

# **Tenant Participation Strategy Supported Housing**

Approved ; Housing and Care Services  
Committee : August 2009

**BIELD HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

Registered Office: 79 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh EH7 4QF  
Scottish Charity No. SC006878

**BIELD HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

**TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

**CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Participation at the National (Strategic) Level .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Participation at the Local (Scheme) Level .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Proposals on which tenants will be consulted .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>How tenants will be consulted .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Resources to implement the Tenant Participation Strategy .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Action Plan .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Information .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Monitoring of the Procedure .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Review of the Strategy .....</b>	<b>8</b>

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Bield is committed to creating opportunities for tenants as individuals or groups to become involved in the affairs of the Association at whatever level they deem appropriate. The Association will seek to ensure that its Tenant Participation Strategy provides such opportunities at both the national (strategic) level and at local (scheme) level.

The overall objective of the Tenant Participation Strategy is to ensure that Bield and its tenants can work together in sharing information and ideas, and in the decision making processes in respect of its landlord services.

## **2 PARTICIPATION AT THE NATIONAL (STRATEGIC) LEVEL**

Bield is committed to creating opportunities for tenants as individuals or groups to become involved in the affairs of the Association at national (strategic) level.

In support of this policy, Bield is committed to:

- Working with tenants in a national Partnership Forum, involving tenants, Senior staff, the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board and the Association's operational Committees
- Involving tenants by including a representative of the Partnership Forum on relevant working groups
- Facilitating membership and co-option onto Bield's Committees and Board
- Enabling tenants to participate in Bield's activities through membership of the Association in accordance with Bield's Membership Policy
- Publishing a Tenant Newsletter and distributing a copy to every tenant 3 times yearly
- Completing national Tenant Satisfaction Surveys on a regular basis
- Publishing an Annual Report and distributing a copy to every tenant
- Making tenants aware of the strategy through its inclusion in the Tenants Handbook and by drawing attention to it at suitable opportunities

To achieve participation at a national (strategic) level the following will be implemented:

### **National Partnership Forum**

#### Purpose

The Partnership Forum will act as a national group within which tenant participation proposals at a strategic level will be discussed and decided.

#### Tenant Representation and Election

To ensure that the Forum has as wide a representation as possible, Bield's area of operation will be split into four geographical areas from which four representatives will be elected, giving a total of 16 tenant places on the Forum

These four geographical areas are; Central, East, North and West. A breakdown of the locations covering each geographical area is shown on Appendix 1

Tenants will remain on the Partnership Forum for a 3 year period and will require to stand down at this time but can stand for re-election. Vacancies will be advertised via the Bulletin.

In terms of nominees, the following will apply:

- A tenant in one geographical area cannot make a nomination for another geographical area
- Each tenant can only make one nomination
- Only one nominee from each household will be accepted. Where a household has more than 1 tenant, a member of the same household cannot nominate another member
- If more than one nominee is received for any vacancy then a ballot will take place across the geographical area where the vacancy has occurred
- The nominee who receives the highest number of votes will be elected on to the Forum
- Only one representative from a scheme can be elected on to the forum for schemes up to 40 units and two for schemes with 40 units or more

#### Board Members and Staff Representation

Board members and Senior staff will attend the Partnership Forum and may include the following:

- Chair or/and the Vice Chair of the Board and Chair of the Operational Committees,
- Chief Executive,
- Director of Housing Services
- Assistant Director : Housing Services
- Assistant Director : Supported Housing
- Director and Assistant Director of Property Services
- Service Manager: Housing Policy and Performance
- Administrative Assistant: Housing Services

Other staff may be invited to attend the Partnership Forum as required. Attendance will be dependent on the matters to be discussed.

#### Meetings

The Partnership Forum will normally meet four times a year. Twice yearly a meeting will take place including senior staff and members of the Board and Operational Committees to focus on matters such as the Budget Strategy. The remaining two meetings will focus on operational issues and will be attended by appropriate staff from the operational departments.

It is important that tenant members of the Partnership Forum have access to good meeting facilities, are able to contribute to the creation of the agenda, and have a record of the meeting. In this regard;

- Meeting times will be set having full regard to the travel time involved
- Meeting venues will be barrier free
- Travel arrangements will be agreed which are appropriate to individual need, including the use of taxis, accessible public transport and where appropriate, Bield vehicles

- Agendas will be prepared after consultation with members of the Partnership Forum
- Final agenda and papers will be issued at least one week before the meeting date
- A record of the meeting will be issued to all members prior to the next meeting

#### Acknowledging Independence and Inter-dependence

The Partnership Forum model will require a recognition and acceptance, by all parties, of the legitimate need for both independence and inter-dependence within the Forum itself.

Independence which ensures:

- Resources and funding to allow tenant members to fulfil their responsibilities
- That tenant members are able to seek independent advice and assistance if desired
- That tenant members are able to discuss and consider matters outwith the Partnership Forum meetings and are given adequate time to do so
- Compliance with statutory and contractual obligations placed upon Bield as a Registered Social Landlord, employer and provider of services

Inter-dependence which ensures:

- A true partnership approach to consultation at the national (strategic) level
- Acknowledgement of the different but complementary input each can make to the Partnership Forum
- A strengthening of the ethos which already exists within Bield
- Open and honest sharing of information, ideas and decision making
- A strengthening of the mutual trust and respect which already exists within Bield
- Improved decision making based upon increased awareness

#### Relationship to Bield Board & Committees

To ensure tenants are involved at each level of the decision making process within Bield, tenants on the Partnership Forum will be represented on Bield's Board and Operational Committees.

In August of each year, prior to the Association's AGM, two tenants will be nominated by the Partnership Forum for potential co-option onto each of the Housing and Care Services Committee and the Development and Property Services Committee.

One of the two tenants co-opted onto each of the above committees will also be nominated by the Partnership Forum to be co-opted onto the Board of Management of Bield. Where more than one member of each Committee has been nominated for the Board, an election will take place amongst Partnership Forum members.

The final decision on accepting nominations to the Board and Operational Committees lie however with the Association's Board of Management.

#### Constitution

The Partnership Forum will agree a constitution. It is not however envisaged that the Partnership Forum will register as a Registered Tenant Organisation as members

would require to have an AGM and annual elections. The Partnership Forum may however review this again in the future.

Tenants on the Partnership Forum will not require to be members of the Association unless they wish to stand for election to the Committee and Board of management at a later date.

#### Independent Advice

The Partnership Forum may choose to join independent advisory groups such as Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), Tenants Information service (TIS) or Age Concern. This would provide access to independent information and advice as well as training and seminars

#### Training

All new tenant members will receive induction training prior to participation in their first meeting in order to enable them to understand the remit of the Partnership Forum and the role of relevant operational departments and Committees.

The Partnership Forum will identify any training requirements on an annual basis, in August of each year by completing a training review form. This will allow any training to be included in the budget for the following financial year.

As part of their own induction and ongoing training needs, members of the Board of Management and operational Committees will be offered the opportunity to attend a Partnership Forum meeting to develop their understanding on the activities of the group.

#### Code of conduct

Members of the Forum will be required to follow the Code of Conduct to be developed and implemented by March 2010

### **Membership of the Association**

Bield has a Membership Policy, which highlights that all Bield tenants have the opportunity to be members of the Association. Tenants can become members by contacting the Secretary of the Association, and the appropriate information will be forwarded to them. The tenant pays a £1 membership fee and is then invited to attend future Annual General Meetings of the Association.

Membership of the Association is open to a wide range of people, unlike the Partnership Forum which is restricted to Bield tenants, board members and senior staff within Bield, and has been specifically formed to involve tenants in the affairs of Bield at a national/strategic level.

### **Tenants Newsletter**

Bield produces its own newsletter, the Bulletin, 3 times per year. The Bulletin provides a range of information relevant to Bield's tenants, service users and staff to keep them updated on a range of issues relating to the Association. Tenants can also submit items to be included in the newsletter by giving these to their Scheme

Manager, Housing Officer or by sending them directly to the Service Manager: Housing Policy and Performance.

Around July of each year, the Bulletin also includes an annual report on Bield's performance over the year on matters such as repairs, arrears and allocations.

The Partnership Forum can choose to co-opt a member onto the editorial board, which oversees the content and production of the tenant newsletter. The Bulletin is available in different formats including community languages, CD, large print etc.

### **Tenant Satisfaction Surveys**

Tenants' views about Bield's accommodation and services are valued. Bield undertakes a range of surveys to seek the views of tenants on the service received from the various departments across Bield. The results of these Surveys will be used to identify areas for improvement which will be discussed with the Partnership Forum and published in the Bulletin.

### **Tenant Handbook**

A Tenant Handbook will be published and a copy distributed to every tenant. The handbook will be reviewed regularly in consultation with the Partnership Forum, registered tenant organisations and by obtaining feedback from tenants via the Tenant Newsletter.

### **Interested Parties List**

On occasion, the views of tenants who have expressed an interest in being consulted on "one off" issues will be sought where there is a need to consult with a targeted group of tenants. These tenants will be held on an Interested Parties list which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **3 PARTICIPATION AT THE LOCAL (SCHEME) LEVEL**

Bield is committed to creating opportunities for tenants as individuals or groups to become involved in the affairs of the Association at Local (scheme) level

In support of this policy, Bield is committed to:

- Consulting tenants on matters relating to the use, furnishing and decoration of communal areas and on the major repairs and refurbishment programme within houses and communal areas
- Holding annual meetings in all schemes to share information, ideas and decision making, as appropriate, on scheme related and general policy and service standard issues, making a record of the main points discussed, any comments or feedback and agreed action available to all tenants within the scheme
- Making arrangements for issue-based scheme meetings and tenant choice as far as practicable
- Completing tenant satisfaction surveys about new schemes, major repairs or adaptations
- Undertaking satisfaction surveys of new tenants shortly after they become Bield tenants
- Assisting with the formation of tenant organisations within schemes

To achieve participation at a local level, within a scheme, the following will be implemented:

### **Scheme Manager**

Within each scheme the Scheme Manager will be the tenant's first point of contact for advice and information. The Scheme Manager will listen to tenants' views and ideas on how services can be improved.

### **Housing Officer**

A Housing Officer will visit each scheme a minimum of 10 times per year and will visit tenants in their own homes to discuss issues such as rents, benefits, services or complaints.

### **Scheme Meetings**

Meetings of all tenants will be arranged at least once per year to discuss general policy and service standard issues within the scheme. Tenants will be encouraged to contribute to the agenda and a record of these meetings, including feedback from tenants and those attending, will be made and a copy sent to each tenant. Tenants will be advised that a representative such as a carer or family member can attend with them or on their behalf. Additional meetings may be held to consult tenants about other issues, including the redecoration of communal areas or replacement of fixtures and fittings in their homes.

### **Tenant Satisfaction Surveys within individual tenancies or at scheme level**

Bield will carry out various Tenant Satisfaction surveys, as we wish to know tenants' views so that we can continue to improve what we do. Tenant Satisfaction surveys will be carried out at all new schemes, at schemes where we have done major work such as bathroom or kitchen replacement work and where adaptations, such as the installation of a shower, have taken place. New tenant surveys will also take place. Other surveys may be developed on particular issues from time to time to meet the requirements of regulatory bodies or on specific service issues. Details of the outcome of these surveys will be published in the Tenant Newsletter and may be discussed with the Partnership Forum and relevant Operational Committees when considering improvements to services and Policy reviews.

### **Registered Tenant Organisations**

#### Background

Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) have been introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which states that an RTO should be an independent organisation set up primarily to represent tenants' housing and related issues.

Bield will support tenants wishing to form an RTO at their scheme, as this will ensure that tenants are involved in the management of their scheme and in the operation of Bield. An RTO requires to be properly set up and to represent the views of all tenants within the scheme.

SEDD Circular 7/2002 provides guidance on criteria and procedures for registration, however Bield's procedures for registration will be drawn up to balance this complex

guidance with the needs of tenants within supported housing, who have historically demonstrated a reluctance to be involved in formal participation processes.

### Purpose

The role of an RTO will be to represent tenants' views on housing related matters, and Bield will consult with RTOs on issues which affect their scheme, and on some national issues. The RTO may however also be the social committee within a scheme if that is the wish of the majority of the tenants and the Committee are willing to provide this role.

### Setting up and Registering RTOs

Bield will provide the following information:

- Tenants' leaflet – How to set up an RTO at your scheme
- Model Constitution and guidance note
- Application to register a Tenant Organisation

Staff and other resources such as postage, typing and photocopying will also be provided along with the necessary support to set up and maintain an RTO.

### Social Committees that do not wish to register

It may be that some Social Committees have been set up only to deal with social activities and do not wish to become RTOs, and Bield will respect the choice of the Committee and tenants. In this case, Bield will ask the Committee if they wish to be consulted on issues specific to their scheme but not national or strategic issues.

### RTOs outwith a scheme

Bield will also consider applications from RTOs who represent a wider area of operation than a Bield scheme. This will be done by taking account of how the organisation will demonstrate its ability to represent Bield tenants' views.

### Registration Process

Bield will have a procedure for registering RTOs and this will be reviewed together with all other information on RTOs. The review will take place in consultation with the Partnership Forum, RTOs and by obtaining feedback from tenants via the Tenant Newsletter.

### Access to the Register of RTOs

A register of RTOs will be held on Bield's intranet and will be accessible at any of Bield's offices during normal office hours.

## **4 PROPOSALS ON WHICH TENANTS WILL BE CONSULTED**

Bield will consult tenants on the following:

- Changes to Bield's policies on housing management or repairs and maintenance, if the changes are likely to significantly affect tenants
- Changes to the standard of Bield's services for housing management or repairs and maintenance

- The Tenant Participation Strategy and its review
- Any proposals to transfer Bield houses to another landlord
- Any other issues which are agreed at the Partnership Forum

## **5 HOW TENANTS WILL BE CONSULTED**

Bield will consult with individual tenants, Registered Tenant Organisations and the Partnership Forum on the above. Bield recognises that the process and format of each consultation will require to be flexible depending on the policy, the nature and perceived impact of any changes under consideration and timing. In some cases only the Partnership Forum will be consulted in recognition of their role in representing the wider group of tenants. In other cases a fuller consultation with all tenants will be necessary either via the newsletter, through surveys, annual scheme meetings, focus groups etc.

On each occasion consideration will be given to:

- The way in which tenant views will be obtained
- How Bield will take account of tenant views
- What information they will provide when consulting tenants
- How and when a final decision will be taken
- How the proposed changes may affect tenants
- How and within what timescale tenants can make their views known to Bield
- How tenants will receive feedback
- The contact officer leading the consultation
- Information on how to complain about the consultation

## **6 RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

As tenant participation is an integral part of the housing management function, it will be very difficult to calculate the full cost of staff time and other resources across the Association in relation to Tenant Participation. Bield will however assess the supplementary resources required to implement the additional Tenant Participation requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

The Partnership Forum will agree the proposed annual budget to meet these additional costs and will monitor and review expenditure within the budget. Details of the annual budget will also be published in the Tenant Newsletter.

## **7 ACTION PLAN**

It may not be possible to progress all issues which Bield and tenants wish to review in consultation. In this situation, to ensure priorities are clear between all parties an Action Plan will be drawn up in consultation with the Partnership Forum.

The Action Plan will include the issues to be reviewed, the timescale to progress each issue and who will be involved in the consultation process. The Action Plan will be updated at each Partnership Forum meeting thereafter and will be reviewed annually when in place.

## **8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

In the provision of housing and services the Association is committed to contributing to the achievements of a Scotland where everyone can participate fully and be

treated equally and fairly without discrimination arising from gender, age, disability, race or any other personal characteristics.

## **9 INFORMATION**

On request the Association will provide tenants with a copy of the Tenant Participation Strategy.

## **10 MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY**

On an annual basis, a report will be presented to the Board of Management at its July meeting on the involvement and participation of tenant members within the Board of Management and the Operational Committees which will include the following:

- The number of Annual Scheme Meetings held
- The number of other Scheme Meetings held
- The number of written communications to tenants
- The number of tenants who are members of the Association
- The number of Partnership Forum Meetings held
- The number of Registered Tenant Organisations
- A summary of survey results relating to property maintenance and upgrading works, and related activities

The following will also be reported to the Development and Property Services Committee:

- Feedback from questionnaires on reactive repairs, adaptations, refurbishment works, new tenants moving in.(annually)
- Feedback where tenants have indicated dissatisfaction with specific repairs (quarterly)
- As required, Compliance report on stock transfer agreements (quarterly)

## **11 REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY**

The Tenant Participation Strategy will be reviewed on a five yearly basis in consultation with the Partnership Forum, RTOs and by obtaining feedback from tenants via the Tenant Newsletter. Bield recognises that in the interim, processes and methods of consulting tenants may be developed and improved in response to tenant feedback and may differ from those specified above.

## Geographical Areas for Election Purposes

### CENTRAL AREA

Bothwell	Wishaw	Bannockburn	Dumbarton
Airdrie	Stirling	Alexandria	Newarthill
Falkirk	Balloch	Uddingston	Cumbernauld
Bo'ness	Kirkintilloch	Biggar	Coatbridge
Stenhousemuir	Greenock	Motherwell	Bridge of Allan
Grangemouth	Port Glasgow	Milngavie	Carluke

### NORTH AREA

Leven	Bankfoot	Buckhaven	Brechin
St Andrews	Crail	Arbroath	Montrose
Perth	Dunfermline	Dundee	Blairgowrie
Kennoway	St. Monans	Kirriemuir	Broughty Ferry
Glenrothes	Ballingry	Monifieth	Elie

### EAST AREA

Dunbar	Duns	Dalkeith	Blackburn
Musselburgh	Penicuik	Whitburn	Livingston
Edinburgh	Melrose	West Calder	Uphall
Haddington	Gorebridge	Broxburn	Bathgate
Macmerry	Greenlaw	Armadale	Selkirk
Wallyford	Winchburgh	Fauldhouse	Bonnyrigg
Prestonpans	Linlithgow		

### WEST AREA

Dunoon	Oban	Patna	Glasgow
Kirn	Dunbeg	Cumnock	Johnstone
Innellan	Helensburgh	Netherthird	Saltcoats
Rothesay	Kilwinning	Dalmellington	