Woking Borough Council Tenant Participation

compact

October 2007

a streetwise special

KEEPING TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS INFORMED

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

We're saving a seat for you...

Above: Some of the volunteers who have joined the tenant and leaseholder local groups and panels

...You can join in too!

Together we can shape the future

We need your help to make a difference!

Woking Borough Council is keen for its tenants and leaseholders to get involved and have their say about various aspects of the Housing Service.

The Tenant Participation Compact, published last year, encourages participation at a level that suits you. By giving up a little of your time you can make a difference to the area where you live, and at the same time meet new friends in your neighbourhood, and find out more about how the Council works.

New members are always welcome to join our team of willing volunteers. There are many panels and local groups you can choose from such as repairs, grounds maintenance and building cleaning or local residents' groups.

If you prefer to stay at home, you can also help us by completing surveys that we send out from time to time – your level of involvement is entirely up to you. All you need is a willingness to help others and make a difference!

To find out more about how you can participate, or if you would like further information about the various forums, groups and panels, please call Sue Keggans, Housing Manager, on **01483 743628.**

What is a Tenant Participation Compact?

It is a formal signed agreement between the Council and its tenants and leaseholders. Based on guidance from the Government, it sets out how the Council may work with tenants and leaseholders in decisions about their homes. It is a working document, with an action plan for improvement and is reviewed and updated as time passes.

All tenants and leaseholders in December last year had a copy of the Compact summary following the official launch by the Compact working group at the YMCA. 137 of you gave us some feedback, 37 wanted to join existing groups and panels, 16 were interested in forming either a sheltered and supported tenants panel or a leaseholder panel. Both new panels have now met. 41 of you were sent a copy of the full Compact.

The Government Tenant Satisfaction Survey this year showed that 80% of you are satisfied overall with the service. We were very pleased that more than half of those surveyed had heard of the Compact and that more than half of you felt that you were involved in managing your home.

However, here's a chance for you to tell us how we can improve. So please fill in our questionnaire and add on some new and exciting ways we can work with you. If you would like a copy of the Tenant Participation Compact Summary, please don't forget to tick yes to question number 6.

Look out for post-its throughout this issue which show you areas of the Compact action plan we are working on. The post-its also highlight opportunities for you to get involved.

Tenant participation - what we have achieved and what we hope to do

We have worked hard on the current Compact Action Plan and have achieved some of the aims, though we still need to work more on others. Below are highlights of our work so far:

Taking on board ideas from others (benchmarking)

- The Forum reviews some of the key letters before they are posted to you - for example, the last letter about rent increases.
- Mystery shoppers are currently being trained to spot check the day-to-day repairs service.

- Tenant inspectors of empty properties have already begun training and will ensure agreed standards are maintained.
- We have started monitoring actions and outcomes of all meetings, panels and groups to be able to demonstrate our effectiveness and highlight long-term aims.

Joint working: something to build on in the future

- The police attend residents' groups and run their own panels which are attended by many tenants and leaseholders. The police Neighbourhood Inspector spoke at the Forum AGM in July and took away comments and queries for further action.

Speakers at the Forum AGM 2007

- Nottingham Court Residents'Association has set up a Neighbourhood Watch in their area.
- The Forum, working over 18 months with the Environmental Manager and Serco, helped to improve grounds maintenance in several areas.

- Neighbourhood Services run the grounds maintenance panel and respond swiftly to complaints from the panel: their views are fed into the Forum.

Pares Close Residents Association at the clean up day

- Clean-up days have taken place at Pares Close and Lakeview with residents' groups, the police, the Council and others.

- Alpha Road work closely with Serco and Neighbourhood Services on recycling.

- Lakeview Sheltered and Supported Group work with the police, councillors and officers on anti-social behaviour and the Respect Standard.

Lakeview Sheltered and Supported group

Tenant participation - what we have

Shah Jahan Mosque's fun family summer fair for the whole community: the Mela

- The Tenant Representatives support tenants and leaseholders at the borough Tune-In meetings and the Mela.
- All groups and panels work with housing to improve the service.

Working groups

- The Anti-social Behaviour (Respect Standard) Working Group have been working on how we as a landlord go about tackling anti-social behaviour. We have signed up formally now and have started to receive quite a lot of information on how others deal with anti-social behaviour. The group is looking at partnership working and has started taking displays to the Borough's Tune In meetings.

Tenant Participation Compact working group.

Widening the scope of participation

- The Tenant Participation Compact working group monitors tenant participation as a whole and has brought this Streetwise special to you.

Panels

Panels

- The Building Cleaning Monitoring Panel has been restructured, so that tenants know when the contractor is coming to their block and can inspect before and after cleaning. The contractor meets the panel every six months and has been invited to the Forum, and the Sheltered and Supported Tenants Panel to discuss the service. A number of aspects have changed including new flooring at Walton Court and variation orders to ensure new bins are added to the contract for steam cleaning.

Working with council services

- The Grounds Maintenance Monitoring Panel is supported by the Neighbourhood Team and it has made many comments that have been taken on board. The service has improved to the extent that the Forum no longer feel they need to invite the Environmental Manager to every meeting to review progress.

Members of the Repairs Panel

- The Repairs Panel have a real input on day-to-day repairs including supporting the appointments system, volunteering for projects such as overseeing new digital systems and discussing the content of RepairNews (the publication sent out with Streetwise).
- The Streetwise Editorial Panel has recently revamped the publication's content to give outcomes of activities instead of straight reporting.

Sharing information

achieved and what we hope to do

New panels

- The Sheltered and Supported Tenants Panel came up with 12 key priorities and agreed to focus on the top three at their meetings over the coming months. The 12 priorities were lighting; security; cleaning of communal areas; grounds maintenance; fire regulations; fire doors; Neighbourhood Watch; new front doors; capital programme; lifts; anti-social behaviour; neighbourhood policing; parking.
- At the second meeting the panel members quizzed Gary Lea about building cleaning. He took away a number of issues to resolve.
- The Leaseholder Panel want to be consulted by letter, phone or email.

Groups

- The Tenant and Leaseholder Forum reviews all of the working groups' and panels' activities, as well as looking at policy. It recently approved satellite dishes for flats.
- There are eight residents' groups: Alpha Road, Wesco Court, Walton Court, Priors Croft and Gloster Road, Lakeview General, Lakeview Sheltered and Supported, Pares Close and Nottingham Court. Since September they have been recording their objectives, monitoring their successes and keeping an eye on progress and activities.
- Each group meets at a level that suits them: some formal with funding, some with informal discussions with the Council.
- You are welcome to form a new group and Tenant Representatives and the Council are happy to assist.

Residents Groups

Individuals

- Completing and posting back surveys can help shape our service. The Government Tenant Satisfaction Survey in January 2007 was reported in detail in the last Streetwise. There are continuous surveys about repairs satisfaction.
- Officers meet individuals to discuss their concerns.

Individuals shaping the service

Supporting each other

Tenant and Leaseholder Forum overviewing service

Spot the Tenant Representative, Council Officers, Councillors amongst the tenant and leaseholders at the 2007 Forum AGM

- The Tenant Representatives funded the Compact launch and Forum AGM's and support you and officers on groups, panels and in various projects.
- Council Officers support all tenants and leaseholders whenever necessary.
- Councillors are involved in a number of groups and have signed up to the Compact.

Tenant Representatives giving your views

Working towards including many more of you

- Both Walton Court and Alpha Road groups translate material into Urdu and are investigating the possibility of translating into Polish.
- Walton Court is also planning to translate material into Bengali and Pusto.
- Alpha Road have secured a grant to work with youth and are looking for volunteers to help.
- The Sheltered and Supported Tenants Panel and the Leaseholder Panel are concerned primarily with their particular issues
- If you have any ideas on working with others, please let us know - we welcome comments from

Local Groups Translating Materials

You too can widen the scope of participation

Tenant participation - the future

Last, but not least: the Tenant Participation Compact Action Plan

- We have revised the way we are working on the Compact Action Plan.
- We are focusing more on objectives and outcomes.

The future

- The Action Plan has a simpler style.
- Activities, plans and successes from groups and panels will be reported in future in Streetwise and at the Forum Annual General Meeting.
- We will invite more guest speakers to talk about subjects you are interested in. So far these are: the gas servicing contract, Equalities, the building cleaning contract, emergency planning; the Garden project; police and the new neighbourhoods;marketing and communications;sheltered housing; Housing Service Review.

Let us know if you are interested in any of these topics and would like to attend the session. Contact Helen Hilderley on **01483 743620**.

Please complete and return the attached questionnaire. Your views matter to us.

Together we can shape the future

If you would like any more information on the Tenant Participation Compact, please contact Helen Hilderley on **01483 743620** or Sue Keggans on **01483 743628**.

A transcript of this document can be provided for visually impaired people, either in large print or on audio tape.

Please contact the number below if you require further information.

01483 755855
(9.00am - 5.00pm)

If you require a translation, please contact:

Se avete bisogno di una traduzione si prega conattare:

Si usted requiere una traducción de esta información por favor contacte a:

اگر آپ کو ترجمے کی ضرورت ھے تو برائے مہربانی رابطہ کریں:

যদি আপনার অনুবাদের দরকার হয় তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন:

如果您需要翻译，请向下列地点联络:

wits
01483 750548
LINK LINE

Editorial Note

This issue was produced by members of the Tenant Participation Compact Working Group:

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Tenant Participation Compact Special Survey

Your views matter to us

Win! up to £40 of shopping vouchers

Thank you for taking the time to read this special Tenant Participation Compact issue of Streetwise. Your views help us shape the way we provide our services and we value your feedback. We would be grateful if you would take the time to complete this short survey.

There's also a chance to win one of three vouchers in our free prize draw – 1st prize is £40, 2nd prize is £30 and 3rd prize is £20 – from any of the following stores Sainsburys, Marks & Spencer, WH Smiths or Robert Dyas. Alternatively, if you win a prize, the Council can credit your rent account

To enter, please tear-off this sheet and complete the following short survey and monitoring form and return it to us in the enclosed pre-paid envelope by Saturday 15 December 2007. **Please remember to include your name, address and contact details**.

1. Did you find this newsletter easy to understand?

yes ☐ no ☐

2. After reading this newsletter, do you feel that you have learnt more about…

the Tenant Participation Compact? yes ☐ no ☐

tenant participation overall? yes ☐ no ☐

3. Are you already involved in any of the Council's panels and meetings?

yes ☐ no ☐

If NO, are you interested in joining any of the following panels, working groups and meetings? (please tick all the relevant boxes)

☐ Building Cleaning Panel
☐ Grounds Maintenance Panel
☐ Sheltered and Supported Tenants' Panel
☐ Leaseholder Panel
☐ Repairs Panel
☐ Streetwise Editorial Panel
☐ Residents' Group meetings
☐ Anti-social Behaviour (Respect Standard) working group
☐ Tenant Participation Compact working group

4. Are there any particular topics that you would like us to consult on in more detail that are not covered by any of the panels or groups ?

yes ☐ no ☐

If YES, please list the topics you would like to discuss with us:

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. How do you personally like to be consulted?

☐ Telephone
☐ Email
☐ Survey forms
☐ Online surveys
☐ Face-to-face
☐ Residents' meetings
☐ Streetwise newsletter
☐ Panels or working groups
☐ The Forum

6. Would you like a copy of the Tenant Participation Compact Summary?

yes ☐ no ☐

7. Are there any particular reasons why you are put off from joining in? (tick all that apply)

☐ Language difficulty
☐ Meeting place unsuitable
☐ Time of day that the meeting arranged
☐ Feel uncomfortable attending meetings
☐ Feel you won't make any difference
☐ Not interested in active participation
☐ Time of year
☐ Transport
☐ Feel isolated
☐ Childcare
☐ Other

If other, please specify:

_____

_____

For your chance of winning one of three vouchers in our free prize draw, please ensure you fill in your contact details overleaf.

Tenant Participation Compact Special Survey

Your views matter to us

Win! up to £40 of shopping vouchers

Monitoring information

Please complete the following information about yourself. Tick any box that you feel best describes you. You do not need to fill in anything that you are uncomfortable with.

This information will help us to:

- ensure that the Council provides quality services that meet the needs of and are accessible to all sections of the community;
- identify which groups are under-represented within our service users; and
- make sure that discrimination is not taking place.

Are you ? **Please tick all that apply**

Male ☐

Female ☐

16-24 years ☐

25-44 years ☐

45-64 years ☐

65-74 years ☐

75-84 years ☐

85+ years ☐

Coping with any long term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activity? ☐

White British ☐

White Irish ☐

Other White background (please specify) ☐

White and Black Caribbean ☐

White and Black African ☐

White and Asian ☐

Other Mixed background (please specify) ☐

Indian ☐

Pakistani ☐

Bangladeshi ☐

Other Asian background (please specify) ☐

Caribbean ☐

African ☐

Other Black background (please specify) ☐

Romany Gypsy ☐

Irish Traveller ☐

Other Traveller (please specify) ☐

Chinese ☐

Other ethnic group (please specify) ☐

The information contained within this form will be used for monitoring purposes only. In compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 all details are kept in strict confidence at all times.

To enter our free prize draw, please provide us with your contact details.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: Home _____ **Work** _____

Email _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please tear-off this page and return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided with this newsletter.