

<b>Tenant Participation &amp; Consultation Policy</b>	
<b><u>WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO?</u></b>	
To provide a framework that will give every tenant and leaseholder the opportunity to participate in and influence decisions which affect their services, homes and communities at a level they choose.	
<b><u>HOW WILL WE DO IT?</u></b>	
Stafford and Rural Homes (the Association) will commit resources to understanding its customer base with the aim of shaping services to meet their needs, providing information to customers on services which they may wish to know about but may not want to be involved in.	
The Association will develop a menu of options, in consultation with tenants and leaseholders, to enable them to choose:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How they will be involved</li><li>• What they want to be involved in, and at what level</li></ul>	
The Association will consult with tenants and leaseholders on a regular basis. It will encourage and support them to obtain the knowledge and skills they need to be effective in their contribution to running of their homes and neighbourhoods.	
The Association will establish partnership arrangements for key parts of its service to enable tenants and leaseholders to have an equal influence over service delivery	
<b><u>HOW WILL WE KNOW IF IT IS WORKING?</u></b>	
By adopting and publishing national indicators and developing local, meaningful measures with tenants, including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % customer satisfaction with arrangements for participation</li><li>• % customer satisfaction with housing service provided by the landlord</li></ul>	
<b><u>WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU NEED TO USE THIS SERVICE:</u></b>	
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<b><u>WHO TO CONTACT TO COMMENT ON THIS POLICY:</u></b>	
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DATE DOCUMENT PRODUCED: July 2005 NEXT REVIEW DATE: To be determined	

**1. Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 Stafford & Rural Homes (the Association) believes that it is essential that tenants have every opportunity to play an active part in the management and development of the Housing Service.
- 1.2 The Association will, through its STATUS surveys and Census data, establish the diverse nature of the communities it serves, and aim to shape services to meet their needs.
- 1.3 The Association is fully committed to effective and meaningful tenant and leaseholder participation and consultation, and views such involvement as an integral part of delivering high quality, customer-focused services.
- 1.4 The Association will provide support and give tenants and leaseholders more opportunities to be involved in and influence decisions that affect their services, homes and communities, at a level of their choice.
- 1.5 The Association believes that involving tenants in monitoring service delivery increases customer satisfaction and helps service users to develop a greater understanding of the issues facing the service.
- 1.6 The Association will work with tenants to develop a 'Tenant Empowerment Strategy' that meets the needs of its tenants.
- 1.7 The strategy will follow national good practice guidance on Tenant Participation and develop the Council's existing Tenant Participation Compact. This will offer tenants the opportunity to be involved at a level they choose. The principles contained in this policy will form the basis for the Compact.
- 1.8 The Association will help the Stafford Tenants and Residents Federation to develop a business plan to ensure its development as an independent body and enable appropriate positioning in the wider community
- 1.9 The Association will encourage tenants and leaseholders to participate in shaping and influencing the decisions it makes about the service and the management of their services, homes and communities. It will develop a range of options to enable tenants and leaseholders to decide: how they will be involved, what they want to be involved in, and at the level of participation they have chosen, which will include:
  - Open Membership of Stafford and Rural Homes, giving key voting rights
  - Board Membership
  - Membership of the Tenants and Residents Federation
  - Becoming involved in Partnership groups running improvement and maintenance contracts

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- General involvement and consultation on capital and revenue work
  - Becoming a member of or starting a Tenants' Association
  - Agreeing to participate on an individual basis in, for example, telephone panels, questionnaires
  - Joining one of the Service Review Groups for housing services
  - Participating in Tenant Challenge Days
  - Joining the editorial group for the tenants' newsletter, Neighbours
  - Staffing or taking part in Participation roadshows
  - Participation in "village voices" initiatives
  - Attending meetings or drop-in sessions
  - Attending an Annual Tenants and Residents Conference
- 1.10 To ensure that local priorities are set by local people, the Association will ensure that tenant involvement and participation is at the centre of service development.
- 1.11 The Association will encourage and enable tenants to be involved corporately and locally in:
- Establishing service objectives and priorities
  - Monitoring service delivery and standards
  - Developing and improving services, including identifying opportunities to improve efficiency
  - Developing and improving partnership arrangements
  - Developing and reviewing policies and strategies
- 1.12 The Association will work in partnership with tenants and other service users to identify barriers to involvement and develop ways to address these.
- 1.13 The Association will at all times offer quality, choice and opportunity, working with all our partners and stakeholders to maximise involvement, consultation and participation and achieve its aim of providing services tenants and leaseholders want, by:
- Increasing satisfaction levels with our service;
  - Improving levels of involvement and representation of all groups, including Black and Ethnic, and vulnerable minorities;
  - Bringing about real and lasting changes in the relationship between the Association and its service users;
  - Ensuring participation is a fundamental objective to developing the well-being of a democratic, socially inclusive society
  - Bringing empowerment to communities

## 2. Detail

- 2.1 The Board will make decisions about the policies and strategic direction of the organisation. Tenant and leaseholder views will be sought before key decisions are taken. These may include changes to the way that services are delivered, as well as future spending priorities. The Board will be responsible for policy making and is legally responsible for all the Organisation's activities.
- 2.2 Tenants will hold one third of the Board places (currently five out of fifteen) which will include an equal number of Council nominees and Independent Members. All future Tenant Members will be elected in line with the agreed Association Constitution.
- 2.3 The Association is committed to working with its tenants to develop a Tenant Participation structure that meets the needs of tenants and the service.
- 2.4 The Association will actively support local tenant and leaseholder groups that meet the Tenants and Residents Federation's recognition criteria and will support and work with the Federation and all groups affiliated to them as partners in delivering the Tenant Participation Strategy.
- 2.5 The Association will help to secure funding for the Tenants and Residents Federation to:
  - provide a capacity building programme for tenants to meet identified needs
  - adequately support the organisation to reflect the increase in participation
  - provide an independent advocacy role for tenants and residents
- 2.6 The Association will work with the Tenants and Residents Federation in supporting Tenants groups to identify local needs and aspirations and where necessary feed these into the Service panels and partnering groups.
- 2.7 The Association will work with the Tenants and Residents Federation to increase representation in areas that are currently under represented.
- 2.8 The Association will work with and support individuals who do not want to set up tenants and residents groups or who cannot gain sufficient support from their communities to do so. Such tenants and leaseholders would be encouraged to seek affiliation with the Tenants and Residents Federation as a "Lone Star" group.
- 2.9 The Association will feed back the results of all consultation projects and show how tenant and leaseholder views have influenced its service. Where such views have not been implemented, the

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Association will explain and review reasons with tenants and leaseholders.

- 2.10 The Association will use various ways of consulting tenants to involve as wide a range of the community as possible. These will include:
- Producing local newsletters
  - Consultation events for the Estate Based Strategy (the method for the delivery of its Investment Programme)
  - Carrying out Customer Satisfaction Surveys
  - Arranging a series of Tenant Challenge Days
  - Arranging a rolling series of Participation Roadshows
  - An annual Tenant and Leaseholder Conference
- 2.11 The Association will enable and facilitate appropriate training and communication structures for staff, tenant and leaseholder representatives and Board members, to encourage partners to obtain the skills and knowledge to allow them to work together effectively.
- 2.12 The Association will provide information about issues in a clear, easy to understand and accessible way, in line with Plain English standards, and will make sure the information meets tenant and leaseholder needs.
- 2.13 The Association will adhere to the following standards for meetings with its tenants and leaseholders. It will ensure that:
- relevant information is sent out before meetings
  - there is effective communication in all meetings
  - there is feedback from meetings
  - reasonable expenses for attending group and consultation meetings are paid where appropriate
  - meetings with tenants are publicised effectively
  - meetings are held at times and venues convenient to tenants
  - meeting places are suitable and accessible, and comply (where possible) with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
  - groups are helped to find appropriate locations and venues for meetings, arranging for relevant staff to attend when given reasonable notice
- 2.14 The Association will employ Participation Officers to help improve involvement at area and estate level, and also identify areas and groups that are currently underrepresented.
- 2.15 The Association will provide information to tenants about local Tenants and Residents associations as well as other groups that support involvement at local and district level.
- 2.16 The Association will help tenants groups with administration and producing newsletters so that they can keep tenants within their areas

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informed. Any such literature will be translated into community languages upon request. The Association will utilise a newsletter to ensure that every tenant and leaseholder receives information on how they can become involved at a level and pace that they determine and that they are fully aware of issues and developments affecting the housing service.

- 2.17 The Association will use comprehensive, imaginative ways of publicising and providing information on opportunities to get involved through various existing structures and processes.
- 2.18 The Association will ensure that the Compact standards are consistently applied and maintained and that the Compact is available in all relevant forms. The Language Line facility will be available at all customer outlets.

### **3 Specific Needs**

The Association will take into account the specific needs, which may arise, of younger, older and vulnerable people, people with disabilities and Black and Minority Ethnic groups, in a manner that promotes equality and inclusiveness.

### **4 Consultation**

- Tenants & Residents Federation August 2005
- Visioning & Sounding Board Days July / August 05

The Association has committed major resources in the commissioning of a comprehensive consultation project, the outcomes of which will both contribute to the registration process and assist in producing many of the outcomes envisaged in this document.

### **5 Monitoring**

#### Housing Corporation Mandatory Performance Indicators

- GNPI22 Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord
- GNPI23 Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in management and decision making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord

#### Local Performance Indicators

None

Please note that local performance indicators are current at the time of writing this policy. They are subject to development.

## **6 Links to Housing Corporation Regulatory Code and Guidance**

### Regulatory Code:

- Properly Governed: Section 2.3.2 2.7,2.7c
- Properly Managed: Sections 3.2 and 3.5a

### Legislation / Guidance:

## **7. Links to Other Policies**

### **All Service policies, including the key policies below:**

- Equality and Diversity
- Customer Care
- Comments and Complaints Policy
- Racial Harassment and Harassment
- Asset Management & Stock Investment (Partnership)

## **8. Responsibility**

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## **9. Author of Policy**

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## **10. Review Date**

To be determined