

Woking Borough Council



# Tenant Participation Compact



**We would welcome your views and comments on this document. Please write to:**

**Tenant and Leaseholder Services  
Woking Borough Council  
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Gloucester Square  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 6YL**

**If you would like any of the documents mentioned in this Compact, please see the website [www.woking.gov.uk](http://www.woking.gov.uk) or contact the Tenant and Leaseholder Services on telephone number 01483 743828.**

A transcript of this document can be provided for visually impaired people, either in large print, braille or on tape. Please contact the number below if you require further information.

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# Acknowledgements

This Tenant Participation Compact has been produced by a working group, formed at the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum Annual General Meeting in May 2005, of nine tenants, leaseholders and officers with support from Councillors. Input has also been sought from those who have received the paperwork, but were not formal working group members.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped to produce this document. It is designed to promote an even better working relationship between Woking Borough Council and its tenants and leaseholders.

Signed:

On behalf of tenants



On behalf of leaseholders



On behalf of Housing and Property Services



On behalf of Councillors



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## 1.1 What is a Tenant Participation Compact?

A Tenant Participation Compact is a formal, signed agreement between the Council and its tenants and leaseholders which sets out in detail how they may work together to involve tenants in decision making about their homes. It should expand on existing good practice arrangements and aim to achieve effective communication between the Council and tenants based on the Core Standards. New guidance on Compacts was issued by the government in 2005 which updated their original requirements. It is part of the government's agenda to improve local services, increase local democracy and sustain local communities.

Woking Borough Council, working with tenants and Councillors, prepared a Tenant Participation Compact in 2002. This has now been updated and is designed to be a working document, subject to review and change.

## 1.2 The Core Standards

There are six Core Standards for a Tenant Participation Compact. These relate to:

1. Housing services
2. Standards for resources for tenant participation
3. Standards for meetings
4. Standards for information
5. Standards for tenants' groups
6. Standards for monitoring and measuring performance

The working group has reviewed these to identify which areas need to be concentrated on to improve the service and tenant participation.

## 1.3 How do Compacts involve everyone?

We fully agree with the new guidance which stresses that councils must communicate effectively and promote opportunities for a level of involvement that suits each individual. As well as supporting a number of democratic and accountable residents' groups, panels, the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and the Tenant Representatives, arrangements are in place to consult with those who are not in recognised groups. We will build on all of these ways of involvement as well as seeking and suggesting new ways for tenants and leaseholders to become involved in tenant participation.

## 1.4 Roles and responsibilities

The working group has drawn up an action plan (Appendix 2) to follow through the aspects in the Core Standards that require more attention. As well as building on the current joint working practices between tenants and housing services, we are proposing to work more closely with Councillors and other council services to support the consultation process and improve the service to you and your community.

Tenant and Leaseholder Services supports tenant participation with the involvement of officers and with the following financial resources: a budget for the Tenant Representatives to assist them in promoting tenant participation; funding for local groups; and production costs for Streetwise magazine. Training is available for those who wish to know more about any aspect of participation and the Council's services.

## 2 What has been achieved so far?

**2.1** The Tenant Participation Compact Working Group reviewed what had been achieved since the first Tenant Participation Compact was produced in 2002. Their progress was reported to the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and in the Streetwise magazine.

**2.2** A list of achievements in relation to the Core Standards is given in Appendix 1 and a summary relating to the Core Standards is given below. Any aspects within the Core Standards that are not already undertaken are included in the action plan.

**Housing Services:** is responsible for negotiating the Compact. There are 22 aspects to this standard ranging from developing strategy to setting standards, handling complaints and monitoring the service. We already do 18 of these.

**Standards for resources for tenant participation:** there are six aspects, all of which the Council fulfils. They include financial help, provision of equipment, and assistance with meeting places.

**Standards for meetings:** this is to ensure there is effective communication and feedback in meetings between the Council and tenants on issues covered by the Compact. It applies to formal decision-making and recognised tenants' groups. There are seven of these standards, five of which we already do.

**Standards for information:** this applies to tenants' groups as well as the Council. There are 13 standards. We already do all of these, but have decided to add one to the action plan – we intend to consider further how to publicise participation and consultation as effectively as possible.

**Standards for tenants' groups:** these are for those involved in decision-making. They will have to meet the Council's agreed and published criteria for formal recognition. They must also be able to show they are democratic and accountable, and comply with all of the 10 standards. The Council believes that its recognised groups meet nine of these, though one needs to be demonstrated further.

**Standards for monitoring and measuring performance:** this is to ensure councils consistently monitor and assess how Compacts perform against standards and targets for a common set of indicators. There are 12 of these, nine of which we already do.

- 3.1** This is explored in detail in the action plan. It includes working with specific groups, for instance leaseholders or sheltered housing tenants.
- 3.2** We have added some aspects not included specifically in the Core Standards. As well as building on our relationship with Local Services, we will work towards liaising more closely with Housing Benefits, Community Services and Customer Services as part of a more corporate approach to tenant participation and residents' involvement in their communities.
- 3.3** We intend to improve the service by following through some of the initiatives undertaken by local authorities who have achieved the government's Beacon Status for 'Involving Tenants in the Housing Service' and by visiting other local authorities nearby to see what they do. These aspects will be put forward by the Innovations sub-group who will report to the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum. References to their involvement are noted at intervals in the action plan.
- 3.4** We will draw up local compacts (or agreements) with residents or groups when it is appropriate to do so and in consultation with all concerned.

- 4.1** The Tenant Participation Compact Working Group will monitor the action plan and update it as targets are met.
- 4.2** The group will also consider remedial action if performance on service delivery falls short of expectation or if there are any complaints about the Compact or tenant participation as a whole. Information about this is in Appendix 3: Complaints under the Tenant Participation Compact Complaints Procedure.
- 4.3** Additional targets will be added to the Compact action plan as new items are suggested for improving the service and improving tenant consultation.
- 4.4** Achievements will be regularly monitored to ensure all aspects are kept under review and functioning effectively and efficiently.
- 4.5** The group will meet at least twice a year and report to the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum.
- 4.6** Progress will be reported in the Streetwise magazine, issued quarterly to all tenants and leaseholders. The Compact will be revised accordingly and notification will be given when an updated version is available.
- 4.7** Tenants and Leaseholders may join the working group at any time by registering an interest with the Tenant Representatives or Housing Manager, Tenant and Leaseholder Services.

- 5.1** Think about what level would suit you and contact us to join in – see Appendix 1: Achievements; Appendix 2: the action plan; and Appendix 5 for details of the Forum, residents' groups, panels and other ways of joining in. Appendix 5 also gives you some idea of the commitment needed and the level of involvement for each activity.

## Achievements related to the Core Standards

### Housing Services: underlying principle: variety of involvement

Aspect	Involvement
Developing the Council's housing policy and strategy	Tenants were members of the Housing Policy Task group and are involved in strategy meetings with the Pride Project, the Council's repairs partners. Policies are agreed by the TLF.
Drawing up and appraising options for housing investment and improvement	Pride Repairs Project with TRs and TLF
Drawing up the Council's capital and renovation programmes	Pride Repairs Project with TRs and TLF
Budgets, finance and rent setting	Discussed at TLF. Rent setting not applicable as set nationally by the government.
Allocation and lettings policies including choice based lettings	Participation in focus group, irregular meetings and participating in debates and decisions
Management of housing services	TLF, residents' groups, individuals are involved: depends on the issue
Policies and procedures for repairs, maintenance, rent collection, rent arrears and voids	A task group including TRs, TLF, completed this task. Any procedural changes are agreed by the TLF.
Tenancy management and sustainability issues, tenancy agreements and conditions	All those involved in tenant participation including TRs, TLF, working groups and individual tenants. The new tenancy agreement and the Tenants' Guide, issued in May 2006, were produced by a working group of tenants and officers and approved by the TLF.
Leaseholder issues and charges	Consultation at appropriate times
Sheltered housing services	Consultation at appropriate times and with various residents' groups
The Council's service and performance strategies and arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the Council's performance, addressing shortcomings and remedial action	TRs and TLF review performance generally. The grounds maintenance and building cleaning monitoring panels and the repairs panel meet at intervals and report on the service

#### Key

TLF Tenant and Leaseholder Forum

TRs

Tenant Representatives

SWG

Surrey Wide Involvement Group

Aspect	Involvement
Setting, monitoring and reviewing services, performance standards and targets for housing management and neighbourhood services	Service Standards have been published: produced by joint working group of officers, tenants and leaseholders and approved by TLF
Proposals to contract Housing Services to other providers including through partnering contracts	Repairs has a partnership with the Pride Project for the capital programme. TRs are fully involved in all aspects.
Neighbourhood issues which affect tenants' homes or the management of the housing service	All are involved: TLF, residents' groups who invite other services, for example, Local Services, police, Surrey County Council and Councillors to their meetings to resolve such issues
Equality policies including race equality policies and policies on racial harassment	Consultation on the Councils policies has involved tenants, leaseholders and residents generally in communities Borough-wide. All constitutions for any groups recognised by the Council include relevant clauses about equality.
Environmental works	Consulted at formal and individual level and through monitoring panels
Arrangements for providing information for tenant consultation and involvement including handling complaints and remedial action	Several forms of consultation and information including TRs, TLF; News and Views newsletter sent to TLF and residents' groups with updates on their activities; residents' groups own flyers and involvement processes, focus groups, surveys, flyers, correspondence, Streetwise magazine. Complaints process is within the Compact.

## Standards of resources for tenant participation: to ensure support

Aspect	Level of support
Reasonable financial help, for example, start-up grant, annual grant and estate budgets	All tenants' groups have financial support until they are formally recognised and have their own bank account when they receive an annual grant. TRs have budget to manage the Tenants' Office and promote tenant participation.
Facilities, for example, access to premises and equipment, stationery, photocopying and help distributing newsletters	Tenants' Office available on request. Officers assist with all aspects, in particular with informal groups who do not have their own budgets.
Advice including independent advice and community development support for local tenant networks	Via SWIG. Also attendance at conferences, training sessions and other learning events.

Aspect	Level of support
Tailored training to meet the needs of tenant representatives or tenants' groups including possible joint training with council staff and members where appropriate. It should also cover equal opportunity issues including policies on race equality and racial harassment	Training on all aspects carried out, but included in action plan for further development
The Council should provide full information on resources	Available through Streetwise, website, TLF meetings and to residents' groups

## Standards for meetings: communication between the Council and tenants

Aspect	Level of communication
Clear objective and mandate	Set out in constitutions
Arrangements for reporting back the outcome including feedback to those who took part	Minutes of meetings are available for attendees and others as appropriate. All tenants and leaseholders are invited to the TLF Annual General Meeting which 40-50 attend and full information is sent to 300-600 others on request. This includes translations in several languages.
Meetings publicised effectively and in good time	Achieved by all groups
Held at suitable times and in accessible places to maximise attendance	Held at venues and times agreed with tenants involved
The Council should pay allowances, provide transport and provide technical assistance, for example, translators	The Council's and Tenants' Office budget used as required

Key	TRs	Tenant Representatives	
TLF	Tenant and Leaseholder Forum	SWIG	Surrey Wide Involvement Group

## Standards for information: applies to tenants' groups and Council

Aspect	Level
Information should be expressed clearly, avoiding jargon and racist, sexist or other biased language. It should be made accessible in large print, cassette, Braille, translation etc	All undertaken though the Council corporately, phasing out use of Braille following consultation with user groups
Tenants should achieve as appropriate information on housing strategies, policies, priorities, investment options and plans, arrangements for delegating housing management including contracting out of services, arrangements for developing best value including monitoring and reviewing performance and setting service standards and targets, housing management and other relevant local services, present and future capital works affecting tenants, their homes and their area, the Council's race equality and racial harassment policies, how they can get involved in housing management and decision-making and what this would mean for them including benefits for both tenants and the Council and support available to help them get involved (10 aspects)	<p>Information is given to all tenants and leaseholders through Streetwise, focus groups, the TLF, the Pride Project attended by the TRs and in briefing/training sessions (for instance on race equality).</p> <p>Streetwise has a section on involvement and encouragement is given at the TLF Annual General Meeting where all are invited; via the website; through panels; and at a local level with groups. General information leaflets are also available.</p> <p>Financial and practical support is available for all aspects</p> <p>How we might publicise information more effectively is included generally in the action plan</p>

## Standards for tenants' groups involved in decision-making: must demonstrate that they are democratic and accountable

Aspect	Level achieved
Have a written constitution with membership clearly open to all tenants including equal opportunities policies which are compliant, having open financial records and regular meetings with an AGM, regular elections and active membership determined by the Council and tenants (five aspects)	All recognised groups and the TLF sign an appropriate constitution originally devised by tenants and leaseholders with officers and after research with other established groups. Constitutions remain under review to ensure they are kept up-to-date and officers attend all meetings to monitor compliance and offer training as necessary. The Tenants' Office budget is independently audited.
Have procedures to make sure that information on the group is made widely available to tenants and all tenants are encouraged to become more active; regular newsletters or other written communications with members	Procedures are included in constitutions. Groups inform members by their own flyers or newsletters. A centrally coordinated newsletter for all groups gives more information. Streetwise publishes regular features on group/TLF activities.

Aspect	Level achieved
Have means of showing how they have met their objectives and still have the skills to work effectively	Minutes, reports, articles in Streetwise and locally produced flyers. Skills assessed by officers at meetings and assistance offered as necessary.

## Standards for monitoring and measuring performance

Aspect	Level
Review policies, practice and performance at regular intervals	This is undertaken at each meeting of the TLF including discussion of Best Value Performance Indicators relating to Tenant and Leaseholder Services. Further information is given in Streetwise for all tenants and leaseholders. Surveys are undertaken with individuals as necessary.
Set clear service standards and targets for tenant consultation and involvement	Tenant and Leaseholder Service Standards were prepared by a working group of tenants and leaseholders and agreed by the TLF. They are reviewed and updated at intervals, circulated to all tenants and included in sign-up pack. Tenant participation procedures/guidelines were prepared by a TR and agreed by the TLF.
Monitor tenant representatives and groups to make sure they continue to carry out their roles effectively	Officers attend all tenant groups meetings and work particularly closely with TLF and TRs

<b>Key</b>		TRs	Tenant Representatives
TLF	Tenant and Leaseholder Forum	SWIG	Surrey Wide Involvement Group

## Action plan related to the Core Standards

### Benchmarking

Aspect	Responsible group	Start date	Finish date
<b>Resources for tenant participation</b>			
1 Innovative approaches to encourage new tenants to get involved, so that structures remain representative and sustainable	TLF, officers, Innovations sub-group	Jun 2006	Jul 2007
<b>Standards for monitoring and measuring performance</b>			
2 The Council and tenants should monitor and evaluate different approaches to tenant participation looking particularly at the scope for changing their own approach to make sure this remains effective and efficient	TLF, officers, Innovations sub-group	Jun 2006	Jul 2007
3 The Council and tenants should assess performance against other housing organisations' achievements	TLF, officers, Innovations sub-group, SWIG members	Jun 2006	Jul 2007

### Communication

Aspect	Responsible group	Start date	Finish date
<b>Resources for tenant participation</b>			
<b>Standards for information</b>			
1 Of good quality, timely and tailored to tenants' needs	TLF	Jan 2006	Ongoing
<b>Tenants should receive information, as appropriate on:</b>			
2 Housing strategies, policies and priorities: all aspects: review broadening access	Officers	Jan 2006	Ongoing
3 Compacts themselves	TPC working group	May 2005	Dec 2006
<b>Standards for monitoring and measuring performance</b>			
4 Procedures to ensure effective involvement of tenants from all parts of the community	TLF/Innovations sub-group	Nov 2006	Jul 2007

#### Key

OSS

One Stop Shop, Council Reception

SWIG

TLF

Surrey Wide Involvement Group  
Tenant and Leaseholder Forum



## Housing and other council services

Aspect	Responsible group	Start date	Finish date
<b>Review working arrangements/consultation with:</b>			
1 Housing services to leaseholders and sheltered housing tenants	New panels to be established	Jan 2007	Apr 2007
2 Housing Benefits (also include debt advice and debt recovery procedures) and Customer Services	New working groups to be established	Jan 2007	Jul 2007
3 Community Services	New working group	April 2007	Oct 2007

## Standards for monitoring and measuring performance

Aspect	Responsible group	Start date	Finish date
<b>Housing Services</b>			
1 Anti-social behaviour policies and procedures and Respect agenda	TLF sub-group	Nov 2006	Apr 2007
2 Proposed remedial action if performance on services falls short	TLF sub group, officers, Councillors	Dec 2006	Jan 2007
<b>Standards for tenant groups involved in decision-making</b>			
3 Assess the results of operating Compacts against their original expectations	TPC wg	One year from launch of Compact	Within three months
4 If service standards and targets are not met, investigate and find remedies	TLF	Annually from initial distribution which was May 2006	Within three months of review
5 Monitor tenant representatives and groups to make sure they continue to carry out their roles effectively	TLF, officers	Jul 2005	Ongoing
6 Monitor equality of opportunity and levels of involvement by all groups including ethnic minorities	Officers, TLF, tenant groups, Innovations sub-group	Jan 2006	Ongoing
7 Check that the Council consults with and involves tenants from all parts of the community effectively	Officers, Innovations sub-group	Mar 2006	Jun 2006

### Key

OSS One Stop Shop, Council Reception

SWIG

TLF

Surrey Wide Involvement Group

Tenant and Leaseholder Forum

Review date	What, how, who, inform
Jul 2007	Seek interest from tenants/leaseholders in setting up panels, publish information in Streetwise and on website
Oct 2007	Establish consultation, review with TLF, publish in Streetwise and on the website
Dec 2007	Review consultation links. Include ideas from other authorities. Use corporate structures for consultation with under-represented groups e.g. youth. Publish in Streetwise and on the website.

Review date	What, how, who, inform
Jul 2007	Include corporate and multi-agency working. Agree at TLF. Publish in Streetwise.
Jul 2007	Consider complaints according to Compact procedures and propose remedial action/amend any procedures etc as necessary. Publish in Streetwise, on the website.
Annually	TPC wg to lead any review. Use surveys, telephone panel. Publicise in Streetwise. Include question 'do you want to be involved?'
Annually	Survey all tenants. Involve Councillors. Inform via Streetwise.
Jul 2007	Use team building, improve communication, hold regular meetings. Inform TLF of any outcomes.
Jan 2007	Look at group membership, review gaps, feedback to groups
Jun 2007	Via telephone panel. Use ideas from other authorities and information from corporate equalities group and equalities in housing group. Report in Streetwise and on the website.

TPC wg    Tenant Participation Compact Working Group

TRs

Tenant Representatives

## Training

Aspect	Responsible group	Start date	Finish date
<b>Standards for resources for tenant participation to ensure tenants have support needed</b>			
<b>1</b> Tailored training to meet the needs of Tenant Representatives or tenants' groups including possible joint training with council officers and Councillors where appropriate. Training should also cover equal opportunity issues including policies on race equality and racial harassment	Officers, TLF	Oct 2005	Jul 2007

## Overall

<b>Performance measures and targets should be set each year for tenant satisfaction with:</b>	TPC wp, TLF, staff	Dec 2006	Dec 2007
<b>A</b> Participation arrangements			
<b>B</b> Services including value for money			
<b>C</b> Their local area			
<b>1</b> Whether Compacts achieve expected outcomes (e.g. on Service Standards)			
<b>2</b> Tenant Representatives and groups and their activities ensure equality of opportunity			

Review date	What, how, who, inform
Repeat annually as necessary	Via TRs, TLF, residents' groups, at appropriate learning and training events. Explore financial resources to enhance opportunities, working closely with Councillors. Report in Streetwise.

Annually	For ABC below: use survey via individual mailshots and Streetwise

<b>Key</b>		TPC wg	Tenant Participation Compact Working Group
OSS	One Stop Shop, Council Reception	TRs	Tenant Representatives
SWIG	Surrey Wide Involvement Group		
TLF	Tenant and Leaseholder Forum		

## Complaints under the Tenant Participation Compact: Complaints Procedure

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Any complaints about the operation of any aspects of the Tenant Participation Compact will be considered, whether made by a residents' group, the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum, Tenant Representatives or individual tenants.
- 1.2 Complaints may be about any member of the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum, the Tenant Representatives, a residents' group or a panel who behaves in a manner which is contrary to their constitution or code of conduct.
- 1.3 They may also be about any actions or the performance of the Council in relation to any aspect of the Tenant Participation Compact. Complaints of this type should be made under the Council's published Complaints Procedure.

### 2.0 Making a complaint under the Tenant Participation Compact Complaints Procedure

- 2.1 Complaints should initially be referred to the chair of the particular group or the Housing Manager, Tenant and Leaseholder Services. If this is not successful, the complaint may move to the next stages.
- 2.2 The complaint should then be referred in writing to the Head of Housing and Property Services setting out the nature of the complaint and any action taken in an attempt to resolve it.
- 2.3 A response will be given within 15 working days either resolving the complaint or putting it before the Tenant Participation Compact Complaints Panel. The group and any officers involved with the group will also be notified of the complaint.
- 2.4 The complainant will be invited to put their case to the Panel.
- 2.5 All decisions of the Panel must be agreed by a majority vote of the resident members or it will not be upheld.
- 2.6 If the complaint is not upheld, the complainant has the right to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 2.7 The Panel may propose certain actions for instance suspension of a member, non-recognition of a group, written warning, amendment to the Tenant Participation Compact, changes to Council procedures or apology.
- 2.8 If the recommendations relate to improving policy, procedures, the Tenant Participation Compact etc, these may be referred to the Tenant Participation Compact Working Group for further consideration.
- 2.9 The complainant and the person about whom the complaint has been made shall be notified of the decision of the Panel within 10 working days of the Panel meeting by the Head of Housing and Property Services.

2.10 **Note:** Complaints about individual council officers must be brought under the Council’s published complaints procedure, not under the Tenant Participation Compact Complaints Procedure.

### **3.0 The Tenant Participation Compact Complaints Panel**

3.1 The membership of the Panel shall be four tenants/leaseholders and one Councillor: five in total. All five will have a vote.

3.2 The Panel must exclude members of any group or any individual being complained about.

3.3 The Panel will be drawn from a pool of interested tenants/leaseholders and Councillors according to availability and ensuring all Panel members have an opportunity to take part, if necessary using a rota system.

3.4 Housing staff will service the Panel, but not have a vote.

## Constitution – Tenant and Leaseholder Forum

### 1.0 Name

- 1.1 The name of the group shall be the Woking Borough Council Tenant and Leaseholder Forum.

### 2.0 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 To represent tenants' and leaseholders' interests when discussing issues with Woking Borough Council.
- 2.2 To promote tenant and leaseholder participation and consider issues relating to tenants and leaseholders generally raised either by tenants, leaseholders, the Council, local groups or individuals and to respond appropriately.
- 2.3 To receive reports from elected Tenant Representatives, residents' associations and individuals and make recommendations where appropriate.
- 2.4 To work towards eliminating discrimination, encouraging those usually excluded to take part in the Forum's activities and promoting equal opportunities.

### 3.0 Membership

- 3.1 Membership will be open to all of the Council's tenants and leaseholders including the partner/spouse/son or daughter over the age of 16.

### 4.0 Forum members

- 4.1 Members will be sought from sheltered, supported, temporary accommodation, general tenancy and leasehold households.

- 4.2 The Forum will have, as elected officers, at least a Chair, Secretary and when thought appropriate, a Treasurer.
- 4.3 The Forum may decide to co-opt members from any field of expertise to serve for a maximum of one year.
- 4.4 All those attending the Forum will be eligible for election as an officer and/or an Area Tenant Representative regardless of whether or not they have voting rights (see 6.1 right).
- 4.5 If a tenant or leaseholder is also an elected Member of the Council they can attend, speak at the Forum and vote in accordance with 6.1 right. They will be expected to abide by the existing ethical rules of council Members.
- 4.6 If a tenant or leaseholder is also an employee of the Council, they can attend, speak at the Forum and vote in accordance with 6.1 right. They will be expected to declare a conflict of interest if this arises.
- 4.7 Elected Members and Council employees may not stand as officers of the Forum or as Area Tenant Representatives.
- 4.8 One member only of any family household may stand as an officer of the Forum or as Area Tenant Representative at any time.
- 4.9 At least one officer from Tenant and Leaseholder Services will attend each Forum meeting to join in and work in partnership with the Forum. However, if requested by the Chair, staff will leave the meeting before it ends so that the Forum can conduct its own business.

- 4.10 All Forum meetings are open to non-tenants and leaseholders to observe by invitation of the Chair. It is the decision of the Chair as to whether a non-Forum member should be allowed to speak at the appropriate time and whether there are any confidential items on the agenda which should be dealt with by the Forum only.
- 4.11 The Forum shall meet at least four times a year including the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.12 The quorum at a Forum meeting shall be five Forum members.
- 4.13 The agenda will be sent seven days before each meeting to all Forum members, co-opted members and appropriate staff.
- 4.14 Minutes of the Forum meetings will be available 14 days after each meeting to all members, co-opted members and appropriate staff.
- 4.15 Minutes will be held for inspection at the Tenants' Office and the Civic Offices.

## 5.0 Election of officers

- 5.1 The Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and any other officers the Forum believes necessary for the running of the Forum shall be formally elected at the first ordinary meeting following the Annual General Meeting.
- 5.2 No person shall hold the same officer post for more than two consecutive years unless there are no other nominations forthcoming.
- 5.3 No more than one officer of the Forum will be from the same household.
- 5.4 Vacancies arising during the year to be filled by agreement of the Forum from its members.
- 5.5 Area Tenant Representatives will be formally elected by the Forum every two years: two each from the Central, East and West areas. Any vacancies arising between elections for Area Tenant Representatives may be filled by agreement of the Forum from its members.
- 5.5.1 **Note:** At Chair's discretion at the Forum meeting on 20 July 2006, and carried unanimously, the first sentence of 5.5 was replaced with the following: "Tenant Representatives will be formally elected by the Forum every two years from any area, but with a remit to focus on, and represent, Borough-wide issues."

## 6.0 Voting by Forum members

- 6.1 Voting rights on appropriate issues of Forum business will be as follows, with one vote per individual if more than one position is held:
  - 6.1.1 Each of the elected officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer).
  - 6.1.2 Each of the six elected Tenant Representatives.
  - 6.1.3 Each of those attending who are not members of residents' associations.
  - 6.1.4 Two voting members only from each residents' association represented at the meeting (residents' associations attending with more than two representatives to inform the Chair in advance of a voting issue which of their members have been elected to vote).
- 6.2 Whereas all matters are open for discussion amongst all Forum members, voting may be confined for certain issues to certain tenures, for example, rents to tenants, leasehold service charges to leaseholders.

- 6.3 Only those Forum members present at a meeting, and who are entitled to do so, may vote. However, any member may make a proposal which must be seconded by someone else. Where necessary, the Chair has the casting vote.

## 7.0 Annual General Meeting

- 7.1 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held during the spring/summer.
- 7.2 The AGM agenda will consist of business to be transacted, minutes of the last AGM, matters arising from the minutes, Chair's report, Secretary's report, Treasurer's report, an audited statement of accounts for the Forum and the Tenants' Office, proposed amendments to the Constitution, and notification that nominations for, and election of, officers will be sought at the first ordinary meeting following the AGM.
- 7.3 Any amendments to the Constitution must be given in writing to the Secretary (or in the absence of a Secretary, to the Chair) 14 days before the date of the AGM.
- 7.4 The AGM will take place within 15 months of the previous AGM and be open to all those entitled to attend.
- 7.5 Members will be notified of the date of the AGM not less than 21 days before the AGM.
- 7.6 All those attending the AGM may vote on AGM business.

## 8.0 Extraordinary Meetings

- 8.1 An Extraordinary Meeting may be called by a minimum of three voting members of the Forum with at least seven days notice.
- 8.2 There must be five voting members of the Forum present.

- 8.3 Any action taken must be agreed unanimously by those present.
- 8.4 A report should be made to the next Forum meeting.

## 9.0 Finance

- 9.1 When the Forum has elected a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and signed the Constitution they may apply to the Council for funding of up to £300 pa.
- 9.2 The Forum may also organise its own fund raising activities or apply for outside funding. Any applications should be approved at a Forum meeting.
- 9.3 All funds will be managed by the Forum to further the aims set out in the Constitution regardless of source.
- 9.4 The Treasurer shall open a bank account in the name of the Forum.
- 9.5 Cheque signatories will be nominated by the Forum (one to be the Treasurer). There shall be three signatories from independent households.
- 9.6 All cheques and instructions to the Forum's bankers shall require two of the agreed signatures.
- 9.7 The Forum will be responsible to the Council for the way Council funding is spent.
- 9.8 Any expenditure to be supported by a valid receipt showing how it was incurred.
- 9.9 All claims to be submitted to the Forum's Treasurer, and in the absence of the Treasurer, to one of the other cheque signatories.

9.10 The Treasurer shall have the accounts audited by an independent person with adequate financial experience.

9.11 The accounts shall be made available to members at the AGM.

### 10.0 Standing orders

10.1 All those attending any meeting shall behave in an appropriate manner for the Forum, taking into account the aims and objectives set out in the Constitution. Failure to do so may result in the Chair of the Forum asking the person/persons involved to leave the meeting.

10.2 Any Forum member wishing to resign should advise the Chair in writing.

10.3 Any Forum member missing three consecutive meetings without giving apologies will be deemed to have resigned.

10.4 All matters relating to individual tenants to be treated as confidential; matters of general interest are not confidential unless agreed as such by the Forum.

### 11.0 Communication

11.1 The Forum will work with the Council to suggest contributions to the quarterly Housing Services magazine, Streetwise.

11.2 If required, the Council will support any dealings with the media.

11.3 Copies of all letters sent or received on Forum business should be made available and commented on at the next Forum meeting.

11.4 All those attending meetings must disclose any financial interest they may have in an issue before it is discussed.

11.5 The representatives of the local groups will advise the Forum of any general issues of interest from their areas and will feedback to the groups on Forum activities.

### 12.0 Training

12.1 The Forum recognises the importance of training both to individual members and to the Forum as a whole.

12.2 The Forum may invite speakers or guests to review specific items of interest or for training.

### 13.0 Dissolution

13.1 The Forum may only be dissolved at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose and advertised 14 days in advance.

13.2 The proposal to dissolve shall only take effect if agreed by the majority of those present.

13.3 Any assets remaining after the payment of all debts and liabilities shall be given to a group with similar objectives.

Signed .....  
(Chair)

Date .....

Signed .....  
(Secretary)

Date .....

Signed .....  
(Treasurer: where appropriate)

Date .....

## Constitution – Residents' groups

### 1.0 Name

- 1.1 The name of the group shall be  
.....

### 2.0 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 To promote the interests of all residents in the defined area served by the group.
- 2.2 To promote involvement in the management of the Council's properties in the area and to improve the area.
- 2.3 To work towards eliminating discrimination, encouraging those usually excluded to take part in the group's activities and promoting equal opportunities.

### 3.0 Membership

- 3.1 Membership will be open to all residents in the defined area which is  
.....
- 3.2 Membership will include all tenure types.
- 3.3 A group should represent not less than 10 households.

### 4.0 The Committee

- 4.1 The group will decide on the number of Committee members, taking into account the area covered, the need to represent all this community effectively and the requirements of an efficient working committee.
- 4.2 As a minimum, the Committee will have a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and four general members to carry out the business of the group.
- 4.3 The Committee may decide to co-opt members to serve for a maximum of one year.

- 4.4 At least one officer from Tenant and Leaseholder Services will attend each meeting to join in and work in partnership with the group. However, staff will leave the meeting before it ends so that the Committee can conduct its own business.

- 4.5 All Committee meetings are open to non-members to observe. It is the decision of the Committee as to whether a non-Committee member should be allowed to speak at the appropriate time and whether there are any confidential items on the agenda which should be dealt with by the Committee only.

- 4.6 The Committee shall meet not less than four times a year including the Annual General Meeting.

- 4.7 The quorum at a Committee meeting shall be at least 30% of Committee members.

- 4.8 The agenda will be sent seven days before each meeting to all Committee members, co-opted members and appropriate staff. Non member observers to receive an agenda only for those meetings they are attending.

- 4.9 Minutes of the Committee meetings will be available 14 days after each meeting to all members, co-opted members, appropriate staff and those who attended the meeting.

- 4.10 Minutes will be available for inspection by local residents at the Residents' Resource Room and Civic Offices.

### 5.0 Annual General Meeting

- 5.1 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held during the spring/summer.

- 5.2 The AGM agenda will consist of business to be transacted, minutes of the last AGM, matters arising from the minutes, Chair's report, Secretary's report, Treasurer's report and audited statement of accounts, proposed amendments to the Constitution, nominations for committee members.
- 5.3 Any amendments to the Constitution must be given in writing to the Secretary 14 days before the date of the AGM.
- 5.4 The AGM will take place within 15 months of the previous AGM and be open to all those entitled to attend.
- 5.5 The Secretary will notify members of the date of the AGM not less than 21 days before the AGM.

## **6.0 Extraordinary Meetings**

- 6.1 An Extraordinary Meeting may be called by a minimum of three committee members with at least seven days' notice.
- 6.2 There must be 51% of the Committee present.
- 6.3 Any action taken must be unanimously agreed by those present.
- 6.4 A report should be made to the next Committee meeting.

## **7.0 Election of officers**

- 7.1 The Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and any other committee members the group believes necessary for the running of the group shall be formally confirmed at the first ordinary meeting following the Annual General Meeting.
- 7.2 No person shall hold the same formal officer post for more than two consecutive years.
- 7.3 No more than one formal officer of the committee will be from the same household.

- 7.4 Vacancies arising during the year to be filled by agreement of the Committee from its members.

## **8.0 Voting by Committee**

- 8.1 All household members, who are also Committee members, will have a right to vote. Committee members may be the tenant/leaseholder/owner and/or partner and should be aged 16 or over.
- 8.2 Whereas all matters are open to discussion amongst all members, voting may be confined for certain issues to certain tenures for example rents to tenants, leasehold service charges to leaseholders.
- 8.3 Only those Committee members present at a meeting may vote. Any Committee member may make a proposal which must be seconded by someone else. Where necessary, the Chair has the casting vote.

## **9.0 Finance**

- 9.1 When the Constitution has been signed and there is an elected Treasurer, the Committee may apply to the Council for funding of up to £300 pa.
- 9.2 The Committee may also organise its own fund raising activities on behalf of the group.
- 9.3 All funds will be managed by the Committee to further the aims set out in the Constitution.
- 9.4 The Treasurer shall open a bank account in the name of the group.
- 9.5 Cheque signatories will be nominated by the Committee (one to be the Treasurer). There shall be three signatories.

- 9.6 All cheques and instructions to the group's bankers shall require two of the agreed signatures. These shall not be from the same household.
- 9.7 The Committee will be responsible to the Council for the way Council funding is spent.
- 9.8 Any expenditure to be supported by a valid receipt showing how it was incurred.
- 9.9 All claims to be submitted to the group's Treasurer, and in the absence of the Treasurer, to one of the other cheque signatories.
- 9.10 The Treasurer shall have the accounts audited by an independent person with adequate financial experience.
- 9.11 The accounts shall be made available to members at the AGM.

### 10.0 Standing orders

- 10.1 All those attending any meeting shall behave in an appropriate manner for the group, taking into account the aims and objectives set out in the Constitution. Failure to do so may result in the Committee asking the person/people involved to leave the meeting.
- 10.2 Any Committee member resigning from the group should advise the Chair in writing.
- 10.3 Any Committee member missing three consecutive meetings without giving apologies will be deemed to have resigned.
- 10.4 All matters relating to individual tenants to be treated as confidential; matters of general interest are not confidential unless agreed as such by the Committee.

### 11.0 Communication

- 11.1 If required, the Council will support any dealings with the media.

- 11.2 Copies of all letters sent or received on group business should be made available and commented on at the next group meeting.
- 11.3 All those attending meetings must disclose any financial interest they may have in an issue before it is discussed.

### 12.0 Training

- 12.1 The Committee recognises the importance of training both to individual members and to the group as a whole.
- 12.2 The group may invite speakers or guests to review specific items of interest or for training.

### 13.0 Dissolution

- 13.1 The group may only be dissolved at an Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose and advertised 14 days in advance.
- 13.2 The proposal to dissolve shall only take effect if agreed by the majority of those present.
- 13.3 Any assets remaining after the payment of all debts and liabilities shall be given to a group with similar objectives.

Signed .....

(Chair)

Date .....

Signed .....

(Secretary)

Date .....

Signed .....

(Treasurer)

Date .....

## Constitution – Tenant Representatives’ Constitution

### 1.0 Name

- 1.1 The name of the group shall be TR Woking.

### 2.0 Aims

- 2.1 To represent tenants’ and leaseholders’ interests when discussing issues with Woking Borough Council.
- 2.2 To promote tenant and leaseholder participation and consider issues relating to tenants and leaseholders generally, raised either by tenants, leaseholders, the Council or local groups and to respond appropriately.
- 2.3 To work towards eliminating discrimination, encouraging those usually excluded to take part in the residents’ group activities and/or the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and promoting equal opportunities.
- 2.4 To formulate a business plan which will, in turn, assist forecasts for spending the Tenant Representatives’ budget for the future.
- 2.5 To be non-political.

### 3.0 Membership

- 3.1 Six Tenant Representatives (or equivalent) to be elected from within the membership of the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum for a two-year term.
- 3.2 Tenant Representatives may stand for re-election.

- 3.3 If a Tenant Representative formally resigns, then wishes to withdraw their resignation, this would not be automatically agreed: the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum would need to hold an election for the vacant position at the next meeting.

- 3.4 Tenant Representatives to decide amongst themselves who are the lead representatives on formal Council meetings and task groups and who are deputies. In doing so, to maintain equal opportunity for development within their group, they should ensure that each Tenant Representative has an opportunity to be a lead representative on at least one of the above.

- 3.5 Tenant Representatives to elect a treasurer every year. If the Treasurer is not an elected Tenant Representative, the Treasurer should still be invited to all meetings held by the Tenant Representatives to advise on the Tenant Representatives’ budget spend and to take forward any necessary financial transactions.

### 4.0 Meetings

- 4.1 Tenant Representatives to have at least four formal meetings a year, one of which will incorporate their Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- 4.2 The AGM to be held within three months of the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum meeting that follows the Forum AGM. Twenty-one days’ notice will be given of this AGM and any amendments to the Constitution given in writing to the Housing Manager.

- 4.3 An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by a minimum of three Tenant Representatives with at least seven days' notice. All six Tenant Representatives (and the treasurer if the treasurer is not already a Tenant Representative) should attend and any action taken must be agreed unanimously by the Tenant Representatives (including the treasurer if there are financial implications).
- 4.4 At least one Council staff member will be present at each formal meeting to facilitate joint working. Members of staff may leave the meeting before it ends if the Tenant Representatives request this so that the Tenant Representatives can conduct their own business.

### **5.0 Tenant Representatives' budget funding**

- 5.1 Tenant Representatives (including the Treasurer) to manage their budget according to agreed guidelines for use of the annual sum set aside for the budget and paid in instalments once the account is below an agreed level.
- 5.2 Tenant Representatives (including the Treasurer) to ensure the budget is used to provide value for money for the benefit of all tenants and leaseholders, for example funding the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum AGM, training events etc.
- 5.3 Tenant Representatives (including the Treasurer) to take part in the annual review of the accounts with staff to identify if there is any end of year surplus which may not be carried over at the end of the financial year and to agree the manner of its disposal.
- 5.4 Treasurer to have the accounts audited at the end of the financial year by an independent person with adequate financial experience. The final accounts should be available in time for the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum AGM, the audited accounts by the following January at the latest.

### **6.0 The Tenants' Office**

- 6.1 Tenant Representatives to manage the Tenants' Office, ensuring responses to tenants and leaseholders are timely and appropriate.
- 6.2 Work with the Council to ensure the Tenants' Office is well equipped and advertised appropriately to the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and local groups.
- 6.3 Abide by agreed guidelines and the licence agreement for use of the Tenants' Office.

### **7.0 Working with the Council**

- 7.1 Tenant Representatives to scrutinise the Council's policies, procedures, services standards etc and make suggestions for improvements.
- 7.2 Liaise with Councillors as necessary in relation to issues in the Borough.
- 7.3 Attend appropriate formal meetings and any other meetings of interest.
- 7.4 Work with the Council to suggest contributions to Streetwise.
- 7.5 Work in partnership with other agencies to achieve their aims.

7.6 With the Council's support, where needed, to invite speakers or guests to review specific items of interest or for training.

## **8.0 Supporting tenants and leaseholders**

8.1 Tenant Representatives to support the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum, and report back to them on all aspects of their activities on behalf of the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and tenants and leaseholders generally.

8.2 Support residents' groups in the Borough and assist the Council in identifying and setting them up.

## **9.0 Standing orders**

9.1 Tenant Representatives should not be chair of more than one formal committee, Forum or group at any given time.

9.2 The quorum at a Tenant Representatives meeting is three. The three will be able to make decisions on behalf of absentees. Absentees may send comments and votes to the Tenants' Office on issues in advance of any meeting.

9.3 Any Tenant Representative resigning should inform the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum in writing. If a Tenant Representative formally resigns, then wishes to withdraw their resignation, this would not be automatically agreed: the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum would need to hold an election of the vacant position at the meeting. If the Treasurer resigns, the Tenant Representatives should elect a new one at their next formal meeting.

9.4 Any Tenant Representative missing three formal meetings consecutively, without giving apologies, or who misses six such consecutive meetings for any reason will be deemed to have resigned. This will be confirmed to the Tenant Representative in writing by the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum.

9.5 All those attending any meeting shall behave in an appropriate manner for the group, taking into account the aims and objectives of the Tenant Representatives. Failure to do so may result in the person(s) involved being asked to leave the meeting.

9.6 Tenant Representatives (including the treasurer) should disclose any financial or area-based interest in an issue before discussion.

9.7 Any dispute between Tenant Representatives which they cannot resolve as a group by majority vote will be referred to the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum for resolution and carried by a vote of quorate Tenant and Leaseholder Forum members. In the event of a tie, a final vote shall be held by Tenant and Leaseholder Forum members omitting Tenant Representatives.

9.8 All Tenant Representatives to sign the Constitution.

9.9 All matters relating to individual tenants are treated as confidential, with no individual being identified in any paperwork. Matters of general interest are not confidential unless agreed as such by the Tenant Representatives or other officers attending meetings.

9.10 The TR Woking group may only be dissolved at an Extraordinary General Meeting where it is agreed by the majority of those present. Any assets shall be returned to the Council.

Signed .....

Date .....

Signed .....

Date .....

**10.0 Training**

10.1 The Tenant Representatives recognise the importance of training for themselves and other tenants and leaseholders and will work with the Council to ensure this is in place, wherever possible utilising their own funding to support this.

Signed .....

Date .....

Signed .....

Date .....

Signed .....

Date .....

Signed .....

Date .....

Signed .....

Date .....

(Treasurer, if not a Tenant Representative)

## How to be involved in tenant participation

The Council supports various methods for tenants and leaseholders to be involved in the management of their homes. Tenants and leaseholders are most welcome to join any of these activities and to suggest other ways of consultation which would also be effective for them.

Figure 1 (page 38) gives an overview of current Tenant Participation Structures. Figure 2 (page 39) lists all of the current residents' groups and their meeting places are also included – this is subject to change which will be notified in the Streetwise magazine.

### Tenant and Leaseholder Forum

- The Forum is open to any tenant or leaseholder and meets quarterly to review the housing service and any other council service that affects tenants and leaseholders (for instance the grounds maintenance contract managed by Local Services).
- The Forum sets up sub-groups for instance those for the Tenant Participation Compact, the Tenancy Agreement, the Tenants' Guide, Service Standards etc. Most of these are open to all tenants and leaseholders to join. Progress is reviewed at each Forum meeting.
- The Forum has a constitution and is formally recognised by the Council. It is resourced from the Tenants' Office budget.
- The Chair and Secretary are elected at the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting. Neither officer can stand for more than two consecutive years.
- The Forum Annual General Meeting is open to all tenants and leaseholders who each receive a personal invitation to attend.
- The Forum also elects the Tenant Representatives at the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.

### Tenant Representatives

- The Tenant Representatives are elected every two years and there is no limit to the number of times they may stand for election. They work to a Constitution recognised by the Council.
- They work with the Council at all levels on housing matters and represent interests of tenants and leaseholders Borough wide.
- They are primarily concerned with strategy, the housing service and promoting tenant participation. They have key roles, for instance, on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Housing Task Group and as full members of the Pride Project repairs partnership.
- They manage the Tenants' Office and a budget for promoting tenant participation. This includes supporting training events for members of the Forum and residents' groups.

### Residents' groups

- Residents' groups, supported by housing services, are formed at the request of tenants or leaseholders and cover a defined area.
- They are open to all residents (whether or not they are the Council's tenants or leaseholders) in that area to attend and have their say on community issues.

- To be formally recognised by the Council they must sign up to the constitution and represent those in their area fairly and accountably. They should represent a minimum of 10 households. Once officers are elected and a bank account set up they qualify for an annual grant.
- Officers from Tenant and Leaseholder Services attend each meeting and most groups also invite the police and Local Services Neighbourhood Officers to each meeting, as well as local Councillors, and others according to specific issues, for example, the dog warden or Surrey County Council Highways officers.
- Groups who do not wish to be formally recognised are also supported by the Council financially and with officers attending each meeting.

## Panels

- **Grounds Maintenance Monitoring Panel:** run jointly by Local Services and Tenant and Leaseholder Services. Tenants and leaseholders return monitoring forms about the service and these are passed on to the contractor if any action is needed. Meetings are held at intervals with all those involved.
- **Building Cleaning Monitoring Panel:** run by Tenant and Leaseholder Services in a similar way to the Grounds Maintenance Monitoring Panel.
- **Repairs Panel:** run by Woking Repair Service to involve tenants in reviewing all aspects of the day-to-day repair service.

- **Telephone Panel:** made up of individuals who have volunteered to be contacted about various aspects of the service.
- **Streetwise Editorial Panel:** includes tenants and leaseholders who meet officers and the public relations consultants who produce the magazine. They decide on the content and layout of Streetwise magazine.
- All the panels are open to all tenants and leaseholders to join and new tenants are encouraged to do so when they sign up for a tenancy with the Council.

## Working groups/focus groups

- These meet on an ad hoc basis and may be drawn from the Forum, residents' groups or individual tenants who have expressed interest in a particular subject.

## Consultation about improvements and satisfaction surveys

- Flyers, satisfaction cards or letters about proposals for improvements to the home or environment are periodically sent out and views sought. The responses are valued and encouraged and provide an informal way for the Council to gather views about the proposals and the service.

## One-to-one involvement

- All tenants and leaseholders are welcome to arrange an appointment with officers to talk about any issues affecting them or their homes or community.

## Commitment and involvement levels

- To help you decide on how much involvement would suit you, the table below indicates the level of involvement and likely commitment for each activity.

Options for involvement	Commitment levels	Involvement
Tenant Representatives	3	D
Tenant and Leaseholder Forum	3	P and D
Residents' groups	3	P and D
Working groups	2	P
Focus groups	2	P
Streetwise Editorial Panel	2	P and D
Telephone Panel	1	C
Repairs Panel	2	D
Building Cleaning Panel	1	C
Grounds Maintenance Monitoring Panel	1	C
Surveys	1	I
Training events	2	P

### Key

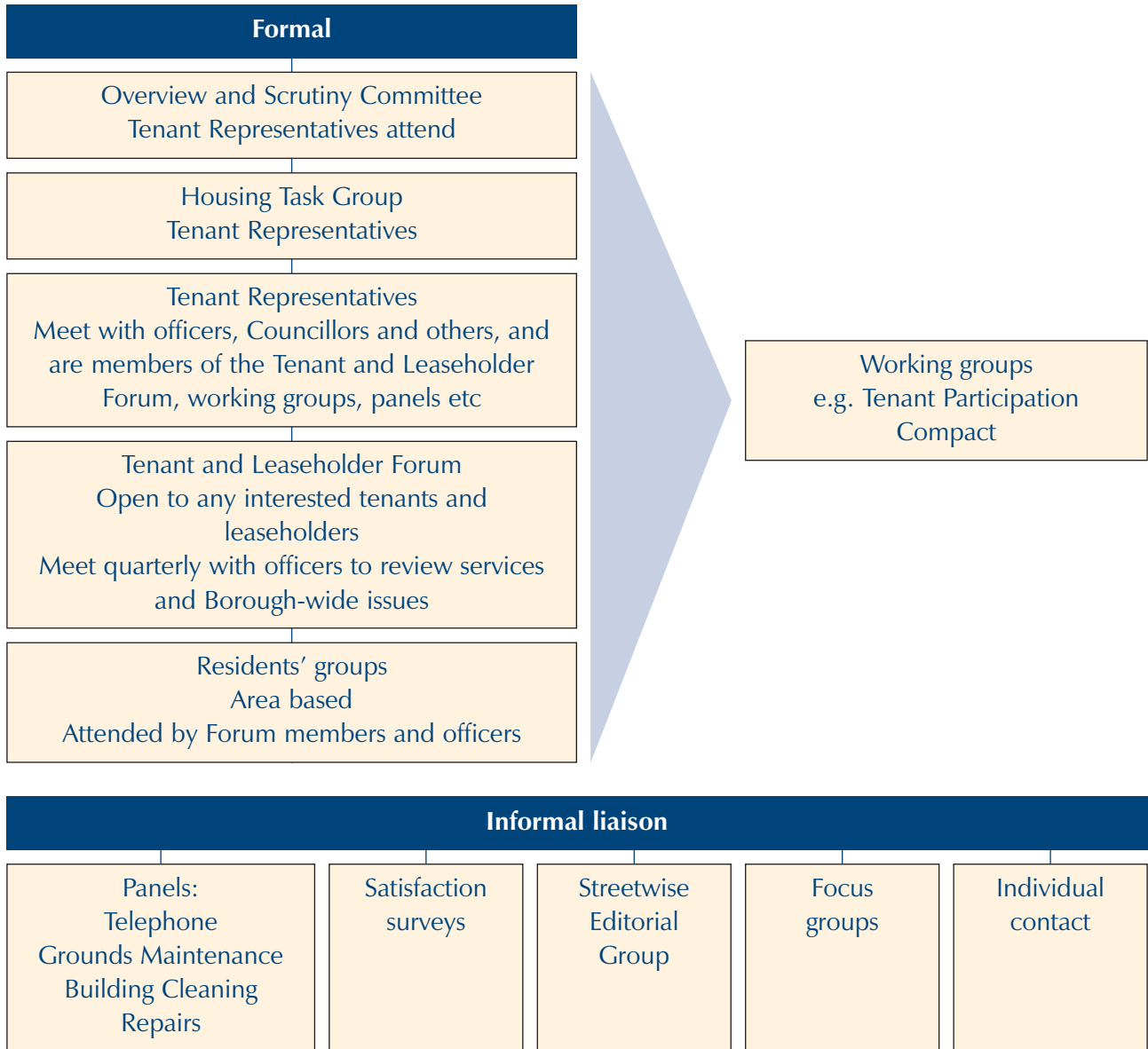
#### Commitment levels

- Level 1 Minimal or occasional contact
- Level 2 Irregular meetings and participation
- Level 3 High level of commitment with frequent meetings

#### Involvement levels

- D Playing a major part in the decision-making process
- P Participating in debates and decisions
- C Consulting and listening to views
- I Receiving and exchanging information

**Figure 1 – Tenant participation structures**



**Figure 2 – Residents’ groups at November 2006**

Name of group	Usual meeting place
Alpha Road	The Arch, Alpha Road Community Hall, Alpha Road, Maybury, Woking, Surrey GU22 8HF
BRANCH (Barnsbury)	30 Ash Road, Barnsbury, Woking, Surrey
Gloster Road and Priors Croft	Priors Croft Common Room
Lakeview General	Lakeview Hall, Tracious Close, Horsell, Woking, Surrey
Lakeview Sheltered and Supported	Lakeview Hall, Tracious Close, Horsell, Woking, Surrey
Nethercote/Huntingdon/Lombardy	Beaufort Primary School, Kirkland Avenue, Goldsworth Park
Pares Close	Scout Hut, Horsell High Street, Horsell, Woking
Nottingham Court	Nottingham Court Common Room
Walton Court	The Maybury Centre, Board School Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 3AH
Wesco Court	Wesco Court Common Room
<b>Tenant and Leaseholder Forum</b>	Civic Offices, Woking Borough Council

For more information about these residents’ groups, please contact:

Housing Manager  
 Tenant and Leaseholder Services  
 Woking Borough Council  
**Phone:** 01483 743628  
**Email:** [tenantandleaseholderservices@woking.gov.uk](mailto:tenantandleaseholderservices@woking.gov.uk)

Tenant Representatives  
 Tenants Office  
 Provincial House  
 26 Commercial Way  
 Woking GU21 6EN  
**Phone:** 01483 769695  
 24 hour answerphone  
**Email:** [trwoking@btinternet.com](mailto:trwoking@btinternet.com)

You can also find out more about some of these groups by logging on to [www.windowonwoking.org.uk](http://www.windowonwoking.org.uk)

## Tenant and Leaseholder Participation and Consultation Policy

### Policy Number 39 Housing Policy

#### 1.0 Statement of intent

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council is committed to working in partnership with tenants and leaseholders and wishes to ensure they all have the opportunity to become involved, both individually and collectively, in the decision-making processes that affect the management of their homes. This will be at a level that suits them and be a benefit not only to themselves, but to their community.
- 1.2 The Council will ensure that policies and procedures for consulting and involving residents are implemented by all personnel involved in delivering housing management and maintenance services, including contractors and other business partners.
- 1.3 Resources will be available to enable a variety of means of consultation and participation and for relevant training of both staff and residents.

#### 2.0 Detail

##### Participation

- 2.1 Participation will be undertaken in a variety of ways for instance with the Tenant Representatives, the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum, residents' groups, panels, focus and policy groups.

- 2.2 It will cover a range of issues relating to the housing service including tenancy and estate management.
- 2.3 Joint working with other services and agencies will be encouraged to enhance understanding of working practices and to improve the overall service within a specific area or the borough as a whole.

##### Consultation

- 2.4 The Council has a legal duty to consult tenants on matters of housing management that may affect them (Housing Act 1985) and leaseholders about proposed repairs where a charge may be levied (Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002). The Council aims to carry out much more comprehensive consultation on a broad range of issues.
- 2.5 Consultation will be undertaken in a variety of ways with groups and/or individuals as appropriate.
- 2.6 The Council will work with tenants to ensure equality of access to information and the service, for instance for ethnic minorities, the elderly or the disabled.

##### Resources management

- 2.7 Resources will be available for recognised residents' groups and the Forum once recognised and managing their own bank account; the Tenants' Office, Streetwise and inter-agency working.

### **3.0 Key targets/standards**

- 3.1 Meet all statutory requirements for consultation.
- 3.2 Consult tenants and leaseholders in the appropriate manner and within reasonable timescales.
- 3.3 Fully support Tenant Representatives, the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and residents' groups to become knowledgeable and confident in working with the Council on the management of their homes and environment.
- 3.4 Review consultation and participation process following Stock Options Appraisal outcomes.

- 3.5 Produce Streetwise quarterly.
- 3.6 Periodically update and amend procedures to reflect current standing orders, financial regulations, legal and good practice.

### **4.0 Date approved:**

**18 September 1995**

**6 June 2003**

**23 March 2005**

**2 November 2006**

### **5.0 Date revised:**

**March 2005 (amalgamates Policy Numbers 68 and 78)**

**October 2006**

## Tenant and Leaseholder Participation and Consultation Procedure

### Policy Number 39 Guidance Note

**1.0** Tenant and Leaseholder Participation and Consultation encourages all tenants and leaseholders to have their say and influence future decisions at a level that suits them. There are a number of ways this might be achieved and can include the following aspects.

### 2.0 Participation

#### 2.1 Tenant and Leaseholder Forum

- Encourage tenants and leaseholders to attend the Forum on a regular basis.
- Encourage tenants and leaseholders to actively participate in the Forum business.
- Ensure a Forum Constitution is agreed, documented and published.
- Ensure the Forum Constitution is signed and adhered to.
- Ensure the Forum Constitution is reviewed and revised as necessary at the Annual General Meeting.
- Ensure elections for Forum officers are held as defined in the Constitution.
- Provide administrative assistance to the Forum officers where necessary.
- Assist in promoting training of Forum members where necessary.
- Hold quarterly meetings and an Annual General Meeting.

- Support attendance at Surrey Wide Involvement Group (SWIG).
- Maintain an action plan, which includes elements of the Tenant Empowerment Strategy and the Tenant Participation Compact and set targets for tenant participation annually, and review progress at each meeting.
- Review the Tenant Participation Compact annually.
- Ensure each new Forum member completes a skills checklist and support gaps in training on a value for money basis.

#### 2.2 Tenant Representatives

- Ensure that elections for Tenant Representatives are held as defined in the Forum Constitution and encourage experienced Representatives to define their role to encourage others to apply.
- Support Tenant Representatives in promoting Borough-wide tenant participation.
- Support Tenant Representatives in joint working with staff and elected members and act as a point of contact between Tenant Representatives, staff and elected members as necessary.
- Encourage Tenant Representatives to attend appropriate meetings, seminars, conferences workshops etc.

- Ensure that others, for instance, members of the Forum, are equally given an opportunity to do so, bearing in mind value for money.
- Ensure Tenant Representatives communicate their involvement in all the various meetings, working groups, training sessions, with the Forum (in particular) and to the wider tenant and leaseholder base through Streetwise, promoting their achievements on behalf of all tenants and leaseholders.
- Support residents' groups and the Forum in any training needed, working with the Tenant Representatives to ensure value for money using appropriate budgets.
- Ensure regular meetings are held between Tenant Representatives and appropriate staff.
- Ensure Tenant Representatives undertake suitable training as necessary.
- Support Tenant Representatives and Forum members in contributing at a strategic level and at an early planning stage.

### **2.3 Tenants' Office**

- Review documentation relating to Tenant Representatives, for example, their own Constitution and the use of the Tenants' Office on an annual basis to ensure compliance with Tenant Participation Compact guidelines for monitoring and use of resources.
- Support Tenant Representatives in the management and use of the Tenants' Office.

### **2.4 Residents' groups**

- Respond to requests to form residents' groups, ensuring that tenants and leaseholders are included in their membership.
- Assist in arranging meetings and providing administrative and financial support as necessary.
- Appropriate housing staff will attend all residents' groups meetings. Staff from other relevant Council services and other agencies may also be invited.
- Assist in identifying training needs for residents' groups using appropriate budgets and ensuring value for money in line with Tenant Participation Compact guidance.
- Encourage residents to gain formal recognition of the group by means of a constitution and elected officers, within a timescale that suits each individual group.
- Encourage the group members to produce their own newsletters or other appropriate means of communication with residents in their defined area and provide support where necessary.
- Encourage group members to attend the Forum meetings and provide input.
- Facilitate a two-way flow of information between the Forum and residents' groups.
- Encourage local Tenant Participation Compacts with recognised residents' groups.

## 2.5 Tenant Participation Compact

- Ensure Borough-wide Tenant Participation Compact is agreed and maintained.
- Promote inter-service agreements so that the Compact is wider in scope than housing services.
- Ensure Compact complies with government guidelines.
- Ensure Compact is published to all tenants and leaseholders in appropriate format and using a variety of means, for example, summary, full length, website.

## 2.6 Panels

### Streetwise Editorial Panel

- Ensure joint working between tenants and leaseholders and staff to edit and publish Streetwise.
- Ensure editorial meetings are held at mutually convenient times for those concerned.
- Encourage tenants and leaseholders to suggest items for Streetwise and credit and recognise those who do so.
- Ensure appropriate information relating to housing and other relevant services is disseminated through the newsletter.

### Telephone Panel

- Establish a panel of 100 tenants and leaseholders and maintain it as an accurate database.
- Review the list for accuracy annually.
- Ensure questions are phrased and guidance given so that those asking questions maintain impartiality.

- Contact appropriate panel members for individual surveys.
- Maintain a database of statistical information from Panel surveys.
- Publish reports of telephone panel surveys in Streetwise.

### Monitoring Panels

- Establish these as appropriate, for example, for building cleaning services.
- Encourage tenants and leaseholders to participate.
- Provide suitable guidance and recording documents to panel members.
- Feedback information to contractors and results to panel members.
- Set up meetings with contractors and panel members at mutually agreed intervals.
- Encourage panel members to conduct walkabout inspections with contractors and/or staff.
- Report on panels to the Forum and in Streetwise.
- Make use of information from panel members to improve the service.

## 3.0 Consultation

- Ensure administrative systems are in place to consult on a Borough-wide basis when necessary for environmental and home improvements, tenancy issues, rent or service charges, changes to housing management strategies, policies or procedures, new housing developments, and elements of tenant participation described in 2.0 (page 42).

- Consult within the appropriate timescales through residents' groups, ad hoc working groups and focus groups or with individuals using flyers, letters, public meetings, road shows, workshops, leaflets, phone calls, personal visits, satisfaction surveys, articles in Streetwise or other newsletters etc.
- Provide pre-paid envelopes to encourage replies.
- Work with Tenant Representatives, Tenant and Leaseholder Forum, local residents' groups and individuals to ensure consultation methods are inclusive and maximise equality of access.
- Feedback results of any consultation in a timely and appropriate fashion to relevant people and include reasons for decisions where necessary.
- Research and implement new methods of consultation.

#### **4.0 Monitoring the service**

- Monitor the service delivery on a regular basis and in accordance with Tenant Participation Compact Action Plan.
- Monitor Tenant Representatives, the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and formally recognised residents' groups to ensure they adhere to their Constitutions and demonstrate value for money, in line with government requirements in the Tenant Participation Compact.
- Monitor inclusion of all sections of the community to enable them to have access to the service, formal and informal participation and consultation structures.
- Set suitable performance targets for tenant participation and consultation and review these annually.
- Actively participate in benchmarking groups and in particular with local authorities who have retained their own stock and in the local area (for instance through SWIG).

## Council contacts

### Contacts for information about tenant participation

#### For general information about tenant participation:

Tenant Representatives  
Tenants' Office  
Provincial House  
26 Commercial Way  
Woking GU21 6EN

**Phone:** 01483 769695  
24 hour answerphone

**Email:** [trwoking@btinternet.com](mailto:trwoking@btinternet.com)

#### For general information about participation and information about current residents groups and panels:

Housing Manager  
Tenant and Leaseholder Services  
Housing Services  
Woking Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Gloucester Square  
Woking GU21 6YL

**Phone:** 01483 743828

**Email:** [tenantandleaseholderservices@woking.gov.uk](mailto:tenantandleaseholderservices@woking.gov.uk)

Information about some of the groups also available on [www.windowonwoking.org.uk](http://www.windowonwoking.org.uk)

### General information about the housing and other services

Tenants' Guide – issued to all Council tenants

Tenant and Leaseholder Service Standards

A to Z of Council Services

Woking web for information about the Council including tenant participation on [wokbc@woking.gov.uk](mailto:wokbc@woking.gov.uk)

### Roles of Officers

The Tenant and Leaseholder Services Housing Manager and a Senior Housing Administrator have portfolios for overall management of tenant participation.

Housing Officers attend and support residents' groups in their areas.

Local Services Neighbourhood Officers jointly manage the Grounds Maintenance Monitoring Panel with Tenant and Leaseholder Services.

## A to Z of Councillors – 2006/2007

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## Political balance

The political balance of the Council is as follows:

Conservatives	15
Liberal Democrats	18
Labour	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

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## **Brockhill**

Residents, officers, Tenant Representatives, Pride Project staff and friends of the Brockhill Extra Care Sheltered Housing Scheme celebrated the refurbishment of the scheme's dining room and re-landscaped gardens.



## **Serco winner at the Tenant and Leaseholders Forum**

Serco Chairman's Award of £1,000 was shared between local charities and residents' groups with Pares Close Residents' Group taking the first prize of £300. Serco is the local services partner for environmental works in the Borough.



## **Tenant and Leaseholders Forum Annual General Meeting**

Tenants and leaseholders at the Annual General Meeting in June 2006.



## **Recycling**

Recycling is top of the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum's agenda as they visit a recycling plant to see for themselves what happens to their rubbish.



## **Signing the Tenant Participation Compact**

This photo shows Cllr Philip Goldenberg, Jo Scott, Ian Draper and Chris Head, signing the Tenant Participation Compact on behalf of the working group.



## **Tenant Participation Compact Working Group**

Members of the working group who worked for many months on the Tenant Participation Compact.



## **Walton Court Play Area**

Walton Court Residents' Group played a major role in the refurbishment of the play area. This facility is enjoyed by children living in Walton Court.



## **Streetwise Editorial Panel**

The Editorial Panel meets quarterly to discuss topics articles and ideas for the Streetwise magazine. The group are hard at work discussing the 2006 Christmas issue.



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