

## **RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION POLICY**

Date Approved: 5 April 2018

Next Review: April 2021

Responsible Board/Committee: Board

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### **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 The Association considers that meaningful resident consultation and involvement makes a positive impact on the quality of services we provide and helps to ensure that those services are appropriate to residents' needs and aspirations.

The Association is committed to involving residents in the way their homes are managed and maintained and to consulting residents on matters affecting them.

We will meet our statutory obligations, the Regulator's expectations and good practice recommendations.

### **2.0 KEY POLICY PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 We will:

- provide a range of ways residents can be involved and can influence our services and the development of strategy and policy.
- provide the opportunity for formal representation on decision-making bodies, including our Board of Management and our Complaints Panel.
- be open and make information available to residents to show how we are performing against our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- encourage residents to contribute to corporate publications, including our Annual Report and Residents Newsletter.

### **3.0 REGULATORY & STATUTORY PROVISIONS**

#### **3.1 HCA Regulatory Framework – Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard (July 2017)**

Registered providers are required to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- the formulation of their landlord's housing-related policies and strategic priorities
- the making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
- the management of their homes, where applicable
- the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and
- agreeing local offers for service delivery.

### 3.2 Tenancy Agreement

It is a condition of our standard tenancy agreement that the Association shall consult the tenant before making changes in matters of housing management or maintenance that are likely to have a substantial effect on the tenant.

## 4.0 SCOPE

4.1 This policy is relevant to all customers, including tenants, shared owners and leaseholders.

## 5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

5.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Bucks HA's Service Standards (*need review - to follow*)
- Feedback Policy (*to follow - covering compliments, satisfaction surveys and other feedback*)
- Equality & Diversity Policy (*2016 – needs review*)

## 6.0 CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT OPOPORTUNITIES

### 6.1 Residents Panel

We will establish and support a Residents Panel, the Terms of Reference of which will be agreed and reviewed annually by the Board of Management. The Residents Panel will monitor the Association's service delivery and performance, ensuring that high quality services are maintained and meet the best interests of residents. The Residents Panel will also act as a sounding board for policies and procedures as they affect residents.

### 6.2 Virtual Panel

We will invite residents, who express an interest in being actively consulted or in participating directly, but who do not wish to become members of the Resident Panel or to attend meetings, to join a "Virtual Panel" of residents. For example, we will circulate draft, customer-facing documents for comment, including to gauge whether the document is accessible and clear to understand.

### 6.3 Digital Engagement

We will use our website and social media platforms to encourage a two-way flow of information and feedback with residents. We will promote opportunities for digital inclusion amongst our residents.

### 6.4 Tenant Surveys

We will carry out a comprehensive Tenants' Survey every three years to assess how satisfied our tenants are with the services they are receiving and to identify trends. We will also use the results of the survey to supplement the information tenants give us when they sign up to their tenancy, to build a profile of our tenants, which we will use to help us tailor our service offering accordingly.

We will also survey our residents on a continuous basis to ascertain how satisfied they are with different aspects of our service, including our Repairs & Maintenance Service, Lettings Service and Satisfaction with their New Homes.

#### 6.5 **Board Membership**

We will ensure that one seat on the Association's Board of Management will be reserved for one of the Association's tenants. The process for electing Tenant Board Members will enable all current tenants to have the opportunity to apply.

#### 6.6 **Residents Associations**

Scheme specific residents associations will be encouraged, supported and formally recognised by the Association if they are properly constituted and they meet the required criteria to be recognised.

#### 6.7 **Housing Management Visits/Aspiration Visits**

We will aim to visit all of our housing schemes at least annually and those with communal areas at least calendar monthly. In addition, we aim to carry out 'Aspiration Visits' to all of our residents at least every three years. Aspiration Visits are used to refresh contact details, confirm who is living at the property and to discuss any tenancy / rehousing issues.

#### 6.8 **Consultation**

We will consult residents on any proposed change which significantly affects them, including variations to:

- the terms of their Tenancy Agreement
- the services we provide
- proposed improvements to their home

The procedures we must follow to vary the terms of tenancy are set out in the Tenancy Agreement.

Depending on the nature of the issue and the number of residents affected, consultation may be via personal contact, letters, meetings or questionnaires (or a combination of these methods). We will consider all consultation responses before taking any further action and we will inform all affected parties of our decision.

#### 6.9 **Estate Services**

We will consult residents on the arrangements for carrying out services on their estates, for which residents pay a service charge, such as landscape maintenance, cleaning of communal areas and window cleaning.

#### 6.10 **Enabling and Training**

We will publicise and fund appropriate training opportunities to enhance skills and the development of resident participation for both residents and staff.

We will provide practical and financial support to recognised resident groups and reasonable travel and other expenses will be reimbursed to involved residents.

We will ensure that information given to residents is in an accessible form and that translation arrangements are available as appropriate.

We will make a specific budget allocation in our annual budgets to support resident involvement and participation.

7.0 **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

- 7.1 The Association's Equality and Diversity Policy sets out our commitment to act in a way which does not discriminate against any individual or group of individuals. Our Resident Involvement and Participation Policy will be applied fully in accordance with our Equality & Diversity Policy. In particular we will seek to encourage people from protected groups to participate in activities where their participation is disproportionately low.