



EDINBURGH TENANTS
FEDERATION

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Edinburgh's Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations

Progress Report

April-June 2020

Introduction

This is the third progress report on the Work Plan agreed by our members at the Federation's AGM in September 2019.

The Federation has outlined the following outcomes for the current year:

1. Tenants are working with City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to help shape housing localities' related services citywide;
2. Tenants are contributing towards national housing policy;
3. Tenants' and residents' organisations are stronger, more effective and are working with CEC to shape housing localities and neighbourhood services;
4. Communicate with individuals, member associations and all tenants and residents;
5. Ensure good organisation, governance and member participation to make ETF stronger and more effective.

This report outlines the actions taken by the Executive Committee between April and June 2020 to tackle these priorities.

Outcome one: Tenants are working with CEC to help shape housing localities' related services citywide

Successes

- ETF has responded well to the current challenges of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. Staff are still working from home and continue to provide support to tenants as and when required. Meetings are now taking place online to protect the health of staff members and service users.
- ETF representatives met with CEC Senior Managers via Zoom. CEC representatives gave an update on how they are responding to COVID-19 and how the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) is ensuring tenants are still able to receive housing services. ETF representatives CEC of the work they are currently involved in and how ETF has adapted to the current situation.
- ETF representatives met with Councillor Kate Campbell, Convenor, Housing Homelessness and Fair Work Committee and Mandy Watt, Vice Convenor. We are pleased to report that despite the current circumstances, ETF and CEC's partnership working continues to thrive.
- Some EC members have continued to hold online meetings with senior housing staff in their respective localities.

Agenda item 7c

- Two Business Planning Meetings have taken place. These meetings enabled ETF and CEC representatives to jointly discuss any operational matters that may have arisen as a result of COVID-19.

Challenges

- A number of ETF Meetings including the Repairs, High Flats and Sheltered Housing Meetings were postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- A number of CEC led meetings, including the Housing Revenue Account Scrutiny Group, Welfare Reform and Stair Cleaning Meetings were also postponed.
- A number of ETF EC members were unable to meet with senior housing housing staff in their respective localities.

The next three months

- ETF will continue to operate, to the best of our ability, during the COVID-19 outbreak. ETF will take the appropriate advice from the Scottish Government and Norton Park regarding the return to its office base.
- ETF and CEC will start to review the work of the HRA Scrutiny Group, Rent Matters and tenant scrutiny. The reviews will contribute towards a Tenant Scrutiny Framework, ensuring there are clear roles, responsibilities and accountability for tenant participation and scrutiny.
- ETF will look at holding the Repairs and High Flats meetings online.
- A Stair Cleaning Project Board Meeting will be held online via Microsoft Teams.
- It is hoped that more EC members will be able to hold online meetings with senior housing staff in their respective localities.

Outcome two: Tenants are contributing towards national housing policy

Successes

- ETF's Convenor continues to attend the Poverty Commission Board Meetings in her capacity as a board member. Progress continues to be made in helping to make a difference in people's lives.
- ETF's Development Worker has attended online meetings organised by the Poverty Alliance and Tenants Information Service (TIS). These meetings ensure ETF is still networking during these times and making a contribution to influencing housing policy.

Challenges

- ETF representatives have been unable to attend any seminars due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The next three months

- ETF will respond to appropriate Scottish Government consultations where possible.
- ETF representatives and staff will take part in online seminars and conferences where possible.

Outcome three: Tenants are aware of Edinburgh Tenants Federation, have wide ranging opportunities for tenant participation and are familiar with good practice

Successes

- ETF staff and representatives have liaised with Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) in need of support.
- Moredun Multis and Maisonettes Residents Association (MMMRA) achieved a great deal of positive publicity regarding developers building on greenspaces in the area. MMMRA highlighted the need to keep greenspaces in the area and organised an event which involved local people to highlight this.

Challenges

- The majority of Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) meetings have been postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The next three months

- ETF will continue to liaise with RTOs in need of support during this difficult time, including looking at holding meetings online. ETF will take Government advice regarding meeting with tenant representatives and attending RTO meetings.

Outcome four: Communicate with individuals, member associations and all tenants and residents

Successes

- ETF is holding its Executive Committee Meetings via Zoom. The majority of EC members are able to take part in the meetings.
- *Federation Matters* was produced in May, the E-Newsletter was produced in April, May and June and *Tenants Voice* was produced in April.
- Terry Kirby, Chair of Wharton Square Residents Association wrote a blog giving his views on the Chartered Institute of Housing Conference he attended. Claudia Baldacchino, Graphics Designer & Communications Officer, People Know How (PKH) wrote a blog giving an update on how PKH are staying connected during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The number of likes on our Facebook and Twitter pages has increased since lockdown began.
- ETF staff have been having regular Zoom meetings. These meetings ensure that staff are aware of upcoming work and are continuing to support tenants.
- ETF has started drafting a Communications Strategy.

Challenges

- ETF was unsuccessful with its application for funding to the OneCity Trust to hold digital awareness classes for tenants.
- ETF was unsuccessful with its application for funding to the National Lottery to buy digital equipment for EC members.

Agenda item 7c

- ETF's new general leaflet was unable to be circulated due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The next three months

- ETF will continue to look at digital participation options to involve tenants and will use these options to gather the views of our service users.
- The September edition of *Tenants Voice* will be produced and circulated.
- It is hoped that ETF's new general leaflet will be circulated to all City of Edinburgh Council tenants.
- The E-Newsletter will be produced in July, August and September and *Federation Matters* will be produced in July and September.
- ETF will finalise their Communications Strategy.

Outcome five: Ensure good organisation, governance and member participation to make ETF stronger and more effective

Successes

- TIS completed the governance review of ETF.
- ETF's Work Plan for 2020-2021 was agreed by the Federation's EC. A summary copy of the Work Plan was circulated to all ETF Member Groups and is available on ETF's website.
- ETF's 2019/2020 Service Level Agreement (SLA) report was produced.
- The Annual EC Review was conducted via Survey Monkey online and by telephone. Findings from the review contributed towards ETF's Work Plan.

Challenges

- ETF has been unable to progress ETF's IT system replacement due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The Federation Meeting was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The next three months

- ETF's SLA will be signed.
- ETF will use the findings of the governance review to ensure ETF's structures, policies and procedures are effective and assist ETF to further develop.
- ETF will continue to operate during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The process to transform ETF's IT system will progress.
- ETF will hold a Federation Meeting online.
- ETF will plan the Annual General Meeting which is scheduled for November 2020.