



## **TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY (2015)**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 As a Registered Social Landlord, Ochil View is required under the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to have a Tenant Participation Strategy which promotes the participation of tenants in the formulation of proposals in relation to the management of housing and related services, where these will affect tenants.

These requirements are set out in detail in Sections 53 and 54 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. In summary they are that we must:

- ✓ Notify tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations about proposals that will affect them
- ✓ Provide information to tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations about how the proposal will affect them
- ✓ Gather the views of tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations in response to proposals that will affect them and take account of these views in decision making
- ✓ Provide resources to enable participation and consultation to be carried out
- ✓ Maintain and publish a Register of Registered Tenant Organisations
- ✓ Add tenant organisations to the Register where they meet the criteria for registration as set out by the Scottish Government. We may remove Registered Tenant Organisations from the Register where they no longer meet the criteria for registration
- ✓ Have regard, in our decision making, to the views expressed by tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations in response to proposals

Proposals that will affect tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations are ones in relation to housing management or maintenance which will significantly affect the tenant, and proposals in relation to a standard of service.

- 1.2 The criteria for Registration as a Registered Tenant Organisation are set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Registration of Tenant Organisations) Order 2002. The procedure for enabling Groups to apply for registration is set out at **Appendix 1a**, including the application form that must be completed by groups applying for registration.

Our budget for supporting tenant participation is at **Appendix 2**.

Our Register of Registered Tenant Organisations is published on our website.

- 1.3 In addition to complying with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Association must comply with the Scottish Housing Charter that requires that registered social landlords achieve the following outcomes:

### Outcome 2: Communication

*Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides*

### Outcome 3: Participation

*Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.*

The Scottish Housing Regulator has decided that achievement of this outcome shall be assessed by the response of tenants in a survey to the following questions:

- ✓ *How good or poor do you feel Ochil View is at keeping you informed about their services and decisions?*
- ✓ *How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities given to you to participate in Ochil View's decision making processes?*

1.4 Ochil View's strategic objectives include:

*To actively promote and support resident participation in the development, management and maintenance of their homes (SO3);*

1.5 The Association's Risk Management Strategy identifies a number of risks related to tenant participation:

- ✓ Tenant's views not taken into account by the Association
- ✓ Residents expectations of tenant participation are not able to be met
- ✓ Resident views expressed deemed non representative - some people hijack the agenda

## **2.0 COMMUNICATION WITH TENANTS, REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER SERVICE USERS**

The Association will provide information to Tenants, Registered Tenant Organisations and other service users (as appropriate) about proposals that may affect them through:

- ✓ Our Website
- ✓ Our Newsletters
- ✓ Presentations to meetings of the Involved Residents Group
- ✓ Email to tenants who have opted in to receive information by email
- ✓ Presentations to Registered Tenant Organisations
- ✓ Providing information to tenants who have given feedback on the service prior to the proposal to change
- ✓ Our Facebook Page
- ✓ Our Tenant's Handbook
- ✓ Our Annual Report

### **3.0 CONSULTING TENANTS, REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER SERVICE USERS**

The Association will consult Tenants, Registered Tenant Organisations and other service users by:

- ✓ Publicising proposals on our website and asking for feedback
- ✓ Publicising proposals on our Facebook page, and asking for feedback
- ✓ Reviewing feedback as recorded in Complaints Register and including this feedback in the review of services
- ✓ Contacting tenants who have expressed views and given feedback and asking for their further comments on proposals
- ✓ Carrying out surveys and questionnaires
- ✓ Consulting tenants at meetings of Registered Tenant Organisations and the Involved Residents Group
- ✓ Consulting tenants who have opted in to be consulted by joining in the Register Of Interested Tenants

### **4.0 THE INVOLVED RESIDENTS GROUP**

The Involved Residents Group is a consultative forum of residents. It does not have a focus on any specific geographical area of operation. The purpose, role and administration of the Involved Resident's Group are set out in the Remit of the Group, which is attached as **Appendix 5**.

### **5.0 THE REGISTER OF INTERESTED TENANTS**

We aim to make meetings accessible to all our service users. However, Ochil View acknowledges that many tenants cannot, or do not wish to, attend meetings. The Register of Interested Tenants (RIT) is a less formal arrangement than the IRG. Tenants who wish to be added to the register will be asked to indicate how they wish to be consulted, for example, by completing online or paper-based questionnaires, attending local discussion or focus groups or taking part in estate walkabouts.

### **6.0 TENANT CONSULTATION – WEST FIFE**

The Association's consultation systems are open to all tenants and service users, regardless of where they live. However, the Association's Tenant Satisfaction survey in 2013 identified that tenants living in West Fife felt remote from the Association. We wish to make particular efforts to address this during the period of this strategy which is set out in the Action Plan below

### **7.0 COMPLAINTS AND CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

The Association values complaints and customer feedback. We will record all instances of complaints and customer feedback, and use them, wherever possible, to improve services. Examples of how feedback has improved services will be a regular feature of staff meetings.

## **8.0 TRAINING FOR TENANTS**

The Association will meet the costs of training for tenants, residents and office bearers of representative groups available and met the costs of such training opportunities where service users wish to attend.

## **9.0 TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE VIEWS OF TENANTS, REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER SERVICE USERS IN OUR DECISIONS**

The Association will, when considering proposals in respect of services, include in each report to a decision making body the details of how tenants, Registered Tenant Organisations and other service users (as appropriate) have been informed and consulted and how their views have been taken into account in the final proposal.

## **10.0 REPORTING OUR PERFORMANCE TO TENANTS AND OTHER SERVICE USERS**

Since Summer 2014 we report our performance in achieving or progressing towards the Social Housing Charter outcomes and standards to tenants and other service users who use our services. We will aim to do this as soon as practicable and reasonable after the end of each reporting period and no later than October of each year. Our performance report will include:

- ✓ An assessment of performance in delivering each of the Charter outcomes and standards which are relevant to our operations
- ✓ Relevant comparisons – including our own historical performance and with other landlords and with national performance

Our report will be in a reporting style and format that is accessible for tenants and other service users and will use plain and jargon-free language. We will seek feedback from tenants on the style, layout and content of the report and amend it in the light of their preferences.

## **11.0 OCHIL VIEW USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Our use of Social Media is complemented by the following documents:

- ✓ Email Policy
- ✓ IT system Code of Conduct
- ✓ Tenant Participation Strategy
- ✓ Unacceptable Actions Policy

11.1 Through use of social media and social network websites, we aim to achieve the following:

- ✓ Improve customer service for current customers and service users
- ✓ Direct traffic to the Ochil View website
- ✓ Build new audiences through communicating in a relevant way
- ✓ Increase awareness of the Ochil View's work and messages
- ✓ Encourage participation and comment either informally, or by linking to *Survey monkey*.

## 11.2 Our Facebook page will have the following information;

- ✓ News Stories – as well as the stories that we already put out to media outlets, including our own newsletter, social media will be an opportunity to share smaller stories and more localised events.
- ✓ Consultation and Participation – social media gives our audiences the ability to have their say and get a response to it. Including rent review proposals
- ✓ Job Opportunities
- ✓ Links to other stories and information that may be useful to our tenants such as community services and other non-profit organisations that tenants might use e.g. council and community events.
- ✓ Homehunt properties
- ✓ Service interruptions and weather events.
- ✓ Gallery of photos from events.
- ✓ Promote Ochil View with Good news.
- ✓ Link to documents, annual report and newsletters.
- ✓ Performance information
- ✓ Publicise estate visits and inspections.
- ✓ Welfare reform.
- ✓ Links to online surveys

## 11.3 There is a small risk that the Facebook page will be used inappropriately. To limit this risk, the page will carry “house rules” that set standards for use. These rules will prohibit:

- ✓ Swearing (automatic “profanity” filters will block posts using swearing)
- ✓ Naming of individuals - for example alleging responsibility for anti-social behaviour ( posts including personal information will be removed)
- ✓ Allegations against members of staff (as above)

The Association cannot however expect to remain entirely free from criticism, however criticism handled properly can demonstrate a responsive organisation. Staff managing the page should make service delivery staff aware of critical posts and the service user will be contacted offline to resolve the matter. When a satisfactory conclusion is reached, they should be asked to post that their concerns have been addressed.

Persons who persistently use the site inappropriately and in breach of the House Rules will be blocked.

The page will indicate that it is not constantly monitored and that a response to a direct enquiry relating to services may not be for some hours (longer at evenings or weekends).

## 11.4 We aim to:

- ✓ Improve customer service for current customers and service users: to be assessed by the number of users of the Facebook page assessing the page as helpful, useful and informative
- ✓ Direct traffic to the Ochil View website: to be assessed by increasing the number of visits as measured on the Association’s website

- ✓ Build new audiences through communicating in a relevant way: to be assessed by increasing the number of tenants participating in consultation exercises and reaching a demographic that more accurately represents the tenant population as a whole
- ✓ Increase awareness of the Ochil View's work and messages: to be assessed by the number of "likes" and "shares"

## **12.0 TENANT INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT OF OUR WEBSITE**

The Association recognises that online services provide an opportunity and challenge to social landlords. While we are aware that a majority of tenants have internet access and some want to see more services provided online, we are also aware that a significant minority do not have internet access, do not propose to have it and therefore we must balance the move to online services with a need to maintain universal access. Therefore development of online services will be done in consultation with tenants.

## **13.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY**

We are committed to equal opportunities. Throughout our work we do not discriminate on the grounds of ethnic origin, disability, gender, marital status, sexuality, age, language, political and religious beliefs, social class or any other form of discrimination. We will support and encourage all tenants and other customers who participate while maintaining their right to privacy and confidentiality.

## **14.0 REVIEW OF STRATEGY**

The Tenant Participation Strategy will be reviewed at least every 3 years

### Policy review Consultation Process

Presented to Management Team	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2015
Discussion at Involved Resident's Group and Registered Tenant Organisations	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2015
Recommended by Customer Services Committee	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2015
<b>APPROVED BY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>26 April 2015</b>
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	<b>February 2018</b>

## Ochil View Housing Association Guidance Notes: Registration of Tenant Organisations

### Introduction

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the right to participate for tenants. Part of this legislation is the requirement that all local authorities and other social landlords introduce a system for setting up and maintaining a Register of tenant organisations. Tenant groups need to apply to become registered and must meet certain criteria to qualify. The criteria for registration have been set out by the Scottish Government and cover a number of points. Groups who do become **RTOs** are entitled to certain rights and the landlord has a duty to inform and consult with them on housing matters.

### What is a Registered Tenant Organisation-RTO?

A Registered Tenant Organisation-RTO is a group who has applied to become registered with a landlord and meets certain conditions which have been set down in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

### Becoming an Registered Tenant Organisation

#### What does a group need to do to become registered?

A group must apply in writing to become registered. To help, Ochil View has an application form which asks for all the information we need. Part of this application includes the need to provide certain information.

#### What information does a group need to provide?

All groups wanting to become registered must provide:

- a copy of their constitution
- a list of their office bearers and committee members
- a contact address for correspondence which can be made public
- a description of the area in which the group operates
- details of any other landlords the group is registered with or applying to become registered with
- A completed registration application form

#### What criteria do groups have to meet?

There are a range of criteria.

1. Groups must have a written constitution that is available for inspection and which details:

- their objectives
- the area in which they operate
- their membership process
- how the committee operates and is elected
- how business is conducted
- how funds are managed
- when they meet, including the Annual General Meeting
- how the constitution can be amended
- a commitment to equal opportunities
- how they intend to promote housing and housing related matters

2. Groups must have a committee that:

- is elected annually and committee members must be required to stand down after a certain period (this period should be included in the constitution)
- consists of at least three members who can co-opt other members
- reaches decisions democratically (the decision making process should be included in the constitution)

3. Groups must operate within a defined area that includes Ochil View housing stock and your group must be open to all tenants and residents within that area

4. Groups must have proper accounting records showing income and expenditure, and assets and liabilities. The constitution must require an annual audited financial statement to be presented at your AGM

5. Groups must be able to demonstrate how they plan to represent the views of their members and how they will kept informed

**What happens next?**

If a group meets the registration criteria we will place the group on the register and let the group know in writing that it have qualified and from what date.

If the group does not meet the registration criteria we will tell the group in writing of our decision not to place it on the register, the reasons why it doesn't meet the criteria and the group's right of appeal using the Association's Complaints Procedure and then to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

**What happens if a group does not register?**

If a group does not register we will still keep its details on file and include it in any consultation that we do. However it will not be classed as an RTO and will not have the statutory rights of an RTO.

**What rights and benefits will we have as an RTO?**

Registered Tenant Groups have a recognised role in the participation process. This is set out in our Action Plan. Registered Tenant's Organisations have the right to be consulted on issues that affect them and their members. They also have the right to have their opinions taken into account in any consultation.

## **Help to become registered**

We can provide a model constitution that helps meet the registration criteria. We can also offer advice and training on the registration process. If a group needs help or advice on equal opportunities policies we can supply this. We can provide access to independent help and advice. We also have access to information on tenant and residents groups in general.

## **Will the register be a public document?**

We are required by law to make the Register publicly available. The Register must include contact details for groups, however if a group prefers you can use a post office box or “care of” address. The Register will be available at our office and on our website.

## **Can a group be removed from the register?**

A group can be removed from the Register if it no longer meets the registration criteria. A group can also ask to be removed from the Register and it must apply in writing to do this. If a group ceases to exist it will also be removed.

## **Does a group have the right of appeal if it is removed from, or not admitted to, the Register?**

A group has the right to appeal if you are refused registration, or re-registration. A group also has the right to appeal against any decision to remove it from the Register or if we refuse to remove you on your request. Your appeal will first be considered by the Association in terms of our Complaints Handling Procedure and if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the process, you can appeal to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

## **Can a group register with more than one landlord?**

A group can register with any social landlord who has housing stock in the area it covers.

## **How long will registration last?**

Registration will last for 3 years, after this period groups will have to reapply.

For more information or if you have any question then please contact the Head of Customer Services.

## Registered Tenant Organisation Application Form

 <p><b>OCHIL VIEW</b> — Housing Association Ltd. —</p>	
<b>Application for Registration of a Tenant Organisation</b>	
<b>Name of Group</b>	
<b>Geographic Area Covered</b>	
<b>Contact name and address including phone number and email (if available)</b>	
Ochil View is required to make its Register of Tenant Organisations available to the public. Please tell us if you <b>do not</b> want your contact details to be available.	
<b>Dates of regular meetings</b> e.g. First Monday of the month	
On behalf of the above named group, I apply for registration with Ochil View HA as a Registered Tenant's Organisation as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.	
Signed:	
Name:	
Position within the Organisation:	



### **Budget for tenant participation**

Ochil View Housing Association has a dedicated budget for Tenant Participation and this meets costs associated with:

- Meetings of the Involved Residents Group
- Annual funding for Registered Tenants Organisations
- Publication of tenant newsletters
- Annual update of the tenant's handbook
- Focus groups
- Publication of the Annual Performance Report to tenants
- Staff attendance at RTO meetings

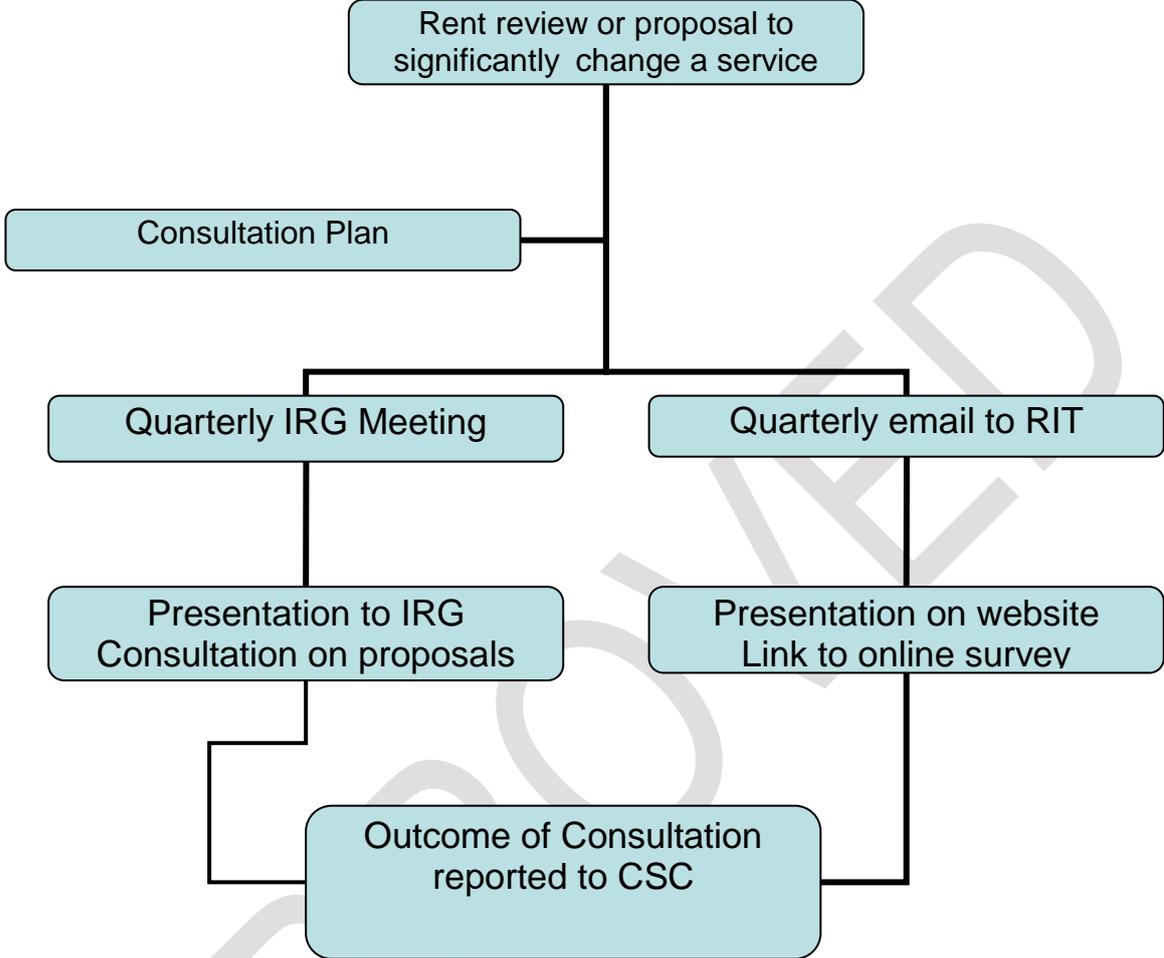
In addition to these specific costs, if required, funds will be made available to:

- Pay a start-up grant of £150 to any newly registered RTO
- Provide annual grant funding to an RTO on the basis of a basic amount of £300 allocated for each group with up to 300 units, plus an additional £0.50 for each unit over and above 300.
- Training of RTO Office bearers

Ochil View will meet the following costs related to tenant participation from its general budget

- Maintenance of the Associations Website and Facebook page
- Commissioning of tenant surveys
- Administrative support to RTO's is also provided by Ochil View Staff where required

Outline of Consultation Process



Tenant Participation Action Plan

		<b>Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plan 2015-2018</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time Table</b>
<b>1</b>	Revise the Tenant Participation Strategy	Include all amendments and revisions requested by TPAS in their Audit of TP Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>February 2015- Draft to Customer Services Committee</li> <li>April 2015 – Consultation with Tenants</li> <li>April 2015 – Final Version to Customer Services Committee</li> <li>April 2015 – Final Version to Management Committee</li> </ul> <b>COMPLETE</b>
<b>2</b>	Establish Register of Interested Tenants	The Registered or Interested tenants are tenants who become involved in consultation at a distance	April 2015 <b>COMPLETE</b>
<b>2.1</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invitation to be extended to all tenants through email, summer 2015 newsletter</li> <li>letter to all new tenants and all tenants who have recorded positive or negative feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email – April 2015 and repeat quarterly</li> <li>Newsletter – June 2015 and repeated at 6 monthly intervals</li> <li>All New tenant- repeat quarterly</li> <li>Tenants giving feedback – repeat quarterly</li> </ul> <b>COMPLETE</b>

Item	Action	Description	Time Table
3	Hold 2 Focus Group Meetings Annually	All RTO's, members of IRG and members of RIT to be invited to attend focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>March 2015 : Website Development</li> <li>November 2015: Repairs by Appointment</li> </ul>
4	Consultation in West Fife	Consult West Fife tenants about interest in West Fife based IRG and carry out locally based activities based on their priorities if there is sufficient interest to establish such a group increased.	<p>Consultation : May 2015            Invitation to West Fife Tenant's Open evening showed little appetite for residents meeting. West Fife tenants will continue to be offered opportunity to attend IRG, or become member of RIT if the cannot attend</p> <p><b>COMPLETE</b></p>
5	Demonstrate effectiveness of complaints, feedback and participation	All staff to be informed at Staff Meetings by Head of Customer Services of examples of how complaints, feedback and participation have improved service	February 2015 onwards <b>COMPLETE</b>
6	Training opportunities for tenants	All appropriate courses will be publicised as and when they arise	From January 2015 <b>COMPLETE</b>
7	Tenant Zone on Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be developed in consultation with tenants at Focus group , content suggested to include copies of the IRG minutes,</li> <li>Outcomes of consultations and the outcomes of complaints and actions taken.</li> <li>Link to Facebook</li> </ul>	<p>From March 2015            The specification for the Tenant Zone and other website improvements was agreed at IRG in July 2015.</p>

Item	Action	Description	Time Table
8	Newsletter content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRG/RIT membership</li> <li>• News about IRG/RIT consultations</li> <li>• How to get involved with Consultation</li> <li>• RTO news</li> <li>• Membership news</li> <li>• Committee news</li> <li>• Complaints outcomes and feedback</li> <li>• Consultation feedback</li> </ul>	From Summer 2015 <b>COMPLETE</b>
9	Annual Rent review consultation	Opportunity for tenants to contribute online	January 2015 and annually <b>COMPLETE</b>

APPROVED

## **REMIT OF THE INVOLVED RESIDENTS GROUP**

### **1.0 MEMBERSHIP**

- The Involved Residents Group shall consist of representatives from Ochil View Registered Tenant Organisations nominated by their Organisation and individuals who volunteer and wish to be involved in the work of the Group.
- All new tenants will be invited to become members of the group shortly after the start of their tenancy and will receive papers for the first meeting of the group scheduled to take place after the start of their tenancy
- All tenants will be invited to attend meetings of the group by publicity in the Association's twice annual newsletter and on the Association's Facebook Page.
- Tenants who express an interest in attending the group will be invited to attend and sent papers for meetings of the Group.
- Any member of the Group can cease to be a member at any time by asking for their name to be taken off the mailing list
- Any member of the Group who does not attend 3 consecutive meetings **without apology** will be removed from membership, as will any member who breaches the Code of Conduct.

### **2.0 QUORUM**

A quorum will be 5 members of the group. If a quorum of members is not present within 15 minutes of the scheduled start of the meeting, the meeting may continue with the agreement of those residents attending.

### **3.0 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

- A Chairperson shall be elected at the first meeting of the Involved Residents Group in each Financial Year
- The Chairperson shall not be re-elected to serve for two consecutive years

### **4.0 ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

The role of the Chairperson shall be:

#### 4.1 Agenda

The Chairperson will liaise with the member of staff assigned to service the Group over the preparation of the Agenda by reviewing and approving the draft Agenda. Only once approved can the Agenda be issued.

#### 4.2 Minutes

The Chairperson will receive a draft Minute of the Committee meeting from the member of staff assigned to service the Group for review and approval. Only Minutes approved by the Chairperson should be circulated for formal approval by the Group at their next meeting.

### 5.0 **MEETINGS**

The Involved Residents Group will meet at least quarterly unless specifically convened to deal with an urgent issue. Meetings will last maximum of 2 hours. Any business remaining at the conclusion of the meeting shall be held over until the next meeting.

Papers for meetings will be issued to members at least 5 days in advance of meetings.

Annually the Group will set out:

- Dates of proposed meetings
- Main items of business to be discussed at each meeting

### 6.0 **PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Involved Residents Group will be responsible for;

- Representing ( as appropriate) the views of their residents group, local community or themselves
- Influencing the Association's policies through consultation and discussion of draft Policies prior to approval by the Association's decision making Committee's.
- Channelling a two-way flow of information between the Management Committee and the community.
- Identifying areas of interest or concern for further information/advice from the Association.
- Considering the Association's Annual report on Social Housing Charter Outcomes and Performance

## 7.0 SERVICING

The Involved Resident's Group will be serviced by the Association's Head of Customer Services (or other member of staff as required) who will be responsible for ensuring that reports are prepared and issued in time for the appropriate meeting. The Group may invite other persons to meetings where their views would be helpful to the Group's discussions.

## 8.0 REVIEW

The remit of the Involved Residents Group will be reviewed at least every 2 years.

<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
Graeme Wilson Head of Customer Services	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2014	