



Tenant Participation Strategy

Policy Author: Hutton, Shelley	Policy Valid From: [Policy Valid From]
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Policy/Strategy Control Statement

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3	Service Lead	Hutton, Shelley
4	Author	Hutton, Shelley
5	Date Approved and approved by who i.e. Service Delivery Project Board, Executive, Group Board, etc.	02/12/2015
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13	Confirm that document meets current legislative requirements	Yes
14	Further Information/Comments	N/A
15	Sign off of statement by Author and Service Lead (name and date):	Shelley Hutton 22 December 2015

Policy Applicable To

Business Area: Castle Rock Edinvar Applicable to: [Policy Applicable To]

Amendment Sheet Record

Revision Date	Description of Changes	Approved By	Date Approved

Please summarise the current policy requirements and how this is changed in the new policy.

[Policy Key Changes Summary]

Please explain the reason for changes/improvements/new policy.

NO EIA

Please explain any new actions required to put the policy changes into practice.

Migration

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This is an evolving document which will be under constant review by both customers and the Board.

We want your views on the Strategy and any other ideas that you might have on improving participation at any time.

An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out on this Strategy in October to December 2015. This is available on request.

Our Commitment

We are committed to participation and within that ensuring that customers help to shape the service we deliver.

Castle Rock Edinvar is committed to:

- ◆ Looking for new ideas and better ways of delivering a first class service;
- ◆ Consulting customers carefully and taking those views into account when making decisions;
- ◆ Developing and maintaining effective and inclusive opportunities for participation;
- ◆ Ensuring we comply with the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator to involve customers in measuring performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter;
- ◆ Developing and maintaining an effective relationship with the Board of Castle Rock Edinvar;
- ◆ Developing new ways of involving customers to give customers a range of options to suit them;
- ◆ Developing and maintaining effective and inclusive methods for customer scrutiny;
- ◆ Developing and supporting residents groups where required;
- ◆ Ensuring that everyone is given the opportunity to participate fully, regardless of age, gender, transgender, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, family circumstances, political beliefs, or sexual orientation, medical condition or disability;
- ◆ Investigating and implementing a broad range of tools and methods to overcome barriers faced by minority groups and ensure inclusion for our diverse range of customers taking into account diversity, linguistic and literacy barriers, poverty and cultural sensitivity.

Consultation Standards

Consultation means putting proposals to customers, giving them enough time to respond as they wish, listening to and taking account of their views and explaining the reasons for staff and Board of Management decisions.

General Standards

- ◆ Use the most appropriate methods to suit the task.
- ◆ Keep accurate records of the consultation.

- ◆ Assess the effectiveness of the exercise.

Standard 1 – be clear and honest about consultation

We will be honest about what we can and cannot do. We will be clear about the effect of any financial or legal restrictions.

Standard 2 – be clear about the purpose of the consultation

We will tell customers:

- ◆ Why we are asking them to get involved in the consultation
- ◆ What may change as a result of the consultation
- ◆ What cannot be changed, if anything—we will be honest
- ◆ Who will be involved and why they have been chosen
- ◆ All the steps we will take to involve customers
- ◆ When and how any final decisions will be made and who will make them
- ◆ The name, department and contact details of the person who is managing the consultation
- ◆ How we will feedback to the participants and others
- ◆ How to complain about the process if you are not happy with it.

Standard 3 – Provide clear information

- ◆ It is important that we let people know what consultation is planned and we do it early enough to make sure they can be involved.
- ◆ All information, including letters, invitations, reports, draft documents, and adverts will be written in Plain English and can be available in other forms where requested and using the information we hold on communications needs. e.g. large type, Braille, audio tape/CD, other languages and other methods as developed. We can also arrange face to face meetings.
- ◆ We will monitor how accessible the information is through a variety of methods including surveys and face-to-face dialogue.

Standard 4 – Timescales

Enough time will be allowed for effective consultation before staff or the Board take any final decisions on service or policy changes.

For general guidance the following is set as a minimum:

- ◆ Surveys and other written responses 21 days depending on the size of the survey or document (in case people are on holiday we can accept them later)

- ◆ Meetings 10 days minimum
- ◆ Individual meetings 10 days minimum notice for consultation meetings (not for visits by Housing Officers and other staff)
- ◆ Papers out to residents groups 6 weeks depending on frequency and timing of their meetings

We will be sensitive to diversity needs and take recognition of religious/cultural events.

Standard 5 – Methods of Consultation

A variety of methods of consultation will be used. When planning an exercise, the most appropriate method/s will be chosen to ensure the most effective and inclusive consultation. We must ensure that individuals as well as groups are consulted.

Effective consultation and involvement may include:

Written consultation – examples include

- ◆ Sending written information directly to individuals and groups and inviting feedback.
- ◆ Using the newsletter to give information and inviting feedback.
- ◆ Writing out to individuals and groups asking them for their views on specific policies, parts of policies or proposals.
- ◆ Using surveys to gather views of individuals or groups.
- ◆ Using voting sheets – particularly useful in sheltered housing.

We recognise that written consultation can be limited for people with visual impairments, poor literacy skills or English as an additional language. Where we know this we can make alternative arrangements.

Face-to-face consultation – examples include

- ◆ Actively seeking the views of certain individuals, organisations or groups by meeting with them. We will allow time and space for support to be arranged where required.
- ◆ Holding general meetings, special meetings or focus groups (regular or one-offs).
- ◆ Visiting other groups to present proposals and to get feedback.
- ◆ Calling together special discussion groups.
- ◆ Asking individual tenants their views as and when they are seen by staff for other reasons e.g. home visit, coffee morning at sheltered housing development.
- ◆ Through tenant forums and panels.
- ◆ Ensuring appropriate interpretation is provided where needed.

Telephone consultation

- ◆ Actively seeking the views of certain individuals, organisations or groups by telephoning them.

- ◆ Supplementing written consultation with follow up phone calls.
- ◆ Using telephone surveys to gather the views of individuals or groups.

Standard 8 – Feedback

- ◆ Participants will get a report on the consultation and they will receive a letter of thanks for their time and contribution or if numbers are large the thanks will be shared via the website and/or newsletter or by using notice boards.
- ◆ The process and outcome of the consultation exercise will be published.
- ◆ We will take into account the communication needs of those who will receive the feedback.

Standard 9 – Assessment of Consultations

- ◆ Each consultation exercise will be assessed to see if it has been effective.
- ◆ We may use feedback sheets or verbal feedback at the end of sessions to gather views from the participants on the process.
- ◆ They will use the following criteria:
 - Did we achieve what we set out to achieve?
 - Did we manage to involve the “right” people?
 - Was any group not represented? Do we know why?
 - Were the participants clear on what the exercise was about?
 - Was there enough time for the exercise?
 - Did we use the best consultation methods in hindsight?
 - Were the records accurate and useful?
 - Did we give feedback to those who participated and to others?
 - Did we use the right resources? e.g. venue, transport, staff etc.?
 - Did we take into account individual needs?

Standard 9 – Resources

Tenants’ and Residents’ Organisations

Castle Rock Edinvar will fund tenants’ and residents’ organisations who meet the necessary criteria – although they do not have to be formally registered to receive funding. We will be flexible to meet the needs of existing and new groups. Funding Application forms are available on request at any time.

Training

Castle Rock Edinvar will fund places for involved customers on training and conferences such as those run by Tenants’ Information Service and Tenant Participation Advisory Service.

Meetings

Room Hire

We will arrange and pay for room hire (unless it is for funded residents organisations). We will use any appropriate available convenient meeting space. Care will be taken to ensure that venues are fully accessible.

Catering

Normally basic refreshments will be organised for short meetings. Longer meetings may make it necessary to provide food. We will take into account dietary requirements.

Transport

We will arrange and pay for transport if it is necessary to enable participants to attend. This may include taxis, Handicabs, bus hire and public transport. We can also pay mileage.

Caring Costs

We will reimburse caring costs (child and other). As a general rule this is for registered care providers only. We will assess the need to provide on-site childcare facilities on a case by case basis and will only use registered childcare providers.

Staff

Staff will attend if required by a tenants'/residents' association.

Evaluation and Review of Participation Strategy

This will take place at least every 3 years.

Complaints

Any complaints about any part of the consultation process will be taken using the Castle Rock Edinvar Complaints Procedure. Communication needs will be fully catered for.