

## 1.0 CONTEXT

- 1.1 GWHA has an established track-record in tenant consultation and participation<sup>1</sup>, with tenant involvement in decision making processes routinely promoted and actively encouraged. The development of a SES was prompted by the Systems Auditor following a review of the participation strategy in 2012, and it has evolved to reflect the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, GWHA experience and examples of best practice.
- 1.2 The SES provides the framework for enhancing and expanding current engagement measures from the traditional tenant base, to the wider community of factored owners, housing list applicants and other service users. It reflects the changing operating environment and demographics; and through the 2019-24 strategy, sets out the association's commitment to exploring measures for greater collaborative working to deliver change: with the aim of shifting the balance from consultation to co-creation.
- 1.3 Building on the principles of the National Strategy for Participation<sup>2</sup> and incorporating recommendations from "Improving Democratic Engagement in the Housing Sector"<sup>3</sup>, the SES forms part of the Community Sustainment Strategy and is complemented by the Communications Strategy. The SES will be subject to resident consultation during 2019 and is expected to remain fluid and flexible enough to respond to changing customer needs, internal priorities and external influences.

## 2.0 AIMS

- 2.1 To deliver inclusive strategies and policies that remove barriers to effective engagement and participation.
- 2.2 To encourage genuine involvement in GWHA services and activities.
- 2.3 To develop opportunities, at various levels, for participation.
- 2.4 To optimise feedback on service provision and priorities.
- 2.5 To outline measures for supporting Residents Groups.
- 2.6 To mitigate risk, and ensure compliance with legislation, best practice and guidance.

## 3.0 COMMUNITY PROFILING

- 3.1 GWHA owns 1487<sup>4</sup> houses and 108<sup>5</sup> commercial units, and through its subsidiary, Glasgow West Enterprises provides factoring services to 581 residential and commercial owners who live or work alongside Glasgow West tenants in mixed-tenure developments. The G3 Anderston area is the main hub of activity for our housing and factoring service with the increase in households in this area over the last 10 years amongst the highest in the City and expected to continue to place demands on services towards 2028<sup>6</sup>.
- 3.2 Profiling from the recent Housing Needs Analysis<sup>7</sup> provided an insight in to the general population within the association's area, which extends west from G3 to G11/G12 and north to G20. Specific household information is limited to the profiling of GWHA tenancies (section 3.3) and housing list applicants (section 3.4) with the value of expanding this database to incorporate factored owners to be explored through the Community Sustainment Strategy.
- 3.3 In terms of tenant households, and consistent with the stock profile, the majority are single adults (63%) and adult couples (9%). 23% are from a BAME<sup>8</sup> group, with greatest ethnic diversity amongst GWHA households in the Anderston area (28%). 23% of the tenant population<sup>9</sup>, are aged 65+ (with 8% aged 75+) and with the highest concentration of elderly residents in the G11/G12 postcode areas, and in the G4/G20 postcodes for the aged 75+.

One fifth of the tenant population has a disability (66% in the Anderston area), with the most prevalent disabilities physical/mobility related (38%), mental ill health (28%), and chronic illness within the household (12%).

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<sup>1</sup> Systems Audit Report March 2012

<sup>2</sup> Partners in Participation 2009

<sup>3</sup> The Demographic Society (supported by CIH and the Wheatley Group)  
47/8/18

<sup>5</sup> 93 lockups, 7 offices and 8 shops

<sup>6</sup> Glasgow Local Housing Strategy

<sup>7</sup> MC 23/01/17

<sup>8</sup> Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

<sup>9</sup> All GWHA household members (i.e. not just the tenant)

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3.4 Demand from housing applicants far outstrips supply and turnover, with a 68% increase in our Housing List since 2011 and with these customers presenting increasingly with significant housing, medical, social and support needs.

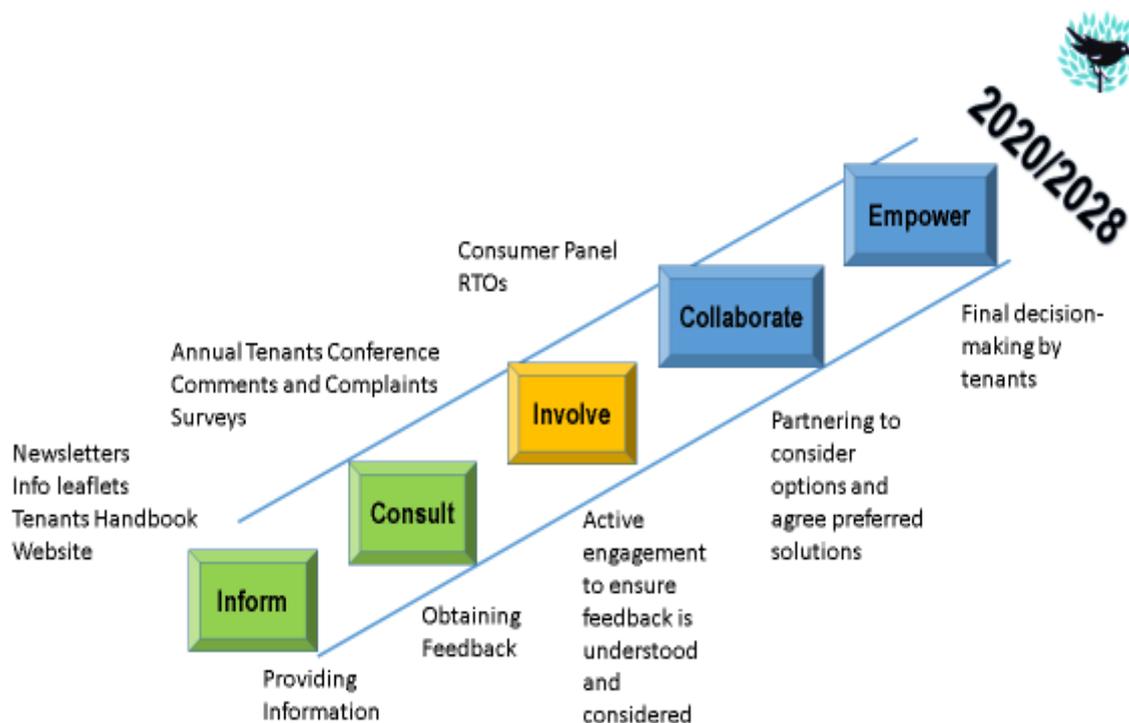
### 4.0 COMPLIANCE (Appendix 1)

### 5.0 RISK (Appendix 2)

### 6.0 EQUALITIES (Appendix 3)

### 7.0 STRATEGY

7.1 For this 2020/28 Strategy, the focus will be on exploring measures for greater collaborative working to deliver change: shifting the balance from consultation to co-creation, empowering tenants to set the agenda and become more actively involved in decisions about their homes and the services they receive.



7.2 A self-assessment against the engagement strategies outlined in the “The Route to Excellent Engagement”<sup>10</sup> will provide the platform for discussion with tenants through the Consumer Panel during 2019/20, with further actions and initiatives expected to evolve for inclusion to the Strategy beyond 2020. The principles for Good Engagement as outlined in the Demographic Society report (Table 1) will apply to all engagement measures.

### 8.0 ENGAGEMENT MEASURES

8.1 GWHA’s strong track record in tenant participation and empowerment reflects the commitment to providing genuine opportunities for engagement at a level customers are comfortable with. From the SES, an annual plan of activities and service reviews is developed for consultation with residents<sup>11</sup>, and this is supplemented throughout the year with a variety of engagement measures including quarterly newsletters for all residents (and targeted supplements where appropriate) and a recently enhanced<sup>12</sup> inter-active website.

8.2 The Annual Tenants Conference, established in 2001 following successful Area Forum Meetings in 1999 and 2000, is key to the

<sup>10</sup>Improving Democratic Engagement in the Housing Sector

<sup>11</sup> Festive newsletter/ATC/website

<sup>12</sup> Launched 2018

Strategy: Service Engagement Strategy 2019-2024 strategic cycle, facilitating discussion on performance, priorities and plans, and providing an opportunity for tenants to genuinely influence service provision and ultimately make recommendations to the Management Committee regarding future rent levels. Key outcomes from ATCs are recorded in Appendix 5, and include the establishment of the Glasgow West Consumer Panel in 2011 (section 11.0).

8.3 Operationally, local surgeries, duty officer rotas, flexible appointment times and home visits optimise opportunities for customers to engage with our staff, with in-house specialist benefits advice, concierge, housing support, handy-person services and specialist partnerships contributing to community sustainment and ensuring bespoke care and appropriate representation for our most vulnerable households. Officer representations ensure the interests of our community are represented at a local, city and national level.

8.4 Participation in Focus Groups, Area and Close Meetings and Estate “Walk-Abouts” is promoted, resident groups are supported, access to local meeting facilities is provided free of charge, and advice and assistance is available where there is an appetite from groups for formal registration in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

8.5 Quarterly independent surveys provide service satisfaction feedback from tenants on the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes, and provide scope for prompt response, learning and continuous improvement. These are supplemented with new tenant surveys and ad-hoc surveys following introduction of new services and/or initiatives.

## 9.0 TRAINING AND RESOURCES

9.1 To ensure adequate resources and sufficient provision for effective engagement, an annual assessment of resources is made, taking account of the reasonable aspirations of tenants, Residents Groups and other service users. Resources include access to training, accommodation and equipment, access to advice and support and the distribution of information through Newsletters, public meetings, conferences etc.

9.2 Where financial assistance is requested by a Residents Group, the request must be in writing and the Association will aim to issue a response within 28 days. If the requested amount is in excess of £250, Chief Executive approval is required, however, in all other cases, delegated authority is granted to the Services Director to consider claims and allocate funding, with the outcome reported to the Management Committee annually.

9.3 Financial assistance will not be provided where the intention is to utilise funding to further campaigns that are contrary to GWhA’s strategy and values.

## 10.0 RESIDENTS GROUPS

10.1 The independence of Resident and Tenant Groups is respected, with all Groups given the same opportunities to comment on proposals and/or get involved in GWhA’s activities and services.

10.2 Mechanisms exist for formal registration, and all Groups are notified, at least annually, of the registration process. The details of RRGs will be formally recorded in a Register which will be made publicly available on request. The Groups that are able to demonstrate compliance with the undernoted criteria will be encouraged to formally register, with MC approval:

### Principles for Good Engagement

To ensure that all participants have a positive experience, good engagement should be:

- **Understandable and transparent** – Every activity needs a clear and stated purpose. The process should be transparent and communicated in a way that ensures tenants and front-line staff have a shared understanding about what will happen before, during and after the activity.
- **Timely** – Engage with tenants and communities early so that people have a chance to influence a decision or idea while it is in the early stage of development. Ensure insights gathered are used quickly enough to be worthwhile.
- **Meaningful and empowering** – Ensure an organisation is prepared and able to use what is heard. Actively invite customer priorities and perspectives rather than taking sole ownership of the agenda. Ensure this is carried out sensitively, helping customers overcome barriers such as a lack of confidence, and capacity build where possible.
- **Varied** – Multiple channels and approaches should be used so that people are given the opportunity to participate in ways that work for them.
- **Fair and inclusive** – Consider the diverse needs of the whole community and cater to those with particular needs to ensure they have sufficient access and the opportunity to state their views. Ensure the activities do not privilege the views of one group or individual over another.
- **Beyond the pattern of ‘us and them’** – Working collaboratively, openly and responsively with customers to build trust. Customers should also be encouraged to work together and understand each other’s perspectives.
- **Responsive** – Communication shouldn’t end when participants have spoken; update participants from the activity so that they are aware of the outcomes. Demonstrate how customer ideas are reflected in key decisions.
- **Supportive** – Where relevant, help customers to understand the wider context. While recognising that customers do not need to be experts in housing policy, where there is interest and relevance, think about how to share knowledge and expertise so that they are able to contribute informed opinions.
- **Safe** – As far as possible, anticipate risk and ensure safety for everyone involved.

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- a) a written Constitution, available for inspection by the public, and outlining membership/ nomination criteria, decision making processes and how funds are managed
- b) a Committee/Board of Management that consists of at least five members who are democratically elected at an Annual General Meeting.
- c) a defined area of operation which includes housing stock owned or managed by GWAH.
- d) a commitment to equality of opportunity, with eligibility criteria that is clearly defined
- e) a clear policy outlining mechanisms for consulting with Members
- f) open financial records and annual accounts
- g) evidence of regular elections and AGM Minutes

10.3 The Association will ensure appropriate advice and assistance is available to Groups striving for registration.

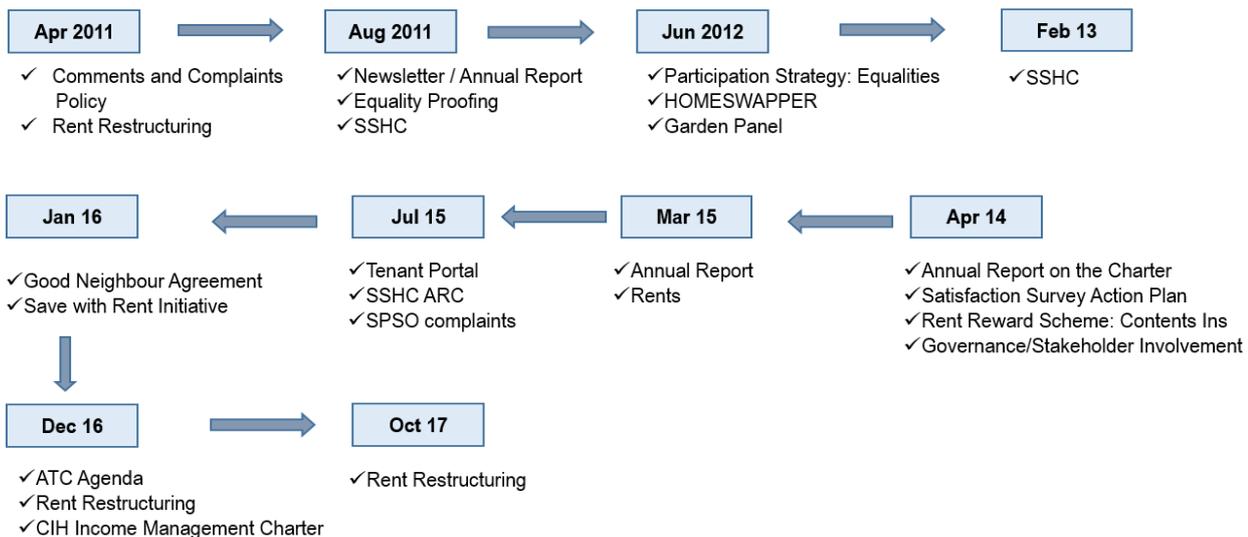
### 10.4 Resources

In the case of formal registered Tenant/Resident Groups, the Association will consider delegating the control of resources to a Group that is able to demonstrate appropriate experience and capacity to fulfil this role.

### 11.0 GW CONSUMER PANEL

The GW Consumer Panel, established in 2011, and open to all GW tenants, acts as a sounding board/link between tenants and the MC. Meetings are informal and tenants are encouraged to comment on services, activities and policy reviews “from the tenant’s perspective”. With the cancellation of the ATC in January 2018, mini-conferences replaced the Consumer Panel Meetings, although concerted efforts will be made to resurrect the Panel during 2019+.

#### CONSUMER PANEL ACHIEVEMENTS



### 12.0 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

12.1 Whilst the MC fully support the strategy towards tenant empowerment, and will always be mindful of feedback from customers, ultimate control and responsibility for the governance of the association remains with the MC, which consists of voluntary Members elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Applications for membership are considered from all members of the community and are specifically encouraged from tenants and members of their households. A £1.00 share in the Association entitles members to:

- a) vote at elections for the Management Committee
- b) nominate, or be nominated, for election to the Committee
- c) contribute to decisions about the strategic direction of the
- d) vote on other matters discussed at the AGM and Special General Meetings

12.2 Residents interested in MC membership are encouraged to participate in a Committee Training Forum held over 3-4 months, extending to 5 or 6 sessions. Trainees work with staff and SHARE to gain an awareness of the role

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of an MC member. On completion of the course, the Trainees are better equipped to consider nomination to the MC at the next election

### **13.0 DECISION MAKING AND APPEALS**

**13.1** Routine complaints are managed in line with the Comments and Complaints Guidance Leaflet, with opportunities for external review, once GWhA procedures are exhausted.

**13.2** In the case of Tenant/Residents Groups, there is a right of appeal to the SHR, acting on behalf of the Scottish Government, where a Group is aggrieved by any of the undernoted decisions. This mechanism is available only after the Association's internal complaints procedure is exhausted:

- a) decision not to register the Group
- b) decision to remove the Group from the Register
- c) decision not to remove the Group from the Register

If a decision is taken by the Association to deregister a Group, a minimum of one month's notice in writing will be provided to the Group.

### **16.0 DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

**16.1** Delegated authority is granted by the Management Committee to the Chief Executive and Executive Team for delivery of this Strategy.