

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Executive
Date:	30/10/2017
Subject:	Housing Tenants Participation Strategy progress report
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Alun Wyn Mummery
Head of Service:	Shan LI Williams, Head of Housing Services
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Local Members:	Relevant to all Members

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s
<p>R1 That the Executive provide feedback on any areas which may require strengthening. Also to provide officers with feedback on areas to be considered for the 2018-2021 Tenants Participation Strategy</p> <p>R2 Elected Members and the Senior Leadership Team to play an active part in promoting tenants’ participation and ensuring all tenants have a voice and a part to play in future housing and corporate developments</p> <p>Reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide a progress report to the Executive, Senior Leadership Team and Elected Members - To ensure we are considering the input of tenants who volunteer their time with housing services’ developments and any wider Corporate developments

1.0 Background

Tenants Participation means giving tenants and leaseholders, the opportunity to have a say in how their home is managed and was first introduced in Anglesey in 1998. As a social landlord in Wales, Isle of Anglesey County Council is required 'to maximise tenants' rights to participate and promote excellence in tenant participation' in order to comply with the Welsh Government's National Tenant Participation Strategy (published in 2007)

1.1 The Isle of Anglesey County Council Tenants Participation Strategy (LPTS) 2015 – 2018 is the third strategy of its type for the Isle of Anglesey County Councils' Housing Department.

1.2 The aim of the Tenants Participation Strategy is to consult and involve tenants within the services that the Housing Services provides. This ranges from involvement on tenants and officer groups, through to activities and engagement within communities and across the Island

1.3 **The key benefits of tenant participation include the following:**

- » Improves our service and helps us to achieve our vision of Quality homes: Sustainable communities.
- » Helps us to be open and accountable
- » Create a two way feedback between tenants, leaseholders and landlord
- » Increases skills and knowledge of tenants
- » Regularly monitor and review all tenant involvement activities in terms of cost, impact and effectiveness to demonstrate our commitment to be open and accountable
- » Improves the wellbeing of tenants through a number of approaches which includes estate clean up days, environmental projects, events, employability support

1.4 Currently, an annual budget of £102,000 allocated to support tenant participation activities including staff costs. The headcount for staff within the Tenants Participation team is two full time equivalent – one Tenants Participation Assistant and one Tenants Participation Officer.

1.5 We are always looking at new ways of involving tenants and increase the number of tenants who engage with us through our varied approaches. Our vision remains largely unchanged:
*"...to deliver a service which demonstrates meaningful partnership working between tenants and officers which in turn encourages others to become involved knowing that their views **will be listened to** and **will influence service delivery improvements**"*

1.6 The LPTS strategy focuses on an annual action plan, of which is developed in partnership with both tenants and officers. There is a direct link between the LPTS

and the Housing Revenue Account [HRA] Business Plan. It is important that our Tenants have the opportunity to shape and influence the business plan.

- 1.7 The LTPS is monitored quarterly by the Môn Tenants and Officers Voice (MTOV) who work closely with the new Housing Services Board and Housing Services Management Team.
- 1.8 To develop the current strategy, an LTPS focus group was set up in October 2014. Membership of the group was a mixture of housing officers and tenants. A total of 5 meetings were held and were supported by TPAS Cymru (Tenants Participation Wales Advisory Service of Wales)

1.9 Progress report

- 1.10 Over the last 18 months, the Tenants Participation Team has been operating with one full time equivalent member of staff, which is in the capacity of Tenants Participation Assistant. This was to allow the full time equivalent Tenants Participation Officer to undertake a secondment opportunity in regards to developing a number of strategies and policies within the Housing Services.
- 1.11 Through having reduced staff in place, it has affected our ability to maximise our potential in delivering the annual action plan. Despite a reduction in staff headcount, there have been a number of achievements that have progressed during the 2016-17 financial Year. A report was submitted to Housing Management Board who agreed that a progress report be submitted to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

1.12 Successes during 2016-17 include:

1.12.1 Computer kiosks

The kiosks are touch screen user-friendly computers and provide short cuts to useful information, which will support tenants to maximise their income, search for jobs and claim Universal Credit.

The computer kiosks are based in Amlwch and Newborough library, Iorwerth Centre Beaumaris, Gwelfor Community Centre and J E O Toole Centre in Holyhead, Llangefni Council reception and Caffi Y Stesion in Llannerchymedd

We have had some teething problems however, following a visit from BT social telecoms; all issues have now been resolved.

1.12.2 The fight against fuel poverty initiative

The aim of this initiative was to support tenants affected by fuel poverty to reduce their energy bills.

Four tenants living in Dwyran attended the Sheltered Housing Forum in December 2015. During the forum, the Citizen Advice Bureau presented on fuel poverty,

which informed tenants on what help and support was available as part of their *energy best deals campaign*.

At the end of the forum, Cil y Graig Dwyran tenants requested the support of the Tenants Participation team concerning fuel poverty. They believed that they were unable to switch suppliers' due to how the gas is supplied to the estate (which is from a large gas tank on the estate serving all the properties). This included 16 bungalows in total. Eight tenants said that their fuel bills were becoming unmanageable. Six tenants said that they did not use the gas, which was supplied by the tank on the estate and had their own gas bottles to avoid high-unexpected bills. These tenants said that they only heat one room at a time. Two tenants reported they *'just accepted that the fuel bill was high and paid it'* and that they adjusted in other ways such as reducing the amount of food they bought.

In partnership with the Citizen Advice Bureau, the Tenant Participation team supported the tenants to negotiate a better deal with their current provider going from 49p per unit to 28p per unit. All tenants were also credited £100 on their gas accounts as part of the new deal.

The success of this project has been recognised by tenants, and as a result has been delivered in 3 other estates. During a period of four months, *'the fight against fuel poverty'* initiative has helped 59 tenants out of fuel poverty. We also received confirmation that all tenants on Calor gas will benefit from the price reduction and this was backdated to January 2016.

1.12.3 **Repairs forum:**

The Repairs forum meet every two months. Panel members have reported positively concerning the transformation programme within the Technical Services response team. Tenant feedback is that it has made real progress throughout the process.

The repairs forum has and continues to concentrate on Customer Satisfaction levels. This is to ensure that the Housing Services are providing tenants with the opportunity to complete a customer service survey, after works are completed. This also enables tenants to feel valued and understand the Housing departments' appreciation of them providing suggestions tenants on continuous service improvements.

An example of when we have listened to tenants includes:

Gas servicing letters now inform tenants that operatives will need access to the gas shut off; this request was made by one of our tenants who suggested that this is

not always easily accessible and may require tenants to move items/ furniture.

1.12.4 **Môn Tenants and Officer Voice – MTOV**

The MTOV group continues to meet on a quarterly basis. Membership includes tenants from across the Island. A number of tenant representatives reside in Holyhead. We were keen to increase tenant participation from other areas on the Island. We have one new tenant from Beaumaris and another tenant from Aberffraw who are now part of the MTOV meeting. We are focusing on other locations to ensure the voice is heard from a varied socio-demographic set of tenants, covering a number of locations from across the Island.

In 2017 – 18 financial Year, we are looking to re-brand and refresh the MTOV structure. This, in turn, should encourage new tenants to attend and provide fresh and innovative ideas within developments in the Housing department.

Tenants on the MTOV have voiced some concern over not having more input on Corporate matters within Isle of Anglesey County Council. This will need to be addressed as priority

1.12.5 **Community Hubs**

There are twenty two communal lounges based across sheltered housing schemes on the Island. Some lounges are used almost daily, others are less frequently.

With the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, communities have more responsibility and accountability over their personal wellbeing. The communal lounges have been viewed as an excellent base for community hubs to be formed. We are undergoing a consultation to view if tenants are keen to extend their communal lounge to the wider community

Discussions commenced during 2016-17 financial Year with MTOV in order gather insight into the need for community hubs within the communal lounges. Positive feedback and support has resulted in this idea being taken forward in 2017-18, in partnership with 3rd sector providers Menter Môn, Medrwn Môn, Housing and Adult Services.

Ger y Graig community hub developments have commenced which has resulted in positive events and gatherings forming, alongside funding for a Mens' Shed.

1.12.6 **Customer Care Audit by tenants**

The Corporate Customer Care Charter was introduced on the 1st July 2015 and is in place to demonstrate the Council's commitment to delivering excellent customer

service. To monitor the implementation, the charter is audited annually. Between January to March 2017, tenants from the MTOV group had the opportunity to audit Customer Care levels across services within the Council.

Overall, the standard of Customer Care within Anglesey Council has improved since the last audit however; there is still room for improvement.

MTOV tenants viewed the following recommendations as areas for improvement:

- All emails to include a signature detailing the officer's name and job role.
- Set up automated acknowledgement responses for all publically available emails such as housing@ynysmon.gov.uk
- All officers working in a reception area to wear name badges rather than lanyards.
- Officers responsible for answering the telephones to be aware of the customer care charter.

1.12.7 Estate clean-up days

Twenty-two estate clean-up days occurred during 2016-17. The Housing Management Team, upon their inspection of estates & during walkabouts and new tenant made referrals for estate clean-up days sign-up were able to refer the requirement to the Tenants Participation team for action

Estate clean-up days during 2016-17 include the following areas:

Llangefni, Holyhead, Moelfre, Llanfairpwll, Aberffraw, Newborough, Pentraeth, Llanddeusant, Llansadwrn, Benllech and Cemaes.

1.12.8 Police surgeries

Ten police surgeries across the Island, which includes Benllech, Amlwch, Moelfre, Llanfairpwll and Llangefni. Relationship with the police continues to go from strength to strength, in particular local PSCO's who are always keen to drive forward with community initiatives, involving tenants and police surgeries.

1.12.9 Anti-Social Behaviour forum

Housing Services recognise that anti-social behaviour ('ASB') can have a significant impact on the lives of our tenants and residents.

We believe that all tenants and residents have the right to enjoy peace, quiet and security in and around their home. We appreciate that anti-social behaviour can

have a devastating effect on victims and to this end, the Isle of Anglesey County Council's Housing Service is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour as quickly and effectively as possible, by working in partnership with a variety of agencies and using the full range of powers available, as defined in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The first anti-social behaviour forum occurred in December 2016. Response from tenants who wanted to form part of this forum was healthy. The next anti-social behaviour forum will take place in October 2017

1.12.10 **Environmental Projects**

Five tenant communities were in receipt of environmental projects during 2016 - 17. The total cost of these projects were £7,000. The environmental project group, which consists of MTOV tenants approved the applications that were provided by each group.

One of the highlights of the environmental projects has been with the Glan Cefni sheltered housing scheme, based in Lllangfni. Tenants requested astro-turf to be laid down in order for them to access their garden 365 days per Year. This has resulted in more tenants using their garden who have in turn, reported an improvement on community cohesion and wellbeing

There is more focus in 2017- 18 on improving environmental projects across the Island. We have seen an increase in environmental project applications over Q1 2017-18 for park benches, picnic tables, recycling area

1.12.10 **Sheltered Housing Forum**

The Sheltered Housing Forum continues to attract 60 to 70 sheltered housing tenants per quarter. Feedback forms are provided for all attendees to provide their feedback and satisfaction on the content of the agenda. Tenant ideas are paramount to the success, retention and increase of attendance within the sheltered housing forum.

1.12.11 **Grant support**

We have successfully supported the Trem Eryri Monday and Tuesday club to secure grant funding from Horizon nuclear. This has enabled the group to refresh their lounge, buy-in a cleaner on a weekly basis and expenditure for tenants to spend on a day out. We have since supported another group in Aberffraw with private grant funding and we hope we can take this forward across the board during 2017-18 to ensure consistency and improving community resilience through groups applying for their own grant funding to improve their wellbeing and access to activities

1.13 **Focus for 2017-18**

- Re-branding of MTOV in order to refresh the group and encourage new tenants to attend, creating new models of tenant and community engagement that delivers real positive outcomes
- To commence the engagement and development of the 2018- 2021 Local Tenant Participation Strategy, in partnership with tenants, and ensure strategic links with the HRA Business Plan and Council's Corporate Plan
- To re-instate the quarterly tenant bulletin for all panel members, ensuring they are fully aware on activities and developments that are underway and seeking their feedback on an ongoing basis
- Involve tenant in tackling issues and finding local solutions for significant changes such as the full rollout of Universal Credit
- To increase the number of communal lounges transformed into community hubs
- To be clear on communal lounges that are not used and will not be used in future. A decision will need to be made on what the Housing Services' plan will be in respect to lounges to which tenants and / or the wider community do not want to use as a hub. For example, transforming these into accommodation
- To recruit a Tenants Participation Officer thus ensuring the quota of staffing within the function is at the budgeted level
- To develop a training plan for panel members in order to improve knowledge on a number of areas. One area noted by the MTOV panel is mental health awareness training as this is becoming an increased challenge within our communities

1.14 This report has been discussed, considered and approved by the Senior Leadership Team, the partnership and regeneration scrutiny

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

Not applicable

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

For information only

D – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?**DD – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?****E – Who did you consult?****What did they say?**

1	Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	<p>The Chief Executive and Strategic Leadership Team are supportive of the work that is undertaken through the Tenants Participation Team and also supportive of the recommendations</p> <p>The Chief Executive has emphasized the importance to continue with the strong and positive relationship with North Wales Police in order to continue to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour or criminal matters in a timely manner</p>
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	The finance unit and section 151 officer is supportive of the report and its recommendations
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	The legal team have considered the report, however there is no feedback to consider
4	Human Resources (HR)	
5	Property	
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
7	Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To accept the progress report for 2016/17 and to thank the Officers for their work; • That Elected Members and the Senior Leadership Team to play an active role in

		promoting tenants' participation and ensuring all tenants have a voice and has a part to play in future housing and corporate developments.
8	Local Members	
9	Any external bodies / other/s	

F – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)		
1	Economic	<p>Economically deprived tenants can benefit through the tenants participation strategy, which supports disadvantaged individuals to improve their skills and confidence through seeking work or training opportunities</p> <p>Tenants can volunteer their time to engage within our tenant panels, which in turn improves their skills on an annual basis</p>
2	Anti-poverty	The Tenants Participation strategi supports residents to be provided with advice and Support on fuel poverty. Also, the tenants participation team are integral to raising awareness on the upcoming changes with Welfare Reform and ensuring to upskill tenants through improving digital skills, in partnership with other agencies on the Island
3	Crime and Disorder	The tenants participation strategy encourages tenants to take part in the anti-social behaviour forum. This is to ensure the department listen to tenants on anti-social behaviour and also attracts local information on areas the housing team can intervene early. The anti-social behaviour forum also ensures that all targets set are reached by officers
4	Environmental	<p>The tenants participation team encourage and empower tenants to take more responsibility over the environment of their estates.</p> <p>The team organises a number of estate</p>

		<p>clean-up days, in order to support tenants to clear rubbish and also scrap larger items</p> <p>Tenants are encouraged to apply for the £5,000 bi-annual Environmental grant in order to purchase items such as bird tables, allotment resources or any other environmentally friendly schemes within their estate.</p>
5	Equalities	
6	Outcome Agreements	
7	Other	

FF - Appendices:
None

G - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):