



**TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

**2003-2005**

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- 1.1 The purpose of this strategy is to guide the Council and Housing Landlord Services on ways to inform, consult and involve tenants in the development, review and monitoring of services that are provided to them.
- 1.2 Tenants are an integral part of our work to continually improve services. By consulting and listening to their views and suggestions, we believe the services we provide to tenants will evolve to meet changing needs.
- 1.3 This strategy has links with the Tenant Participation Compact and the Tenant Empowerment Strategy and it will shape the way these documents support and sustain tenant involvement.

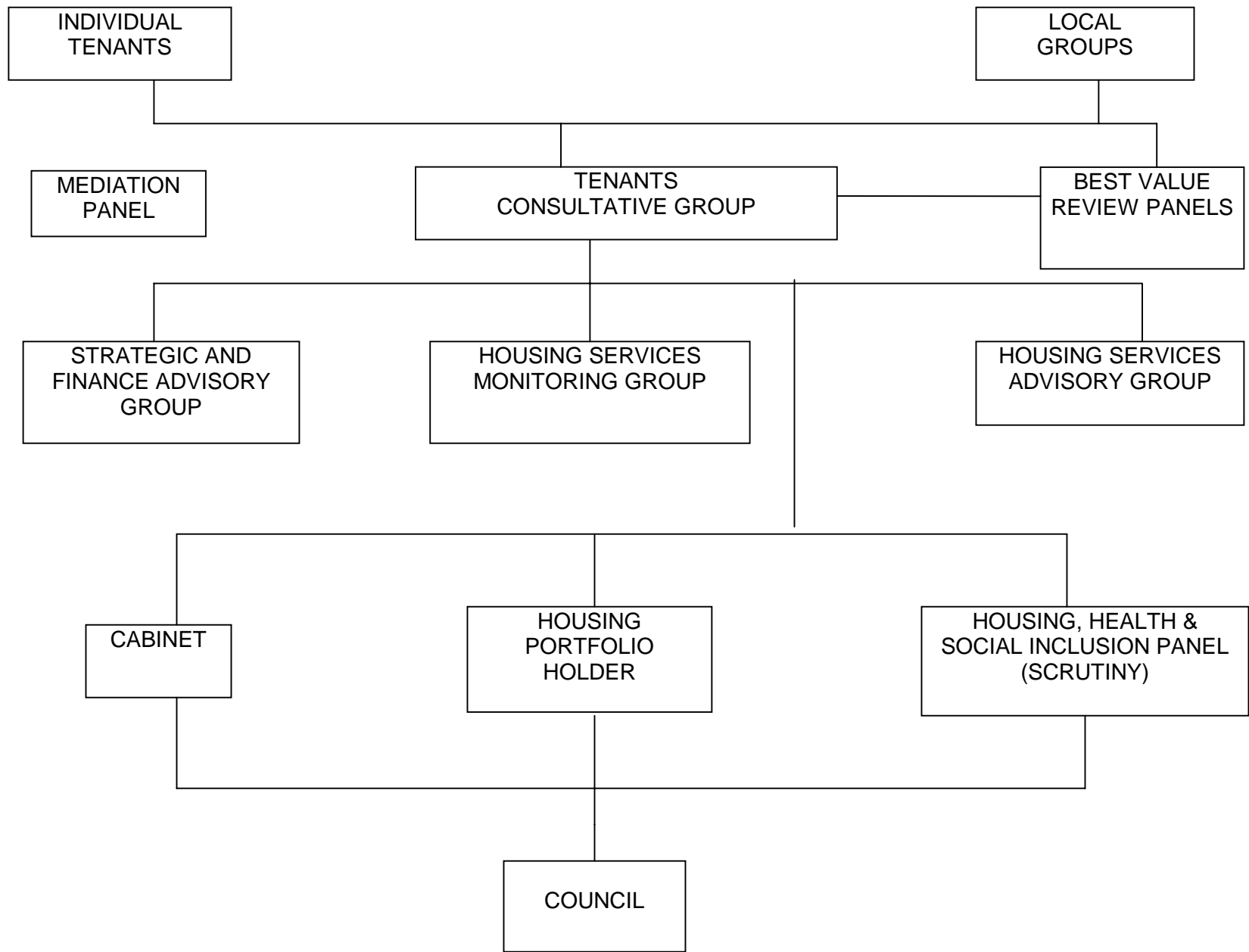
## **2. AIMS**

- 2.1 To encourage, maintain and support a close working partnership between this Council and its tenants.
- 2.2 We will ensure that this Strategy meets the Corporate values as shown in the Corporate Plan 'The Heart of the Forest'.

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| ➤ Caring             | ➤ Communication     |
| ➤ Openness and Trust | ➤ Positive Thinking |
| ➤ Quality            | ➤ Simplicity        |
| ➤ Value for Money    | ➤ Working Together  |

## **3. TENANTS IN THE COUNCIL STRUCTURE**

- 3.1 New Forest District Council has a good record of consulting and working with its tenants. However, with the introduction of the Cabinet Structure, opportunities for tenant involvement in the decision making process has never been wider.
- 3.2 The following chart shows how tenants fit into the Council's decision-making process and provides an explanation on the function of each forum.
- 3.3 The last table shows options for involving tenants and explains the level of commitment and involvement required for each option.



TENANT PARTICIPATION IN THE COUNCIL STRUCTURE - 2003

## Tenant Participation - Explanatory Notes

<b>INDIVIDUAL TENANTS &amp; LOCAL GROUPS</b>	<b>TENANTS CONSULTATIVE GROUP</b>	<b>BEST VALUE REVIEW PANELS</b>	<b>HOUSING STOCK OPTION REVIEW PANEL</b>	<b>STRATEGIC &amp; FINANCE ADVISORY GROUP</b>	<b>HOUSING SERVICES MONITORING GROUP</b>	<b>HOUSING SERVICES ADVISORY PANEL</b>	<b><u>COUNCIL</u> 60 Councillors</b>
<p>Opportunities for ALL tenants and leaseholders to become involved and 'have a say' in ways to suit their needs, issues and time commitment</p> <p><b>Meeting as and when required</b></p>	<p>Main decision-making body for tenants. Representatives feed information from other tenants and local groups, to the council groups</p> <p><b>Monthly meetings</b></p>	<p>Panels set up internally to review housing landlord services under Best Value Service Reviews</p> <p><b>Meet when required</b></p>	<p>This panel has been set up to oversee the Option Appraisal process.</p> <p><b>Meeting monthly</b></p>	<p>Group set up to look at Strategic and Financial Issues. For example, Housing Strategy, Business Plan and Rent Setting/ Calculations</p> <p><b>Twice a year</b></p>	<p>This group has a monitoring role; looking at Performance Reports from Housing Landlord Services</p> <p><b>Monthly meetings</b></p>	<p>A panel, which looks at Policies and Procedures; reviewing, updating and amending where necessary. Including TP Strategy and TP Compact</p> <p><b>Twice a year</b></p>	<p><b><u>Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel</u> a Scrutiny role 10 councillors, 6 tenant reps.</b></p> <p><b><u>Portfolio Holder</u> with brief and responsibility for Housing</b></p>
<p>Any number of tenants or leaseholders</p>	<p>9-15 area tenant representatives; staff and Councillors as required</p>	<p>Tenants, staff and external representatives</p>	<p>4 tenants and 4 Councillors</p>	<p>2 tenant reps and 2 tenants from local groups</p>	<p>Asst. Director Landlord; Housing Performance Manager, 2 tenant reps and 2 tenants from local groups</p>	<p>2 Councillors from Scrutiny, Portfolio Holder, 2 tenant reps and 2 tenants from local groups</p>	<p><b>CABINET</b> 8 Councillors and 2 tenant representatives from TCG</p>

A Mediation Panel can be set up as required to deal with conflict/dispute resolution

This Panel could consist of tenants, staff and councillors

Where possible there should be external independent advisors

## Options for involving New Forest District Council Tenants

There is a wide range of options available for becoming involved, sharing views and information or just to meet with other tenants.

To guide you on the time commitment:

- \* level of commitment – minimal or occasional contact with other tenants and the Tenant Participation Team
- \*\* irregular meetings, participating in surveys or panel meetings; some contact with other tenants and the Tenant Participation Team
- \*\*\* high level of commitment, frequent meetings with tenants, staff and councillors

To guide you on the level of involvement:

- I receiving and exchanging information
- C consulting and listening to views and ideas
- P participating in debate and decisions
- D playing a major part in the decision-making processes

Options for Involvement	Star rating	Level
Cabinet	***	D
Health, Housing and Social Inclusion Review Panel	***	D
Area or Local Representatives	**	P
Conferences and training events	*	I
Estate Walkabouts	**	P
Local Groups	**	P
Panel Meetings	*	C
Telephone and Postal Surveys	*	C
Housing Panel (i)	**	C
Residents Associations (formal)	***	P
Street or Village Representative	*	I
Tenants Consultative Group	***	D
Young Parents Group	*	C
Youth Group or Forum	*	C
Social Events	*	I
Disability Forum (ii)	*	C
Special Needs or Interest Groups	*	C
Reading Panel (iii)	*	I
Fun Day or Information Day	*	I
Editorial Panel – Round the Houses Newsletter	**	C
Community Initiatives	*	C
Leaseholder Forum (iv)	**	C

- (i) over 250 tenants interested in taking part in telephone or postal surveys
- (ii) set up to provide a network opportunity for disabled tenants and involve them in areas where their special needs should be considered
- (iii) to be set up for reading and checking documents that are jargon free and easy to understand
- (iv) a forum set up to ensure leaseholders are kept informed and consulted

## **4. THE STRATEGY**

- 4.1 This strategy recognises that tenants give freely of their time to support other tenants and assist the Council in monitoring and reviewing Housing Landlord Services.
- 4.2 Tenants and Leaseholders themselves should determine how and when they want to be involved. They can demonstrate this by bringing issues they want to discuss to meetings.
- 4.3 The key objectives are summarised below:
  - Housing Landlord Services – New Forest District Council will ensure that tenants are fully involved in deciding and influencing policy and service standards. This will be achieved by working in partnership with tenants and leaseholders as set out in the revised Compact.
  - Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement – working with tenants and leaseholders we will regularly assess and review the arrangements for consultation and participation. The aim is ensure that tenant representation is appropriate for tenants and leaseholders and that we will continue to provide a wide range of options for working with them.
  - Information – we are committed to ensure that information provided to tenants and leaseholders is in plain language avoiding jargon, easy to understand, timely and relevant to their needs. (further detail on the provision of information can be found in the Tenant Participation Compact)
  - Monitoring and Reviewing Performance – this Council strives to continually improve its services to tenants and leaseholders. It is therefore vital that they should play a key role in monitoring performance. Currently the Housing Services Monitoring Group, which will include staff and four tenant representatives, and meets monthly.

## **5. SUPPORT FOR TENANTS**

- 5.1 Tenant Representatives on the Tenants Consultative Group have an Induction Programme of Training to support them; which include – An Introduction to Tenant Participation; Committee or Meeting Skills; Health & Safety; Team Building and Equal Opportunities.
- 5.2 The appointment of the Independent Tenant Advisor will support and advise as many tenants as possible during the Housing Stock Option Review.
- 5.3 Funds will be made available to tenants from the Housing Revenue Account, via the Tenant Participation Budget. Reasonable out of pocket expenses will be

available to tenants who wish to claim when attending meeting with the Council and other tenants. Some of the support is summarised below, with full details provided in the Compact:

- An annual grant for constituted groups
- A start up grant for new groups
- Stationery and other support
- Transport costs, child care and carer allowance
- Access to training events and conferences
- Membership of TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service)

5.4 We recognise that there will need to be more effort to contact under represented groups. For 2004 therefore, the focus will be on reaching the needs of the following:

- Sheltered Housing Tenants
- Young Parents
- Tenants in rural areas
- The Disabled
- Young People
- Gypsies and Travellers

5.5 There is also recognition that we need to continue to develop tenant participation generally:

- Supporting and capacity building of the Tenants Consultative Group
- Developing and expanding the use of the Housing Panel
- Ensuring the development of the Disability Forum and the Leaseholder Forum
- Seeking ways to encourage the formation of formal and informal groups at local level

## **6. ELECTION OF TENANT REPRESENTATIVES**

6.1 Area Tenant Representatives have an election process every three years; those tenants voted in as co-opted members should be required to stand for election in the June after joining the Tenants Consultative Group. Where possible, tenant representatives will rotate their term of office, so that not all area representatives stand down at the same time.

6.2 The process will involve nominations, election statements and full postal ballot of all tenants. This work will be supported and carried out by the Tenant Participation Team.



## 7.1 KEY TARGETS and MONITORING FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION

TARGET	ACTION	KEY PEOPLE	DATE	COMMENTS
<p><b>TARGET ONE:</b></p> <p><b>To ensure that tenants are fully involved in deciding and influencing policy and service standards</b></p>	<p>We will consult and involve tenants in:</p> <p>Reviewing and amending the Housing Business Plan The Housing Strategy Board Reviewing and updating the Tenant Participation Compact and setting future action plans Reviewing and amending the Tenant Empowerment Strategy and the Tenant Participation Strategy The Housing Services Monitoring Group Influencing: budgets, finance and rent setting; allocation and lettings policies; repairs and planned maintenance, environmental improvements; rent collection and voids; tenancy conditions and tenants handbook</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tenants and where appropriate</li> <li>➤ Leaseholders</li> <li>➤ Housing Landlord staff</li> <li>➤ Councillors</li> <li>➤ External partners</li> <li>➤ Other Council departments</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Bi-annually</p> <p>Bi-annually</p> <p>Monthly</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p><i>Work beginning December 03</i></p> <p><i>Board set up</i></p> <p><i>Reviewed December 03</i></p> <p><i>Consulted monthly at HSMG and annually on rents</i></p>

## 7.2 KEY TARGETS and MONITORING FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION

TARGET	ACTION	KEY PEOPLE	DATE	COMMENTS
<p><b>TARGET TWO:</b></p> <p><b>Working with tenants and leaseholders to regularly assess and review the arrangements for consultation and participation</b></p>	<p>We will consult and involve tenants in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing the Tenant Participation Budget</li> <li>Appointing Tenant Participation Staff to support tenants and leaseholders</li> <li>Providing and reviewing the provision of a Resource Room for tenants</li> <li>Reviewing the payment of expenses to tenants and tenant groups</li> <li>Continuing to support the Tenants Consultative Group and Leaseholder Panel</li> <li>Providing a training programme of events to build skills and capacity for tenants</li> <li>Ensuring that tenants maintain a key role in the Council's structure</li> <li>Continuing membership of TPAS</li> <li>Constantly reviewing the options for involving tenants and seeking to meet the needs of all tenants at a level they want</li> <li>Assisting the Tenants Consultative Group to be accountable and as representative as possible</li> <li>Ensuring that the agreed standards in the Tenant Participation Compact are met and reviewed</li> <li>Review and update the Tenant Representatives Handbook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants and leaseholders</li> <li>Tenant Participation staff</li> <li>Other council officers</li> <li>Councillors</li> <li>Internal and external trainers and consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annually</li> <li>Annually</li> <li>Annually</li> <li>Annually</li> <li>Annually</li> <li>When required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Annual report to TCG</i></li> <li><i>Temporary move to Hythe offices to be reviewed 6/12</i></li> <li><i>Ongoing support</i></li> <li><i>Updated Sept 03</i></li> </ul>

### 7.3 KEY TARGETS and MONITORING FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION

TARGET	ACTION	KEY PEOPLE	DATE	COMMENTS
<p><b>TARGET THREE:</b></p> <p><b>We will ensure that the information provided to tenants and leaseholder is in plain language avoiding jargon, easy to understand, timely and relevant to their needs</b></p>	<p>We will consult and involve tenants in:</p> <p>The provision of a Tenants Newsletter, currently 'Round the Houses'; ensuring that the Editorial Panel involves a mix of tenants and staff</p> <p>The information provided in the Tenant Representatives Handbook</p> <p>Providing up-to-date information in the Tenants Resource Room</p> <p>Ensuring that every tenant and leaseholder receives updated versions of the Tenant Participation Compact</p> <p>Research the feasibility of a Housing Web page, with a dedicated tenant participation link</p> <p>Setting up a Reading Panel to check written documents going out to tenants for plain, jargon-free language</p> <p>Providing reports, minutes and other supporting papers, where possible, 10 days in advance of any meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tenants and leaseholders</li> <li>➤ Council staff</li> <li>➤ Councillors</li> <li>➤ IT department</li> <li>➤ Committee</li> <li>➤ Admin staff</li> <li>➤ External agencies as required</li> </ul>	<p>Reviewing all these arrangements when possible annually</p>	<p><i>Reviewed under Best Value 03</i></p> <p><i>Completed Sept 03</i></p>

#### 7.4 KEY TARGETS and MONITORING FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION

TARGET	ACTION	KEY PEOPLE	DATE	COMMENTS
<p><b>TARGET FOUR:</b></p> <p><b>We will ensure that tenants, and where appropriate leaseholders, play a key role in monitoring and reviewing performance</b></p>	<p>We will consult and involve tenants in:</p> <p>The Housing Services Monitoring Group</p> <p>Setting targets and service standards in Housing Landlord Services, including Tenant Participation</p> <p>The Status Survey</p> <p>Reviewing the Housing Revenue Account and Tenant Participation Budget</p> <p>Evaluate the training provided for tenants and in particular tenant representatives</p> <p>Reviewing progress on the targets in the Housing Strategy, Business Plan, Tenant Participation Strategy and the Compact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tenants and where appropriate leaseholders</li> <li>➤ Council staff, including finance department</li> <li>➤ Councillors</li> <li>➤ External agencies as required</li> </ul>	<p>Monthly</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Every 3 years</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p><i>January 2004</i></p> <p><i>December 03</i></p>

**It is anticipated that the Four Key Targets above will be reviewed annually;  
The Tenants Consultative Group will review one target quarterly in more detail**

## **8. TENANT COMMENTS**

- 8.1 The Tenants Consultative Group are happy to support this strategy and look forward to working in partnership to achieve its aims.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising from the strategy, as officers believe future initiatives will remain within current budgets.

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications with this strategy, though Cabinet are aware that the local environment is important to the tenants.

## **11. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications with this strategy. Cabinet are aware of the concerns of tenants and residents in relation to anti-social and nuisance behaviour.

## **12. CONCLUSIONS**

- 12.1 This strategy will take tenant participation forward by continuing to evolve and develop with the needs and issues of our tenants.

## **13. HOUSING PORTFOLIO COMMENTS**

- 13.1 The Portfolio Holder is happy to support this Strategy and looks forward to the continuing close relationship with the Tenants and in particular the Tenants Consultative Group.

## **14. RECOMMENDATION**

- 14.1 That the Cabinet accept and support the Strategy for Tenant Participation.

### **For further information:**

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### **Supporting guidance:**

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
Community Housing Task Force