



City & District of St. Albans
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Housing Services
District Council Offices
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St. Albans
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AL1 3BR



TENANT PARTICIPATION COMPACT





Please send me a detailed copy of the action plan for the Tenant Participation Compact.

I am interested in knowing more about:-

leaseholders issues.....

young persons opportunities in shaping housing issues

the ways the Council will be involving minority groups.....

how the Council and the Housing Department works.....

the involvement of residents in retirement schemes in decision-making.....

being involved in monitoring the repairs service in Housing

Name:.....

Address:

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COMMITMENT

St. Albans District Council is committed to working in partnership with tenants and with other agencies to provide efficient services and enhance the quality of life of all people in the area.

Our aim is to work together to create new opportunities for tenants to have a greater say in how services are delivered.

Tenants from the Compact Working Party are authors of this Compact and have been involved in all stages of its development. My role as Tenant Participation Officer has been to guide them and advise them through the process.

This Tenants Compact is a working document which sets out how we plan to improve tenant participation in St. Albans District over the next three years.

TENANTS



BRAND

Mr Hurd

J. Hood

Mrs Hood

J. Spear

Mr Spear

R. Hornett

Mr Hornett

R. Russell

Mr Russell

P. Marshall

Mrs Marshall

R. Rolf

Mr Rolf

C. Williams

Mrs Williams

A. Seldon

Mr Seldon

Diane P. Lawrence

Miss Lawrence

J. Mason

Mr Mason

A. Lee

Cllr A. Lee

J. Lusby

Cllr J. Lusby

J. Clarke

Cllr Clarke

Janet Smith

Cllr Smith

Bert Pawle

Cllr Pawle

A. Marshall

Cllr Marshall

WHAT IS A TENANT PARTICIPATION COMPACT?

A Compact is a written agreement between the Council and tenants which sets out:

- How tenants, leaseholders and residents associations can be involved in decisions on housing matters and take part in the Council's decision-making process.
- What the Council and its tenants want to achieve through the Compact, such as improving the standard of local services and the way services are delivered.
- How this Compact will be implemented and checked to ensure it is working properly.

(In this document "tenants" means tenants and leaseholders)

AIMS OF THIS COMPACT

- To provide a flexible framework which offers the widest possible range of opportunities for involvement.
- To work together to continually improve housing services.
- To support and develop tenants and residents associations.
- To ensure that tenant participation and involvement reflects the diversity of our community.
- Work to eliminate barriers to participation.
- To find new and innovative ways to involve residents.
- To demonstrate a clear and open decision-making process.

HOW INFORMATION IS PROVIDED

We are aware that some tenants may choose not to be actively involved, as is their choice. However, it is essential that all tenants receive key information regarding Housing Services to ensure that they have equal opportunity to access any aspect of the service.

Rent statements will be sent out quarterly.

Rent advice letters will be sent out annually.

The *Housing Times* magazine will be circulated quarterly to:

- All tenants
- Harpenden Town Hall
- Redbourn Parish Village Hall
- London Colney Parish Hall
- Wheathampstead Parish Hall
- Ridgeview single homeless hostel
- Other local housing associations in the district
- Available at the District Council's Office
- Available on the Council's website

New tenants will receive a new tenancy welcome pack which lists services available from the Council and a summary of the Tenant Participation Compact.

WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED

	Time Commitment
<p>1. Surveys/Questionnaires Tenants can join our mailing list for surveys on a variety of issues.</p>	15 minutes per survey
<p>2. Telephone Surveys You can join our Customer Response list for follow up responses on tenants satisfaction with our services.</p>	5 minutes per telephone call
<p>3. Focus Groups When we need feedback on specific issues we set up focus groups. These are made up of between 6-12 tenants who will meet once or twice.</p>	1-3 hrs per focus group
<p>4. Meetings Meetings held on an ad hoc basis to discuss specific issues as they occur. (They can be initiated by either residents or Council Officers).</p>	1-3 hrs
<p>5. Residents Conference</p>	1 day per year
<p>6. Housing Times Editorial Team An opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to contribute articles to the quarterly Housing publication.</p>	Varies according to commitment of individual tenant
<p>7. Partnering Project Group A tenant representative is part of the selection panel in choosing contractors who will be delivering improvements and repairs to Council stock.</p>	2-3 days per project
<p>8. Residents Associations Groups of tenants may wish to set up a resident association to address local issues.</p>	
<p>9. Estate Walkabouts Informal walkabouts attended by Council staff, Ward Members and residents to highlight issues in the local area.</p>	10 minutes - 1 hr

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION

Resources

The Council will provide resources to encourage and enable tenants to participate fully, these will include:

- A dedicated Tenant Participation Officer.
- A start-up grant (currently at £100 a year).
- An annual budget for tenant participation.
- Funding costs involved in room/hall hire for meetings.
- Assistance with stationery/ photocopying/printing/distribution.
- Reimbursement for cost of refreshments at estate meetings.
- Funding travel and childcare to allow tenants to attend focus groups, tenants forums and Housing Liaison Consultative Forum meetings and other tenant focused events.
- Providing assistance with planning and publicising meetings.
- Training for committee members of recognised groups.
- Providing associate membership to TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service).
- Providing an interpretation/ translation service on request for estate meetings.

Support

Council staff will provide support for tenant participation by:

1. Help in setting up new associations by sending out information packs, holding meetings and discussing with interested parties to gauge interest and discuss future actions.
2. Attending meetings, if requested, given four weeks' notice (if less notice is given we will endeavour to attend wherever possible).
3. Carrying out estate inspections with residents association representatives twice yearly.
4. Identifying and accessing training for tenants who want to get more involved by funding external or in-house training.
5. Help tenants to work together with elected Ward Members to improve participation and decision making throughout housing services.

HOW WILL THE COMPACT BE MONITORED?

It is essential this agreement be regularly reviewed on its performance to ensure that it is working and continues to deliver agreed expectations.

The Compact will be monitored by the Tenants Compact Review Panel. Through monitoring we can:-

- Monitor progress information on each of the targets set in the action plan.
- Identify where performance is below target and by working together, find ways of putting it right.
- Assess our performance against local and national performance indicators.

(St. Albans District Councils' Housing Services is a member of TPHERTS. This group consists of Tenant Participation Officers and invited tenants from other councils and housing associations within Hertfordshire that meets quarterly to share good practice and tenant involvement.)

HOW WILL THIS COMPACT BE REVIEWED?

A Compact Review Panel has been formed from the Tenants Compact Working Party consisting of Tenant representatives and Council staff and will:-

- Meet quarterly.
- Review performance targets as set out in the Action plan.
- Establish and maintain a database of numbers attending various events and meetings.
- Collect information on tenants' profiles to enable us to tailor our services according to tenants needs.
- Review all areas of tenant participation for equality and diversity.
- Review the agreement and propose changes.
- Produce an annual report to be published in:
 1. *The Housing Times*.
 2. To members via Members Bulletin.
- Review complaints.

DURING 2006 WE AIM TO:

- Engage and consult with leaseholders to enable them to participate in the decision-making process.
- Involve and encourage young people to voice their opinions and help improve the delivery of housing services.
- Find ways to involve minority groups in shaping the housing services.
- Increase tenants understanding of how the Council delivers its services in Housing.
- Promote involvement of tenants in retirement schemes.
- Form tenants monitoring groups to increase repairs satisfaction.
- Schedule 6 monthly walkabouts on estates with Council housing.
- Set up a tenants support network for active tenants.
- Involve tenants of flats & maisonettes in customer service improvement.

DURING 2007 WE AIM TO:

Continue to support all initiatives formed in 2006.

And

- Organise a leaseholder's conference.
- Organise a young persons event.