

Tenant Participation and Engagement Strategy



Tenants Meetings



Your Views List



Group Get Togethers

“Bring it to us and we will participate!”



Community Litter Pick and Lunch



Tenant Conference



Online Meetings

October 2024

New Gorbals Housing Association Tenant Participation and Engagement Strategy

This document was produced with our Tenants' Panel and has been written specifically for our tenants and other customers. Our summary version in diagram form (page 21) is available in Urdu, Arabic, French, Polish, Punjabi, Hindi, Farsi, Bengali and Ukrainian. Please contact the housing office for a copy or for other formats or languages.

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New Gorbals Housing Association (NGHA) is generally referred to as “we” throughout this document. Tenants is used to represent “tenants and other customers”.

Foreword

Jean Miller, Chairperson



New Gorbals Housing Association (NGHA) committee members are determined to work together with tenants, residents and staff on decision-making processes.

Tenants and residents serve on our committee to make sure that their essential lived knowledge and experience of our housing and support services influences our most important strategic decisions.

Our commitment to tenant participation and engagement is a fundamental part of how we function as an organisation. We are delighted to endorse this Tenant Participation and Engagement Strategy which we hope will support and encourage more involvement from our vibrant and diverse community.

Helen Trainor, Tenants' Panel member on behalf of Tenants' Panel

Unlike many other groups and organisations where participation is a 'tick box' exercise, we believe the NGHA Tenants' Panel has genuine influence on decisions taken by the Housing Association, from rent, repairs, to estate management and now, through this Strategy, to how NGHA engages with its tenants and residents.



As a Tenants' Panel we discuss issues raised by tenants. We submit suggestions and make proposals direct to housing management, who are charged with responding within a time frame. We believe it does actually make a difference.

We look forward to seeing this put into action through our new Tenant Participation and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan.

Section 1

Introduction to our Tenant Participation and Engagement Strategy

1.1 What is a Strategy?

A strategy is an action plan. In this case it refers to tenant participation; explaining what that means, why we do it and how we make sure it thrives.

Our Strategy

- Sets out our commitment to involving tenants in decisions about their housing services.
- Says how this will be carried out.
- Details the resources available to do this.
- Sets out a range of targets.
- Monitors and evaluates how we are doing.

We developed this strategy by working with tenants to review current participation arrangements to find out:

- whether tenants find it easy to participate in and influence decisions,
- any barriers to participation,
- what needs to be changed or put in place,
- training and support needs for tenants and staff,
- what progress is being made.

You can find out more about how we did this on page 9.

1.2 What is Tenant Participation?

The Scottish Government says:

Tenant participation ensures tenants have opportunities to influence decisions about the housing services they receive and it gives landlords better links to the community and the opportunity to work with others.

The introduction of the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#) created a legal requirement for landlords to actively develop and support tenant participation.

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 say:

- Give tenants a voice.
- Have genuine concerns listened to and followed up within good timescales.
- Have a say. Be listened to. Respected.
- It matters that the Association listens to me and doesn't tell me I am the only one raising the issue.
- We feel we are often consulted or informed only after decisions have been made. If we are prepared to change our stance when faced with good reasons, then the Housing should be too.
- Some tenants are involved but there could be more. I come to get out of the house and talk to people. That's how it started for me.
- I would like to see some inclusive events for those from differing cultures where we can share stories and food with one another.
- Let's have residents' meetings which are social but also share information, raise estate issues with feedback and input from NGHA and work towards positive outcomes.
- Delighted you are doing this.

1.3 Acknowledging the difference between participation and engagement

Participation is described as the involvement in the process of making a decision. However, we know that you can have participated in something without feeling particularly engaged.

We recognise that engagement is an ongoing working relationship to help improve the service you receive, but also to help improve understanding on both sides.

We believe that:

- good engagement will lead to increased involvement,
- genuine engagement is a continuous process rather than a one-off event,
- engagement takes a shift in attitudes within the organisation, especially on issues of power in relationships with tenants and residents.

We have been told that tenants have felt as if they “were not consulted on one pebble”. We want this to change and engagement to be embedded into our processes from start to finish.

That is our vision for this Tenant Participation Strategy, developed by our tenants, residents, staff and committee.

1.4 Why do we do it?

We do it, not only because it makes sense, is the right thing to do, and has proven benefits but also, it’s the law!

The Scottish Social Housing Charter

You may have heard of the Scottish Social Housing Charter which came into force in 2012. The Charter set out the standards which tenants could expect from landlords. Since then, The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced new measures to improve the standards, safety and operation of social housing including the requirement for all Registered Social Landlords/Housing Associations to submit an Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The ARC outlines how we have performed in the previous year against the standards which are set out by the Housing Regulator.

In The Charter, there are 16 outcomes on which Landlords need to report. Outcome 3 is about Participation but links in with all the other outcomes.

Outcome 3 Participation

“Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants and other customers are offered a range of opportunities that make it easy for them to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.”

Outcome 3 describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants, other customers, and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants and, other customers to become more capable of involvement – this could include supporting them to scrutinise landlord services.

All tenants receive our Performance Report each year which shows how we are measuring up against these outcomes in our Annual Return on the Charter.

You can find out more by visiting www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk where you can read about how we performed against the Scottish average and any other social or local authority landlord. You can also find our full Annual Return on the Charter there or contact our office if you would like a copy.

Section 2

Our Commitment to Equal Opportunities

2.1 Commitment to providing and promoting equal opportunities

We are committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities in all that we do and being proactive to prevent discrimination. Our Tenant Participation and Engagement Strategy will strive to ensure that no person is discriminated against on the grounds outlined in the Equality Act 2010. This includes the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

2.2 Annual Equal Opportunities Survey

We will demonstrate how effective we are with an annual Equal Opportunities Survey of tenant participation, using our participation figures of September 2024 as a benchmark, to be surveyed again in September 2025. We will also carry out meetings evaluations and ask for regular feedback throughout the year and report back on this. We will make all information available.

2.3 Flexible approach

Our approach will be flexible, considering the individual needs of our tenants and their households.

For example:

- We have a preparation day the week before our Tenants' Panel meeting for anyone who would like to go through papers individually, for support with literacy or if English is not the first language or just for confidence to be prepared. The preparation day is anytime from 9am – 8pm to ensure anyone can attend and children are welcome. We will provide an interpreter where needed. We want tenants to feel confident and well-prepared to be able to contribute at the meeting.
- We will make sure that arrangements are in place for communicating with all our tenants in their preferred format. We know that preferences can change, so we will make sure this is checked regularly. For example, providing information in large print or electronically, or in a preferred language where possible. For meetings and events, we will always carry out an accessibility check of the venue, including physical access, providing interpreters where needed, hearing induction loops and a quiet room if available.

2.4 Working with Partners

We know that our tenant groups are under-represented in terms of our minority ethnic communities, our younger families and tenants with additional needs and we are working with Positive Action in Housing, South East Integration Network and Inclusion Scotland for support, resources and training to ensure we are alert to barriers and active in seeking new ways to encourage wider involvement.

Section 3

Background to our Strategy

3.1 How our Strategy was developed

Our strategy was developed with support and input from our community, including the Tenants' Panel, tenants and residents' groups, management committee, staff, residents on our Your Views consultation list, and other individuals. As many views as possible were taken into consideration in the development of this strategy.

3.2 Who will oversee the Strategy

The strategy will be overseen by our Tenants' Panel. It will be a working document, which will demonstrate how tenants can participate in the development of our services, the review of our policies and procedures and the monitoring of our service delivery.

Our strategy sits alongside the Tenant Participation and Engagement Action Plan which will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis to keep us accountable. A diagram of the Action Plan is on page 21.

3.3 Who does it apply to?

Our strategy applies to all tenants who live in a New Gorbals Housing Association property. However, as a community-based organisation we will ensure that other residents and the wider community are consulted and involved fully where appropriate.

3.4 Duties and responsibilities

As well as being best practice, our approach to participation and engagement is determined by our statutory and contractual obligations.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is the main Act which sets out the main requirements of our Strategy. The specific parts of this legislation which are most relevant to participation and engagement are:

- Chapter 3, Sections 53 and 54 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which set out the requirements for tenant participation.

Our tenancy agreement also confirms our contractual responsibilities to consult with our tenants in section 8: information and consultation.

3.5 National Standards for Community Engagement

In our tenant participation work, we work to the National Standards for Community Engagement.

- **Inclusion:** We will identify and involve the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement.
- **Support:** We will identify and overcome any barriers to participation.
- **Communication:** We will communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement.
- **Methods:** We will use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.
- **Planning:** There is a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions.
- **Working Together:** We will work effectively together to achieve the aims of the engagement.
- **Impact:** We will assess the impact of the engagement and use what we have learned to improve our future community engagement.

3.6 How the strategy was developed and who was involved

This new strategy was developed over 5 months from February to June 2024, building on the existing 2019 strategy. The process was overseen by our Tenants' Panel. Here is what we did:

- existing 2019 strategy sent out to Tenants' Panel and discussed,
- Tenant Participation audit carried out with Panel,
- Tenant Participation Strategy survey developed based on results,
- survey promoted through newsletter and social media,
- consultation on the Survey questions carried out with the Tenants' Panel, Laurieston Estate Action Group, Gorbals Housing Action Group, Riverside Tenants Group, Oatlands Tenants Group, Your Views members, NGHA staff, NGHA Management Committee, other interested individuals and at the Be Part of Something Information Sessions.

To shape our vision, the Tenant Participation Strategy survey asked the following questions:

- how would you like to see tenants involved in the work of the Housing Association?
- What do we need to put in place to ensure tenants have equal access to involvement opportunities?
- What matters most to you about being a tenant with New Gorbals Housing Association?

3.7 Our responses

We collected four main sources of responses: online, groups, individuals through meetings, emails or phone calls and from staff and committee members from business planning day workshops.

Overall, we had input from 200 individuals. The survey was advertised to all our tenants and residents through the maintenance newsletter, on social media and with handouts at all groups and meetings.

We found there was greater interest in being involved when asked directly in person, rather than indirectly through articles in newsletters or social media posts. Summed up by one tenant, and now central to our tenant participation approach:

“If you bring it to us, we will participate”, Marion

The consultation work has also resulted in monthly catch ups with housing teams at different sites, at the request of tenants. Currently, we have the momentum, goodwill and support from the community, and we need to ensure this is maintained.

“We are enjoying the catch ups and getting answers and a chance to ask questions”

“Buoyed up with the positive energy of residents pride in being from the Gorbals”

“Excellent to hear everyone comfortable and confident to speak up”

“I really enjoyed today’s meeting. It is useful to know about our community and to find out and express positive and negative facts.”

Section 4

Our Goals and Vision

4.1 Our goals for tenant participation for 2024/25 are to:

1. Raise awareness of the benefits of tenant participation and the opportunities to be part of something.
2. Increase number of people involved.
3. Have an active and diverse Tenants' Panel which meets regularly.
4. Have active and diverse representation from residents' groups which cover Hutchesontown, Laurieston, Riverside and Oatlands and be able to bring these groups together to share ideas and celebrate community.
5. Evidence the impact tenant participation has made on our services.
6. Embed tenant participation into all that we do.

Our goals for Tenant Participation are driven by our overall organisational vision and core values.

4.2 Our organisational vision is to:

- provide the highest possible quality housing, environment and services to all of our customers,
- maximise our contribution to the overall regeneration of the Gorbals, addressing wherever possible the needs of those in the community who are disadvantaged.

4.3 In delivering our vision and in every aspect of our business, our core values will guide our behaviour:

- we will be representative of and accountable to the local community,
- we will be open and accessible,
- we will be fair and equitable, treating every individual with courtesy and respect,
- we will be innovative and creative, and work in partnership with others, to achieve the best possible outcomes,
- we will be customer-focused in delivering our services, providing the best quality possible for our tenants.

Section 5

Benefits of Participation and Engagement

5.1 Recognising the benefits

We recognise the benefits of tenant participation and engagement for our tenants, staff, organisation and wider community. We know that effective participation and engagement can lead to:

Benefit	Example
Better service delivery and improved outcomes for tenants which give value for money	Improved process for close cleaning with a new quality control role to implement and monitor this
Working together for common goals with respect and understanding	Getting to know Ukrainian neighbours at Riverside through residents' meetings, community litter pick and gardening group
Informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions	Performance Report consultation work to explain how this process works and ensure tenants are happy with how we report to them
Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood	Visible impact of having been to a meeting and been listened to with changes made, for example garden improvements at Devon Street
Identifying actions for service and performance improvements and working together to implement these	Walkabout at Oatlands with Housing, Maintenance and Glasgow City Council with shared actions for improving the environment

5.2 Improved understanding

We know that if tenants have a meaningful role in making decisions and understanding the processes, trust will develop and levels of satisfaction with our services will improve. We have seen this in our discussions at residents' groups about why some decisions are made, for example the legal framework and requirements for housing allocations.

5.3 Working together

There may be times when we have different views on how issues should be resolved. In these cases, everyone involved will have to work together to reach an

agreement. However, our tenant-led management committee make the final decisions. We encourage tenants to become members of the Association so they can influence these decisions.

5.4 The impact of participation

The impact of participation, and the confidence that can go along with it, is linked to benefits including a sense of community and wellbeing as well as improved services.

This is because the whole process helps us to set aside time to understand what you want. It provides the time and space to think about and express your views. This includes checking what you think about what we are doing, identifying and solving problems and increasing understanding on both sides.

Acting on your feedback improves service design and delivery and raises standards within services. It can lead to improved customer satisfaction and can also give staff a greater sense of purpose and increased job satisfaction, which results in better customer service.

Our staff say:

“This is the part of the job I love, getting out, listening to tenants and hearing what is important to them.”

“I think we need a strategy that can be flexible and adaptable. Not one size fits all”.

“Tenants should be more involved in policy changes. I think this would ensure we are focusing on what is important to them.”

“I would like tenants to be kept fully up to date with what is happening in their area. Join working and decision making where possible.”

“The Association needs to better understand both its perception by the community and the needs, wants and aspirations of those tenants it works for.”

“Resolving problems together, making decisions to make our community happy!”

Section 6

Our Consultation Process

6.1 How we consult

We take every opportunity to ask you how you want to be kept informed and what information you want. Preferences may change and how you want to be kept informed may depend on the topic. When we consult with you, we regularly review these preferences.

The Housing Act mentioned in Section 1 gives you the right to ask for information such as:

- managing estates,
- offering houses,
- repairs and maintenance,
- the environment,
- service standards and performance,
- investment programmes,
- reviewing services,
- welfare rights.

Our Strategy will use a range of methods so you can be involved, if and when you choose to do so. This will be reviewed and evaluated regularly to make sure the methods are working and meeting the needs of all groups of people. We currently use the following methods:

- newsletters and information leaflets,
- tenants' handbook,
- information sessions,
- tenants gatherings/conferences,
- monthly drop-ins at community flats,
- monthly bulletin on Community and Tenant Participation events,
- Your Views list,
- website and social media,
- text messages,
- tenants and residents' groups in person and online,
- feedback forms at events.

Every three years we also carry out tenant and owner satisfaction surveys. Our satisfaction surveys help us to understand your priorities.

6.2 What we consult on

- Our performance
- Policy and procedure reviews
- Rent increase proposals
- Service delivery
- Events

6.3 Opportunities for involvement

We also have a range of opportunities where you can become involved and make a difference to what we do and how we do it.

- **Tenants' Panel**
The aim of our Tenants' Panel is to give tenants a collective voice over local housing and community issues and to act as a sounding board for any new ideas or proposed changes to the housing service. For this first year, the Panel will meet 11 times to discuss and influence key decisions, such as our allocation policy reviews, performance report and oversee the implementation of this Strategy.
- **Laurieston Estate Action Group**
The Action Group meet every 6 weeks to discuss service standards with us and other service providers (for example, Glasgow City Council). Members are local tenants, owners and residents who have an interest in their area. Their meetings are open to local people.
- **Gorbals Housing Action Group**
The Action Group meet fortnightly themselves to discuss service standards and monthly with us and other service providers (for example, Glasgow City Council). Members are local tenants, owners and residents who have an interest in their area. Their meetings are open to local people.
- **Riverside Residents Group**
This new group are getting to know each other and starting to work with the Housing and Maintenance teams to improve their local area. They meet 6-weekly and engage with Glasgow City Council and Community Police.
- **Oatlands Residents Group**
This new group meet every 6 weeks with housing and maintenance teams. They also want a social and wellbeing focus to their meetings.
- **Hutchesontown Residents Group**
This new group is currently meeting every 6-weeks to share information.

- **Waterside Residents Association**
The Waterside Residents Association is a group of owners who meet to discuss service standards and any other related housing and neighbourhood issues with us.
- **Your Views List**
Joining a group does not suit everyone, so we have a “Your Views” list of actively interested tenants who would like to be consulted on areas of interest to them, in their preferred format.
- **Community Litter Pick and Lunch**
Some people just want to help out in a practical way. As a community litter pick hub, we hold monthly litter picks followed by lunch which are well supported by the whole community. The lunch afterwards provides an informal space to share information and experiences.
- **Tenant Scrutiny Group**
The purpose of a tenant scrutiny group is to critically review our organisational performance and standard of services. Our Tenants’ Panel acts as a critical friend but does not scrutinise our policies and procedures. Members recently expressed an interest in establishing a scrutiny panel early next year and therefore our action plan includes this as an aim.

6.4 Group Standards and Terms of Reference

The Groups are working towards agreed Standards and Terms of Reference to ensure they are welcoming, fair and comfortable places to be heard.

6.5 Registered Tenant and Resident Groups

We will keep an up-to-date register of any registered local tenants and residents’ groups. At present there are no formally registered groups operating within our area. However, we have produced a procedure for formally registered groups in line with the requirements of housing law. The register will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is consistent with requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

6.6 Wider involvement

We will continue to promote membership of the Association which gives members the opportunity to attend and vote at General and Special Meetings and consider seeking nomination to serve on the Management Committee.

We also encourage participation through our wider action activities such as our holiday programmes and seasonal events.

We will take all reasonable steps to encourage involvement and have the flexibility to respond to any new requests.

However, we also recognise that many of our tenants, residents and the wider community do not want to participate. When this is clearly expressed to us, we will respect their decision and will only provide the information specified by them.

Section 7

Top Priority - The Importance of Feedback!

7.1 Open and transparent feedback

Providing feedback to tenants is a top priority for this Strategy. We will provide verbal and written feedback following all consultation exercises, and we will record how and when we have done this.

We are improving these feedback protocols, but currently all tenant meetings and consultation exercises have minutes taken with actions noted. These minutes are sent out to all those who attended and available to anyone who wants to know what is being discussed. Additionally, as an organisation, all issues raised by tenants are noted, actions followed up and records updated with the outcomes and date when tenants are informed on a fortnightly basis. This helps maintain momentum and trust. This feedback will clearly set out how tenants have helped shape policy and service delivery.

Our last tenant participation survey told us that not being given feedback is a main reason for people no longer taking part. They say, “what is the point?” We aim to demonstrate the point with meaningful feedback throughout the year.

7.2 Feedback amongst groups

This year all groups have agreed to share their minutes with other resident groups to promote what is happening and what is working well. Groups have also agreed that meeting minutes can be put on our website for anyone to view. This is to encourage openness, transparency and a sense of working together. We have a new website being developed and when this is in place, we will share the minutes.

Groups have also agreed to come together this year to meet up to share ideas and feedback and increase the feeling of wider community. A consistent theme has been that parts of the Gorbals feel that they are forgotten, or that other areas receive a better service, or know more about what is happening. We want to address these concerns and encourage an atmosphere of trust, openness and one community.

“It is good to have the chance to focus on our own particular area, but together we are The Gorbals”

Section 8

Reviewing Progress

We will review and measure the effectiveness of our Participation and Engagement Strategy using a Monitoring and Evaluation Checklist, with the Tenants' Panel overseeing this work. We have benchmarked where we are now in terms of participation which is detailed in our Tenant Participation 2024 report. Please get in touch if you would like a paper or electronic copy of this report or visit our website at www.newgorbalsha.org.uk to download.

Using our Action Plan, we will review our progress every 6 months to see if we are on track or if changes need to be made.

We will carry out and publish an annual review with our Tenants' Panel which will consider:

- Action Plan progress and outcomes,
- consultation and feedback outcomes,
- training for tenants and staff,
- number of events and attendance levels,
- what we have learned.

We will ensure there is information in our newsletters on our progress.

Section 9

Resources and Training

9.1 Staff resources

All staff are committed to tenant participation however the following staff have lead roles: Tenant Participation Officer, Community Co-ordinator, Head of Housing, Housing Managers, Director, and Communications Officer. The first point of contact is the Tenant Participation Officer.

9.2 Budget

There is a dedicated tenant participation budget which will cover hiring meeting rooms, providing refreshments, childcare costs, interpreters, translation costs, printing and publications. We have carried out an assessment of tenant participation resources and we will do this regularly when we review the Strategy to ensure it continues to meet the needs.

9.3 Training needs

- We will consider training needs for staff and tenants to make sure they have the necessary skills and resources to allow them to get involved.
- We have carried out a training needs analysis for Tenants' Panel members and are putting identified training in place.

- We will look at capacity building for the wider community with our Communities Team.
- We will look at joint training sessions for tenants, staff and committee in conjunction with our Human Resources Manager.

Section 10

Gorbals Residents and the Wider Community

As a community-based Housing Association we are also committed to making sure that our mid-market tenants, other residents, owners and the wider community of the Gorbals have opportunities to engage and participate.

We appreciate that their experience and knowledge can help shape our housing policies, conditions, standards and services. All residents are encouraged to join our Your Views list and to come along to Tenant and Residents Groups.

Our Tenant Participation Officer sits in the Communities Team, working alongside the Community Engagement Worker and Community Budgeting Officer and managed by the Community Co-ordinator. Every opportunity is taken to look at shared benefits for tenants and the community to work together.

Section 11

Time to Communicate

We know how important it is to be given enough time to respond to consultations or make plans to come along to an event. Friendly timescales for consultation will be advertised through an annual calendar published in January which sets out the opportunities for involvement and consultation in the year ahead.

The timescales include enough time to provide information in preferred formats and for tenants to provide feedback.

We will provide a minimum of seven days' notice when communicating with tenants on participation activities. However, we also know from experience that too much notice is not helpful, as people can then forget while they get on with busy lives. We will monitor how the timescales are working in our Action Plan.

Section 12

Links to other Policies

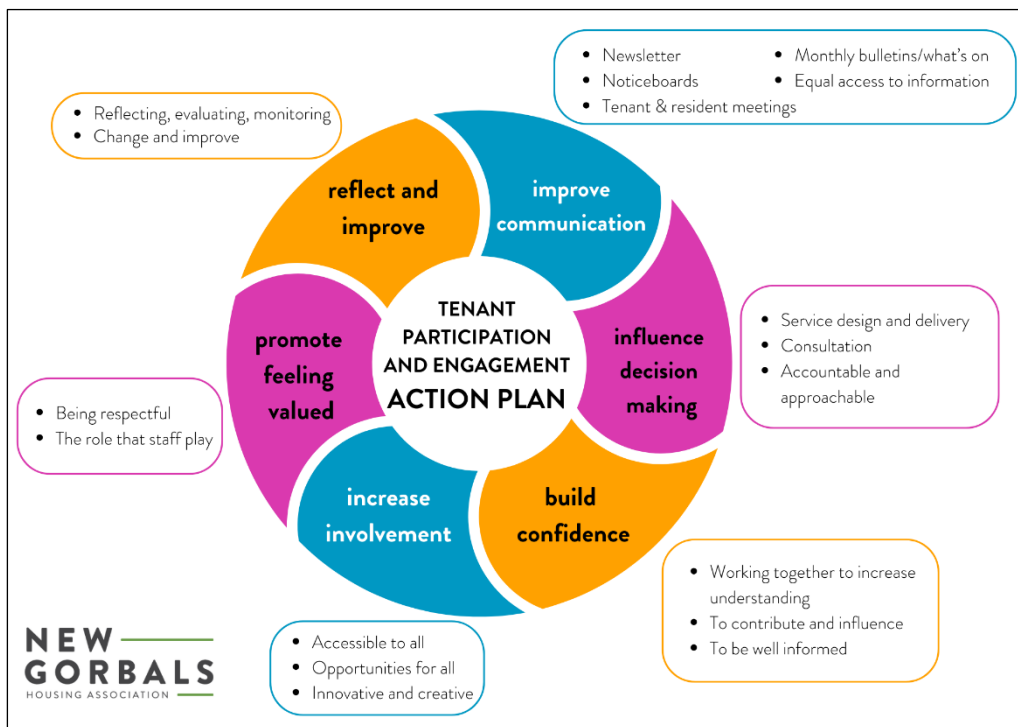
Our Tenant Participation and Engagement Strategy links to the following policies and strategies:

- Communications Strategy (in progress),
- Complaints Handling Policy,
- Customer Service Standards Policy (in progress),
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Privacy Policy,

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy,
- Membership Policy.

Section 13 Our Action Plan

We have a detailed Action Plan which will monitor how we implement our Strategy and this will be overseen by our Tenants’ Panel, with the first review in April 2025. We also have a graphic representation of the Plan to instantly highlight our priorities.



Section 14 How Can I Be Involved?

Please get involved in any way you can. We would love to hear from you. Contact our Tenant Participation Officer, Susan Burn, on 0141 429 3900, phone or text 07971 819780, email susan@newgorblasha.org.uk or drop by the office at 200 Crown Street, G5 9AY.

Section 15 Thank you

Thank you to our tenants, residents, staff and management committee for taking the time to shape our Strategy. We hope it will develop and improve over the year as we set our plan in action.