



## Tenant Participation and Consultation Strategy

<b>DATE</b>	<b>February 2008</b>
<b>LAST REVIEW DATE</b>	<b>March 2003</b>
<b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b>	<b>February 2009</b>
<b>REVIEW CYCLE</b>	<b>Annually</b>

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Fairfield Housing Co-operative is committed to

- Providing good quality local housing in the Perth & Kinross area;
- Improving the services the Co-operative provides to tenants;
- Improving the quality of life for our residents by creating attractive and stable communities;
- Providing tenants with opportunities to participate in influencing, and ensuring these objectives are effective.

## **2.0 Legal Requirements & Good Practice**

The Co-operative will seek to comply with all current legislation and statutory regulations covering tenant participation, and in particular, seeks to comply with:

- Communities Scotland Performance Standard GS2.2 Tenant Participation
- Communities Scotland Performance Standard GS3.1 Responsiveness to Service Users
- S.F.H. A. Raising Standards in Housing Chapter 12 Tenant Participation
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

## **3.0 Equal Opportunities**

Fairfield Housing Co-operative is an equal opportunities organisation. We aim to ensure that no tenant, member, employee or stakeholder receives no less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, family circumstances, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, religion, political or sexual orientation.

## **4.0 Participation**

4.1 The Co-operative is managed by a Committee comprising solely of tenants who are elected at the A.G.M. Although this helps to keep us informed of what issues are important to tenants, we realise that this has restrictions:

- we do not always have enough information to base decisions on, and,
- the limited number of places on the Committee means that some tenants and service users are excluded from participating.

For these reasons, we believe that it is important to provide tenants and service users with a range of opportunities for participation, consultation and exchange of information.

4.2 The Co-operative recognises that tenant participation is a continuous process and that good working relationships will take time to evolve, as will momentum, interest and a willingness to participate on the part of tenants.

4.3 Participation, and in particular, tenant participation can be defined in several ways.

We have chosen to define it as:

“tenants influencing the decisions we take about housing policies and services. It is a two way process involving the sharing of information, ideas and plans. It provides opportunities to empower tenants to a high degree and makes the Co-operative more accountable for its actions.”

To do this, we will ensure that:

- Tenants are given clear information, in a variety of formats, and in plain language, on the issues they regard as important;
- We use different ways of obtaining information from tenants, about what their needs are, and what they think about the services we provide;
- We will consult tenants on housing management and maintenance issues that directly affect them and their tenancy;
- We will seek to engage with tenants in a variety of ways, and in particular, to continue to attract new members to the Co-operative's Committee;
- We will develop other ways of engaging with tenants which will provide vehicles for meaningful communication and information sharing;
- We will use that information to inform policy and practice with the aim of continuously improving the Co-operative's performance and service to tenants.

- 4.4 Certain expectations are placed upon tenants in the social rented sector, which are not placed on those in other tenures. Different levels of participation exist, from having access to information at the lowest level, to becoming a Committee Member at the highest. The Co-operative therefore, recognises the decision not to participate as a legitimate choice for tenants and a valid outcome of its tenant participation strategy.
- 4.5 The Co-operative recognises the importance of community events which allow tenants to meet and take part in social activities. The Co-operative will organise and contribute to funding such activities. Although they may not be undertaken to specifically to gather tenant views or opinions, they are an important aspect of the Co-operative's and Committee's activities. They engender community cohesion and spirit and strengthen social networks. These events also allow staff to interact with tenants in an informal setting, helping to build relationships as well as gather anecdotal information on services and local issues.
- 4.6 The Co-operative will set out specific objectives in relation to tenant participation, in an Action Plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually.