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Albyn Housing Society Ltd. Tenant Participation Strategy



building homes...supporting communities

Introduction

from the Chair, the Chief Executive, and the Federation of Albyn Residents (FAR)

Albyn Housing Society has been working with tenants at various levels and in a variety of different ways since the early 1980s.

In developing our strategy over the past three years, it has become clear that it is not possible to address all the issues of consultation, participation and communication that the Society would like to straight away. We therefore expect the strategy to continually develop to fit the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders (i.e. anybody with an interest in the success or failure of the Society, including tenants, sharing owners, and other organisations that we are regulated by or work in partnership with). It is a starting point, not a conclusion. However the strategy, in setting out the fit and operation of tenant participation, reflects good practice by placing tenant participation as a core practice across the whole Society. This is also reflected in our Internal Management Plan.

On behalf of both the members and officers of the Society and the Federation of Albyn Residents (FAR), we welcome the opportunity to publish our strategy to reconfirm and enhance our commitment to participation with our tenants and communities that we work with.

Jim Oag {Chairman}

Calum Macaulay {Chief Executive}

Isobell McLaughlan {Chair of FAR}

September 2004

This leaflet gives you a summary of the main points of our strategy only, but if you would like the full version, you can contact our office to have a copy sent to you. It can also be downloaded from our website at: www.albynhousing.org.uk

Aims

Our Tenant Participation Strategy sets out our framework for tenant participation in the decision-making processes and everyday work of Albyn Housing Society Ltd. We recognise that effective tenant participation benefits all stakeholders. We include our sharing owners as having equal rights to participation and include such residents within the term 'tenants' used throughout this Strategy.

We recognise that for tenants to be able to participate effectively they must have the capacity to influence the Society and that the Society must be open to influence.

We will actively encourage equal opportunities by ensuring that tenants are not excluded from actively participating on the basis of nationality, race, colour, age, political opinion, gender, sexual preference or disability.

The main aims of the Strategy are:

- to improve the quality of our services through tenant involvement
- to provide clear and open access for tenants to allow meaningful involvement in our decision-making processes
- to support and encourage a culture of mutual trust and understanding to allow all stakeholders to work together towards common goals

Objectives

In order to meet these aims, the following objectives will be met:

- i we will ensure open, accessible and meaningful consultation with all stakeholders on relevant issues including consideration of their equalities and diversity requirements
- ii we will ensure appropriate training is available for all parties to our participation processes
- iii we will integrate tenant participation into the day to day running of the Society at all levels
- iv we will ensure that appropriate resources are available to deliver these objectives
- v we will ensure that this strategy and progress towards achieving the objectives are reviewed regularly

Key Tasks

A number of key tasks have been identified within each of the objectives stated above. These are developed into practical actions in the full strategy and in an Action Plan to make sure that the strategy is implemented and reviewed regularly.

Funding and Resources for Participation

We provide support for new and existing tenant groups and Tenant Information Volunteers (TIVs).

We will provide funding for the day-to-day working of this strategy, which will include the following:

- An annual grant to the Federation of Albyn Residents (FAR).
- An annual grant plus an allowance per unit to registered and recognised groups, paid directly to each group by FAR.
- These groups and TIVs will also be entitled to a computer package, which will be agreed and funded by FAR.
- Appropriate staff will be available as and when required to attend meetings on a reasonable basis
- Appropriate staff will be available to provide information and advice at reasonable times

We recognise that resource requirements will change as needs and circumstances change. We will therefore review them at least annually to make sure that best use is being made of the resources that are available. All direct and indirect costs of tenant participation will be monitored and reported to the Committee of Management and published on an annual basis, including an assessment of time input required by our tenant volunteers.

Registration of Tenant Organisations and Tenant Information Volunteers

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) a central position in tenant participation. It introduces a duty on local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (housing associations) to keep a register of Tenant Groups.

Albyn Housing Society has already benefited from partnership working with tenants through its relationship with FAR and FAR's remit to support tenant groups. The statutory right for registered tenants' groups to be consulted is therefore welcomed.

Albyn also recognises the need to be flexible to respond to the views and priorities of tenants. We have therefore included non-registered groups and Tenant Information Volunteers in the formal consultation process, although neither need to be included under legislative requirements. However we will still encourage groups to become registered, as this will give them direct access to Communities Scotland for monitoring purposes.