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## TENANT AND RESIDENT CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

### 1.0 Strategic Links

Reference should also be made to the:-

- Vision and Objectives
- Customer Care
- Equal Opportunities (Services) policy;
- Board Training and Recruitment policy; and
- Tenant Recruitment policy.

### 2.0 Key Objectives

South Lakes Housing is committed to empowering tenants to enable them to influence decisions about their housing service. South Lakes Housing will consult and involve tenants, leaseholders and residents on a range of issues that affect their homes and neighbourhoods and the way that they are managed. It will actively encourage tenants and residents to participate within a framework of choice and discuss directly their views on the way in which its services are managed and provided.

South Lakes Housing will enable involvement in all aspects of its activities. Such involvement will range from the provision of information to opportunities to influence and participate in decision-making and governance of the organisation and will ensure tenants' views are reflected in how services are provided.

### 3.0 Key Policy Standards

Information

South Lakes Housing will ensure that information to tenants is accessible, expressed clearly, timely and suited to tenants' requirements.

Information will be made available through:-

- Publishing an annual report;
- Publishing regular tenants' newsletters;
- Producing and regularly updating the Tenants' Handbook;
- Development of a transactional Website;
- Publishing monthly performance monitoring figures;
- Publishing relevant performance and service plans and standards as part of South Lakes Housing's programme of achieving Best Value in its service delivery;
- Operating a complaints procedure;

- Holding regular local meetings and walkabouts;
- Adoption of and continued support for the terms of the South Lakeland District Council's Tenant Participation Agreement;
- Encouraging, supporting and consulting with tenants/residents groups;
- Undertaking opinion surveys from time to time to assess and evaluate the effectiveness, relevance and cost of the services provided to, and/or required by our residents;
- Providing information, on request, in other languages to those whose first language is not English; and in other formats eg Braille or cassette tape to those with hearing or sight difficulties or other special needs.

### Consultation

Tenants and residents will be fully consulted on all issues that are likely to affect them. In particular, detailed consultation will be carried out on:-

- Proposals to alter the Tenancy Agreement;
- Any significant change in South Lakes Housing's housing policy or practice affecting the management of its housing;
- any significant change in the level of service provided being proposed by South Lakes Housing;
- Plans to carry out improvements to individual tenants' homes;
- Strategic plans such as maintenance or demolition programmes.

A variety of consultation methods will be used. The method will be dependent upon the circumstances and the nature of the subject matter but is likely to involve one or more of the following methods:-

- Letter with prepaid reply envelope, personalized where possible;
- Personal visit;
- Tenants' meetings;
- Exhibitions/roadshows/conference;
- Consultation with tenants and residents associations;
- Telephone/written surveys;
- Focus groups.

Tenants will always be informed about the results of any consultation.

### Participation

South Lakes Housing is committed to active tenant participation within its policy and practice frameworks and agreed standards for this participation are published in the District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement.

Tenants are enabled to participate to the level they feel comfortable with by the provision of information, advice, training, resources and technical support. A formal framework of participation methods allows tenants to progress at their own pace and builds the capacity of individuals to progress to Tenants' Committee and the Board of Directors.

There are four Tenant members on the Board, four Council members and four Independents.

## Tenant Participation Agreement

The Government's initiative to develop Tenant Participation Compacts has resulted in the establishment of South Lakeland District Council's formal Agreement with its tenants. The District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement was published in January 2000 and has established an action plan of activities designed to ensure participation is developed and strengthened. The Agreement is reviewed annually in partnership with tenants and the Tenants' Committee.

South Lakes Housing will adopt the Agreement as a mechanism for delivering its objectives. It will form the framework within which all tenant and resident participation and involvement activities will be undertaken.

In adopting the Agreement South Lakes Housing will be ensuring that the following core standards are achieved.

### ❶ Standards for the Housing Service

These standards ensure that all Council tenants have equal opportunities to be involved in decision-making. The Agreement includes a list of the main ways in which tenants can be involved in each area of the service.

### ❷ Standards for Resources for Tenant Participation

Tenant participation must be adequately resourced and these standards set out details of the amounts available for tenant training, staff resources, facilities, grants and expenses.

### ❸ Standards for Meetings

Clear guidelines are agreed on purpose, codes of conduct, publicity, choice of venue, paperwork and voting procedures.

### ❹ Standards for Information

Information in accessible formats and plain language.

### ❺ Standards for Residents' Associations

Residents' Associations must meet agreed standards to receive grant payments.

### ❻ Standards for Tenants' Committee

Tenants' Committee has its own standards including conduct and representing other tenants' views.

### ❼ Standards for Councillors

Members must aim to follow guidelines for tenants' meetings, and encourage, support and liaise with tenants and residents.

### ❽ Standards for Monitoring and Measuring Performance

These standards set out how tenants and residents are involved in monitoring and measuring the performance of the organisation.

#### 4.0 **Key Targets and Performance Indicators**

- BVPI 75a -Satisfaction with opportunities for participation.
- BVPI 75b - Satisfaction with opportunities for participation (BME).
- BVPI 75c - Satisfaction with opportunities for participation (non-BME).
- Service Charter.
- District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement performance indicators.
- Sheltered Housing Agreement performance indicators.
- Feedback from tenants via Tenants' Committee and Board Members.

#### 5.0 **Monitoring, Reporting and Review Process**

Responsibility for the development, monitoring and review of the policy will rest with the Board which will act in partnership with the Tenants` Committee. This role will encompass the following:-

- Monitoring how the strategy is implemented;
- Information exchange with Tenants' Committee;
- Elections of tenants (see separate policy).

#### 6.0 **Service Development and Review Priority**

There will also be a need to look at other ALMOs' achievements and aims to consider benchmarking using Best Value benchmarking techniques, to be decided on in partnership with tenants. This will inform service delivery and ensure high levels of quality are achieved.

There is a need to review all standards set out in the Tenants Participation Agreement.

Policy Review Priority: Medium