will enable 'continuous improvement in landlords' performance in supporting and enabling tenants to participate'.

You can find out more about the Charter, The Scottish Housing Regulator and Melville's performance at www.housingregulator.gov.scot.

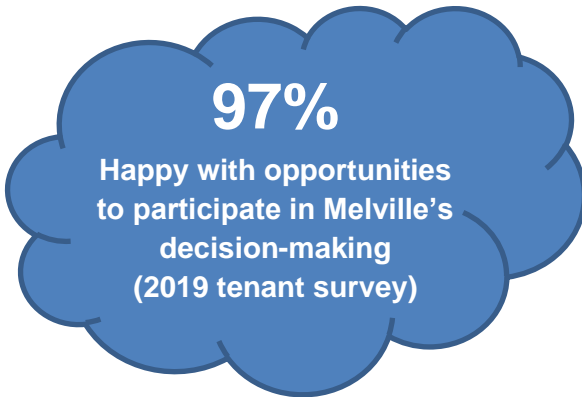
This strategy outlines Melville's commitment to tenant participation and highlights the range of involvement opportunities available to tenants, service users and other customers. It also explains how we will support and provide resources for tenant participation and the actions that we will take to ensure the continual development of effective participation and how these will be monitored.



Covering an initial 3-year period (2021 to 2024), the strategy was developed in collaboration with our Tenant Rep group and also with input from staff and Board members. Tenants were involved at every stage of its development and had final approval. It is a living document, subject to ongoing change and reviewed annually, taking on board feedback and input from tenants, staff, Board members and other customers. It sets out what we plan to do, how we will consult with our tenants, options available for getting involved, how we will take into account the views of tenants and how we will provide feedback.

Why is tenant participation important?

Strong tenant participation can, ultimately, lead to improved performance by allowing tenants to assess our performance, and hold the organisation to account.



We recognise that effective tenant participation has benefits for both customers and Melville as an organisation. These include:

- Improved service delivery and an increase in value for money
- Better communication and understanding between tenants and Melville
- Increased satisfaction levels
- Happier tenants and improved communities

3 Ways to Get Involved

We currently offer a wide range of ways in which tenants can and do participate in decision-making, providing feedback about homes and the services they receive. These include:



Tenant Rep Group



We have a well-established Tenant Rep group that is intended to represent all of our communities

and that any tenant can apply to join. We hold a minimum of four tenant rep meetings every year, at least half of which (in normal times) will be face-to-face. Meeting topics and timings are subject to change but as a general rule will take place as follows:

Meeting Calendar	
January	Rent consultation findings
April	Annual review of TP performance and ideas for new (financial) year
June	No prescribed subject
October	Annual review of Melville's performance and Tenant Report

Our Tenant Rep group currently scrutinises the organisation's performance once a year in the autumn and we will look at ways we can building on this (see Action Plan, Section 8 Objective 4).

As well as sitting on our Tenant Rep group, all tenants, as well as members of the wider community, also have the opportunity to become members of the Association, allowing them to vote at our Annual General Meeting and be considered as potential Board members.

Registered Tenants and Residents Organisations

We are open to other ways that tenants may like to get involved, including Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs).

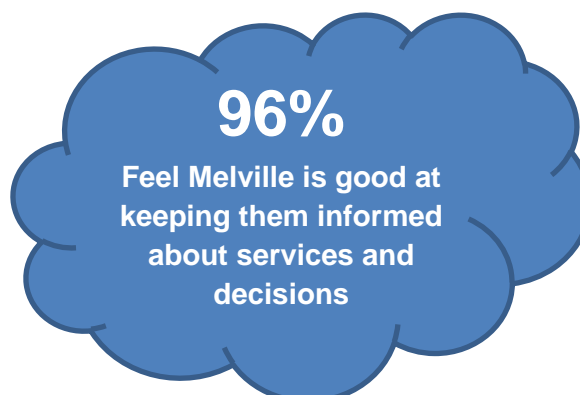
Melville tenants haven't currently formed any RTOs but we will provide grants to help tenants who would like to set one up. Formal requests should be made in writing and there are a number of criteria you must meet. If you're a Melville tenant, or part of a group of tenants, interested in forming an RTO please contact us to find out more.

4 Consultation – What, How and When

We will consult on all important issues that affect tenants. We will respond to the views of our tenants on how we consult, offering a variety of methods including via our Tenant Rep group, through social media, using online surveys and by email.

Important issues that we will consult on include:

- any significant changes to policies which affect tenants such as allocations or anti-social behaviour
- the annual rent review and any other proposed changes to rent or service charges
- the tenant participation strategy
- priorities for improvements to home
- significant changes to housing law proposed by the Scottish Government
- proposals for the sale or transfer of homes to another landlord
- any other plans, proposed by Melville, which might affect tenants or communities



When consulting we will make sure that everyone who wishes to reply has enough time to do so. For general guidance the following is set as a minimum:

Consultation Times	
Rent consultation	Tenants will have at least 28 days to provide a response
Other surveys	Tenants will have at least 21 days to provide a response
Meetings	Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will aim to give at least 14 days notice of meetings

Following consultation, Melville will announce the decision and give feedback on how it was reached. This feedback will be widely available including:

- in our Voice tenant newsletter
- on the Melville website
- and using our social media channels

5 Help and Support to get More Involved

Melville allocates an annual budget to assist and support tenant participation activities. This covers things like:

- Regular meetings
- Tenant events
- Newsletters
- Other printed tenant materials
- Satisfaction surveys

The budget also covers tenants' childcare and transportation costs to and from meetings.



As well as financial assistance we also provide staff time and support.

As part of this budget we can also provide support for any Melville tenants interested in forming their own RTOs (see section 3).

We will also fund places on training courses and conferences run by organisations such as the Tenant Information Service (TIS) and Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). We will fund places for a maximum of two tenants at any one conference.

6 Involving Staff

In order to achieve effective tenant participation it's crucial that staff as well as tenants have the right skills, approach and attitude, recognising the value of meaningful tenant involvement in our work. It is important that all Melville staff recognise that tenant input leads to better decision-making, improved relations between staff and customers and greater satisfaction with our services.

To help achieve this we will:

- ensure that staff are aware of the importance of effective tenant participation

- offer training, learning and support to staff to develop the skills and confidence to get involved
- regularly update staff on participation and scrutiny initiatives, and the outcome of recent consultation exercises
- make staff available for tenant meetings when appropriate
- brief all new members of staff on the importance and value of tenant participation during the induction process

7 Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Melville places equality at the heart of everything it does and is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all staff, tenants and other customers. We will respond to people's different needs regardless of their age, sex, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality), disability, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment, gender identity and gender expression.

We are committed to ensuring that all tenants are given equal opportunity to get involved and wherever possible will remove any barriers that prevent them from doing so. In order to achieve this, we will make every effort to ensure that tenants can participate and have their say by:

- holding meetings, consultations and special events only in accessible venues
- offering free, accessible transportation to meetings where required
- developing new ways of engaging with people who are less likely to participate
- ensuring participants treat each other with respect at all meetings
- providing materials (including this strategy) in a variety of formats and languages on request

8 Action Plan

Objective 1: To develop and implement a Melville Housing Tenant Participation Strategy

	What	When	Who	Why
1	Publish a Melville TP Strategy and Action Plan	August 2021	Comms Manager	Good practice also legal requirement
2	Regularly consult with tenants on what 'matters most' to inform TP Action Plan and Events Programme	At least once a year (usually April)	Comms Manager	To ensure effective programme
3	Deliver training on tenant participation methods and approaches to staff and tenants	No later than end March 22	Comms Manager	To ensure effective programme
4	Review budgets and resources to deliver the TP Strategy	Twice yearly	Comms Manager	To ensure effective programme
5	Support Tenant Reps to monitor the progress of the TP Action Plan	Ongoing	Comms Manager	To ensure effective programme
6	Produce an annual TP Action Plan Report to be presented to Board (plus in newsletters and on social media etc)	No later than end August	Comms Manager	For wider organisational awareness
7	Make TP a standing item at all Melville Team meetings	Ongoing	All managers	For wider organisational awareness
8	Review and promote support available to enable tenants to become involved in Melville's work	Ongoing	Comms Manager	Skills development

Objective 2: To improve tenant communication and maximise tenant engagement in Melville's activities

	What	When	Who	Why
1	Build a menu of options for tenant participation to be tested in a tenant survey	November 2021	Comms Manager	Wider inclusion and consultation
2	Deliver a comprehensive tenant survey to gather data on preferences for participation, communication and engagement	Financial year 2021/2022	Comms Manager	To ensure effective programme
3	Set up an interested tenants group using tenant survey responses	June 2022	Comms Manager	Wider inclusion and consultation
4	Review and improve tenant feedback channels enabling important local issues and priorities to be identified and included with the TP Action Plan	Ongoing	Comms Manager	To ensure effective programme
5	Review Voice newsletter including TP content	September 2021	Rep Group	For effective comms

6	Review Melville's annual tenant consultation programme and identify where Tenant Reps should be involved	Annually in April	Rep Group	To ensure effective programme
7	Publish 'You said/We did' articles in Voice, on website and social media	3 times a year – Jan, April and Sept	Comms Manager	Celebrate successes
8	Publish TP impact case studies	Ongoing	Comms Manager	Celebrate successes

Objective 3: To deliver community activities that provide opportunities for tenants to engage with the work of Melville

	What	When	Who	Why
1	Support Tenant Rep's to participate in local events such as gala days to promote TP and encourage involvement	Annually in April/May	Rep Group	Wider inclusion and consultation
2	Consider reintroducing Melville family days to promote TP and encourage involvement	Discuss at September meeting	Rep Group	Wider inclusion and consultation
3	Host events and activities which celebrate community success including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Event 1: Covid-19 response community recognition ❖ Event 2: TBC ❖ Event 3: TBC 	Discuss at late summer 2021 meeting	Rep Group	Wider inclusion and consultation

Objective 4: To continuously improve Melville services and decision making through tenant scrutiny

	What	When	Who	Why
1	Support Tenant Reps to form a scrutiny group	Discuss at autumn 21 meeting	Comms Manager	Improve Melville performance
2	Train and resource the scrutiny group	Ongoing	Comms Manager	To ensure effective programme
3	Organise a tenant led inspection programme including 6-month return monitoring visit	Discuss at August 2021 meeting	Comms Manager	Improve Melville performance
4	Publish scrutiny review findings and recommendations	Annually in November	Comms Manager	Improve Melville performance
5	Perform mystery shopping exercise with Tenant Reps and volunteers	Discuss at August 21 meeting	Rep Group	Improve Melville performance
6	Further develop and promote tenant led inspections and estate walkabouts	Discuss at August 21 meeting	Comms Manager	Improve Melville performance
7	Develop 'tenant checked' logo to be used in tenant publications	Summer 21	Comms Manager	Raise awareness

Objective 5: To involve tenants in improving Melville's website and digital communications

	What	When	Who	Why
1	Improve the user-friendliness of the MHA website by offering a search function	Spring 2021	Comms Manager	Fit for purpose
2	Develop a channel shift strategy to encourage tenants to engage with Melville's online services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Developing a self-service app ❖ Developing a call to action pop up to encourage registration ❖ A social media strategy to encourage registration and promote self service ❖ Organising competitions and incentives to register as a self service customer ❖ Offer tenants the option of receiving Voice digitally ❖ Improve digital version of Voice 	Financial year 2021/2022	Comms Manager	Improve efficiency and effectiveness
3	Improve the carousel function on the website by including information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Local support services ❖ Local/community events ❖ Why TP matters and how to get involved 	By end 2021	Comms Manager	Raise awareness and involvement
4	Improve the Tenant Zone by providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A menu of TP involvement opportunities ❖ More information on why TP matters and how to get involved Also make the Voice newsletter more visible/easy to find	By end 2021	Comms Manager	Raise awareness and involvement
5	Explore the development of an online messaging service via the website	By end 2021	Comms Manager	Improve efficiency and effectiveness
6	Improve the visibility of information about Tenant Reps	By end 2021	Comms Manager	Raise awareness and involvement