

Hjaltland Housing Association Tenant and Community Participation Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hjaltland Housing Association is committed to the promotion of tenant participation. The Association recognises the importance of involving tenants and its customers in the ongoing development of the organisation and the service it provides.
- 1.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires that every local authority and registered social landlord must have a strategy for promoting the participation of tenants in proposals relating to the management of housing and the provision of related services.
- 1.3 This strategy aims to ensure that there are opportunities for the Association's tenants to participate in the management of their homes and have direct input into the development of the organisation. The strategy covers all tenants of the Association as well as sharing owners. The strategy provides a framework for participation and an action plan for achieving our objectives.
- 1.4 The strategy has been developed in consultation with tenants and other key stakeholders and all future reviews of this strategy will continue to be influenced by tenants and these groups.

2. The context

- 2.1 Hjaltland Housing Association presently owns and manages 418 properties. The location of the Association's properties range from the main town in Lerwick to small remote island communities.

3. Legal Background

- 3.1 Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 the Association is required to:-
 - Produce a tenant participation strategy.
 - Provide a statement of the amount of resources which it proposes to commit to tenant participation
 - Outline the arrangements for obtaining and taking account of the views of tenants and registered tenants groups.
 - Maintain a register of residents groups
- 3.2 RSL's and local Authorities must also notify tenants and registered tenants organisations on their proposals concerning:-

- Housing management and repairs and maintenance policies which may significantly affect the tenant
- The standard of service they intend to provide concerning the above
- The tenant participation strategy

3.3 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out some issues which must be included in the strategy:-

- How the Association intends to consult tenants
- How the Association intends to take account of tenants views
- How the Association intends to keep tenants informed
- The type of resources and support which are needed for tenant participation and how this will be met.

3.4 This strategy outlines the way in which the Association will meet these requirements.

4. The Benefits of Participation

4.1 The importance and the benefits of involving tenants and the community in the development of the Association cannot be underestimated.

4.2 The Association aims to provide affordable social rented housing to those in housing need in Shetland. To ensure that the needs of our community are met we want to encourage the ongoing dialogue with the community about our future building plans. In addition to this we need to extend this consultation to include the users of our services to enable individuals and groups to have input to the type of services we provide and the way in which they are provided.

4.3 This will enable the Association to remain accountable to the people who access and use our services.

5. Aims and Objectives

5.1 Our aim is to ensure that tenants have the capacity to influence the design and delivery of our housing service and that the Association is open to influence.

5.2 Our objectives are

Objective 1 - Provide tenants with good quality, accurate and easily understood information.

- A clear and concise tenancy agreement. This will be explained in detail at the signing up of new tenancies.
- A tenant's handbook which will also include details about tenant participation and tenant participation groups
- A new tenancy pack including information about the property
- Regular information on their rent account where the tenant is in arrears.
- Quarterly newsletter
- Provision of a website
- Access to any of the Associations policies and procedures on request

All our materials will be produced in clear, plain and easily understood language. Where required the information will be provided in different languages or support will be given to translate the material, provided in large print or on tape.

Objective 2 – Promote tenant participation and increase opportunities to participate

- Actively promote membership of the Association to all our tenants, at the start of their tenancy and through our newsletter.
- Promote and advertise the dates and times of the Association's Committee meetings and encourage attendance.
- Annually undertake joint promotion of tenant participation with the Shetland Tenants Forum through the Association's newsletter. This will specifically target the involvement of tenants in existing groups or the development of new groups
- Undertake a joint promotion of the benefits of tenant participation with the Shetland Tenants Forum on all new build developments
- Undertake, in conjunction with the Independent living Scheme and the Shetland Tenants Forum, the development of a tenants group to represent those residing in the ILP supported units in Shetland.

Objective 3 – Empower tenants and service users to have a say in the provision and development of services and policies

- Undertake an annual tenant satisfaction survey to obtain tenants views on the service they receive and areas for service review and development.
- Ensure the use of tenant satisfaction cards for all day to day repairs and publicise the results of these in the newsletter and annual report.
- Provide feedback forms to all One Stop Shop users following completion of grant work. This information will be used to improve provision.
- The Association will involve tenants in the review and development of services and policies which will have a significant impact on them. Participation will be sought on the following areas
 - Tenant Participation Policy
 - Allocation policy
 - Changes to tenant / Association repairs responsibilities
 - Changes to maintenance of communal areas
 - New build developments
 - Any other areas that will have a significant impact on tenants
- The Association will advertise the review & development of policies through the Tenant Newsletter seeking tenants who are interested to take part in the review. The Association has recently used a tenant involvement questionnaire
- A recent tenant involvement questionnaire (see Appendix 3) identified individual tenants who have indicated a willingness to take part in future reviews of services and policies.
- Where appropriate local meetings will be held or individual meetings with tenants will be arranged.
- Annually a rent consultation will be undertaken with all tenants
- Outcomes from these areas of participation will be reported to Committee with feedback to tenants via the Newsletter

Objective 4 – Promote tenant participation in planned maintenance works

- Where kitchen renewals are being undertaken tenants will be provided with a choice of two kitchen options. Tenants will be notified in writing and provided with brochures showing the different styles available.
- In schemes with Sharing Owners, they will be offered to be included in the proposed works programme and informed of the costs involved.

Objective 5 – Promote tenant and community participation in the development of new build schemes

- Undertake where appropriate design competitions to obtain the views of tenants and the local community. Designs for all new schemes will be available in the main office with voting sheets for tenants and the local community to complete. These views will then be taken into account in the procurement process. The Shetland Tenants Forum will also be asked to participate in any design competitions.
- Attend annually the Association of Community Councils to discuss the Association's development plans.
- In rural communities undertake naming competitions for new schemes using local schools in the area, where possible.
- Undertake a new development survey on new build schemes one year after completion to encourage tenants to comment on the design of their houses and schemes. Information obtained from these surveys will be used to improve standards on future new build schemes.
- Through use of the quarterly newsletter keep tenants informed of new build developments

Objective 6 – To ensure that appropriate training is available regarding the tenant participation process

- The Association will liaise with the Shetland Tenants Forum to ensure that any new groups are supported in their development, including any training requirements
- All staff and Committee will receive training in our tenant participation strategy and the legal requirements of the housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Our induction training for both staff and committee will include tenant participation
- Through our annual staff development review training needs will be assessed and required training put in place.

Objective 7 – To ensure that appropriate resources are available to meet these objectives

- Specific budgets are available for the following areas associated with tenant participation and information
 - Tenant group start up grant. A grant of £250 is available to assist with establishing a new tenants group. Tenant groups will be encouraged to seek the support of the Shetland Tenants Forum when they develop their group.
 - An annual budget is available to undertake, promote and publish the tenant satisfaction survey.
 - An annual budget is available for the production and distribution of the tenant's newsletter and handbook.
- Staff time will also be made available to attend meetings and provide administrative support for tenant participation issues.

Objective 8 – To promote equal opportunities in the development of Tenant Participation

- The Association will actively promote equal opportunities by ensuring that tenants are not excluded from actively participating on the basis of nationality, race, colour, age, political opinion, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

- Any tenant meeting held will be undertaken at an accessible venue and where appropriate assistance with travel arrangements and child care provision will be given.
- The Association will encourage tenant groups to adopt an inclusive approach.

6. Working with registered tenant groups

- 6.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on the Association to keep a register of tenants groups. The Association has established a register of tenant organisations and this is available on request at the Association office.
- 6.2 The Association will work with groups that have not registered as long as they meet certain basic requirements including a commitment to equal opportunities.
- 6.3 The Association will also encourage input from individuals and will maintain a register of tenants who are interested in being consulted. The Association will encourage involvement through the newsletter and where appropriate will contact these individuals with a view to creating a discussion group about specific areas of service development.
- 6.4 Information on establishing a Registered Tenants Group is contained in Appendix 2

7. Framework for Action

- 7.1 Annually an action plan will be developed to outline the specific work that will be undertaken in relation to Tenant participation.
- 7.2 This will outline the action, timescales, required resources and the anticipated outcomes to be achieved
- 7.3 The Action plan is attached at Appendix 1.

8. Monitoring and review

- 8.1 This strategy will be reviewed every 3 years and this will involve the participation of tenants and key stakeholders. In particular we will maintain close links with The Shetland Islands Council and Shetland Tenants Forum.

8.2 Annually the action plan will be updated and this will be made available to tenants and other key stakeholders

8.3 The Association will ensure that strategically this tenant participation policy links to other key strategies and the legal requirements placed on the Association

Committee Approval: Date Oct 2007

Review of Appeals Procedure: This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years.

Action Plan 2007/2008

Action	Lead Officer	Resources	Timescale
Objective 1			
Review of Tenant Participation aspects of Tenants Handbook	Housing Manager & Housing Officer & Shetland Tenants Forum	Time Printing Mailing costs Within Handbook Budget	Nov 2007
Develop tenancy pack	Housing Manager Housing Assistant	Within handbook budget	Nov 2007
Quarterly Newsletter Two of the newsletters to promote tenant participation issues. One to be a joint promotion with Shetland Tenants Forum	Housing Manager & Housing Officer & Shetland Tenants Forum	Time Within Newsletter budget	April July September December
Promote Tenant Participation through website	Housing Manager	Time	October 2007
Objective 2			
Advertise Committee meetings and encourage involvement. Public notice and in newsletter	Housing Manager & Housing Assistant	Time Within newsletter budget	April 2007
Develop tenants group for ILP tenants in conjunction with Shetland Tenants Forum & ILP	Housing Manager, ILP manager & STF	Time Within Tenant Grant Budget	March 2008
Develop tenant group for sheltered tenants in conjunction with Shetland Tenants Forum	Housing manager & Sheltered Housing Support Worker & STF	Time Within tenant grant budget	March 2008
Objective 3			
Undertake tenant satisfaction survey	Housing manager & Graduate placement	Time Within survey budget	November 2007
Review of tenant	Housing Assistant	Time	November

repair satisfaction cards and report on findings			2007
Provide user feedback information on one stop shop to Committee & Tenants Forum	Housing manager Housing Property Manager	Time	March 2008
Promote tenant forum/discussion groups	Housing manager	Time Within newsletter budget	October 2007
Review tenant participation policy	All staff Committee Shetland Tenants Forum	Time	October 2007
Review Allocation policy	All staff Committee Shetland Tenants Forum	Time	June 2008
Objective 4			
Kitchen consultation to take place on schemes due for refurbishment Schemes: Goodlad Crescent Russell Crescent Cairnfied Road Nederdale	Senior technical officer	Time	Ongoing
Objective 5			
Display of new designs of following schemes Gulberwick Burra Grantfield Quoys East Voe	Housing property Manager	Time	Ongoing
Objective 6			
Undertake staff & Committee training on tenant participation	Housing Manager	Time	July 2007
Objective 7			
Review financial resources available for tenant participation	Housing manager	Time	November 2007

development			
Objective 8			
Review venues for availability of good access, transport and childcare facilities	All when organising meetings	Time	Ongoing

Appendix 2

Registration of Tenant/Residents Organisations Information Sheet

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires Local Authorities, Housing Associations and Housing Co-operatives to set up a Register of Tenant Organisations (RTO's) that operate in their area.

The register is to be available for everyone to see and includes the name of the group, the area it operates, contact addresses and other details such as the date of meetings

There are certain criteria that RTO's need to have in order that they can be accepted onto the register.

The Association has produced a Tenant and Community Participation Strategy which gives information on the ways that you can be consulted. If you need any assistance we will be happy to assist you, alternatively you can contact the Shetland Tenants Forum, 1a Water lane, Lerwick.

The Association as part of its participation strategy will consult with registered groups but will also continue to have discussions with individual tenants.

Establishing a group

If you are interested in establishing a group you will need to have the following in place. Please remember you can contact the Association or the Shetland Tenants Forum if you need help establishing a group

1. Your group would need to have a constitution that sets out
 - Its objectives and area of operation
 - How people can become members of the organisation
 - The way the committee will operate
 - How people can become committee members/office bearers
 - How the business of the organisation will be conducted
 - How decisions will be reached democratically
 - How funds will be managed
 - Arrangements for public meetings
 - Arrangements for an annual general meeting
 - How changes will be made to the constitution
 - Its commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities
 - Its commitment to the promotion of the housing and housing related interests of tenants

2. Your group would need to have a committee that
 - (after the first year) is elected at an AGM
 - Has at least three members
 - Can co-opt others onto the committee during the course of the year
 - Has elected office bearers
 - Can demonstrate that decisions are reached democratically
 - Promotes equal opportunities
3. Your group would need to operate within
 - A defined area which includes housing stock owned and managed by the landlord with whom it is seeking to register; or
 - Membership of the organisation and participation in its activities must be open to all eligible tenants within its defined area of operation
4. Your group will need to maintain appropriate accounting records and have an audited annual financial statement to be presented at your AGM.
5. It is important that you represent the views of your members and the simplest way of doing this is to detail how you intend to obtain the views of your members.

How does your group apply for registration?

To apply you need to complete the Associations registration form and return it along with

- Your written constitution
- Names and addresses of committee members (identifying the office bearers)
- The area/scheme(s) your group represents

The registration form can be obtained from

Fiona Robertson
Housing Manager
Hjaltland Housing Association Ltd
2 Harbour Street
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 OLR

Tel: 01595 694986

Email: Fiona@hjaltland.org

All requests will be processed within 28 days and confirmed in writing
All registered groups will be asked to re-register every 3 years

Group meetings

It is important that meeting takes place in a fair and accountable way. So you should promote the following approach

- One person should speak at a time
- Meetings should start and finish on time as agreed by the participants
- A common view, where possible should be reached on issues being discussed. Where this is not possible, differences of opinion will be recorded and taken into consideration before the RTO reaches a final decision.
- Offensive behaviour should not be permitted, this includes racist, ageist and sexist remarks
- All items to be discussed should be agreed on at the start of the meeting

Removal of Groups from the Register

A residents group can be removed from the register in any of the following circumstances

- The tenants organisation no longer meets the registration criteria
- The organisation ceases to exist and does not operate
- There is mutual agreement between the Association and the residents organisation for the group to be removed

Appeals

A tenant's organisation can appeal against the Association's decision to:-

- Not register the organisation
- Remove the organisation from the register
- Not remove the organisation from the register

The appeal would be considered by the Regulation and Inspection Division of Communities Scotland. An appeal would only be heard by Community Scotland after the Association's internal appeal procedure had been followed. Details of this procedure are available on request. The internal procedure will be started without delay and will be completed within 1 month of the appeal being made.

Supporting your group

The Association wants to support your group and recognises the importance of tenants to have a voice and input into the development of the Association. Staff will always be willing to assist you should your group need support, we are happy to attend meetings and the Association will also assist with a start up grant.

The Shetland Tenants Forum based at 1a Water lane, Lerwick is also available to give you advice and support in the setting up and running of your group. They can be contacted on 01595 695197

Registered Tenant Organisation Details

Name of Group	
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Contact Address	
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Contact Telephone Nos.	
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Email Address	
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Office Bearers	
Chair	
Vice Chair	
Secretary	
Treasurer	
Other	

Area Represented	
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Cycle of meetings	
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Hjaltland Housing Association

Individual Representative

We welcome the input of Individual tenants and sharing owners of Hjaltland Housing Association in the development of the services we provide. You can assist us in the work we do, where and how we build our properties, influence the information we provide you and the quality of the services you receive.

Hjaltland is keen to hear your views and as an individual representative we would ask you to either be part of a small focus group with other tenants or would contact you individually to discuss your views.

Name	
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Address	
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Contact Telephone Nos.	
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Email Address	
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Times available for meetings	
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Registered Tenants Organisation

Appeals Procedure

Introduction

A tenant organisation can appeal against the Association's decision to:-

- Not register the organisation
- Remove the organisation from the register
- Not remove the organisation from the register

Procedure for Appeal

The appeal should be submitted in writing and outline the reasons for the appeal.

The Housing Manager, will be responsible for handling the appeal and will ensure that the following action is taken.

1. Written acknowledgement of the receipt of the appeal will be sent within 3 working days of its receipt
2. The decision being appealed will be reviewed. This will include the review of any paperwork associated with the decision. It will also include a meeting with the group appealing the decision to obtain their views.
3. A written decision on the outcome of the appeal will be submitted to the Association's Committee for consideration. The final decision of the Association will be provided in writing to the group.
4. The group will be advised in writing that should they remain dissatisfied with the decision that they can appeal to the Regulation and Inspection Division of Communities Scotland. An appeal would only be heard by Community Scotland after the Association's internal appeal procedure had been followed.

Tenant Involvement

The Association is keen to involve tenants in the ongoing development of our policies, procedures and services. By completing this form you will help us to provide quality services.

Information provided by the Association, what information would you like to receive?



- Tenant Handbook for new tenants

- Tenancy Pack for new tenants including information on heating, rubbish collection etc

Quarterly Newsletter

Our Website

What information/ topics would you like to see included?

- We are legally required to tell you about how we have performed how would you like us to tell you about this? (Tick as many as you like)

Annual report



On the website

In the news letter

Other ideas

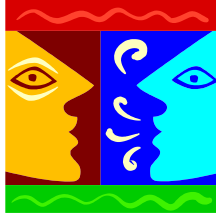
Services and Policies

Which services and policies would you be interested in being consulted on? Please tick as many as you would like

- Tenant participation policy
- Allocations policy
- Repairs service
- New Build Schemes - (design standards etc)
- Other areas, please state

How would you like to be consulted?

- Small questionnaire on specific issues
- Through the newsletter



- Become part of a small Hjaltland Tenant's discussion group, taking part in short meetings once or twice a year, or contacted directly by phone or email.

If you are interested in being part of the discussion group or being contacted directly please provide your name, address and contact details

Name	
Address	
Phone number email	

Other ideas on consultation

What resources do you think are needed to help tenant's become involved e.g. start up grants for tenants groups in your area, help with travel to meetings etc?

Do you have any other ideas about tenant involvement?

Remember that the Shetland Tenants Forum at 1a Water Lane, Lerwick is also there to assist tenants. They can be contacted on 01595 695197.

Name:

Address:

Please return to Hjaltland Housing Association, 2 Harbour Street Lerwick

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART