

## **PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL**

### **(Taken from: Tenants Compact 2005 – 2010)**

Tenant and resident associations, Councillors and Ascham Homes Board members already operate under strict codes of conduct. This protocol will govern the outlined consultations structure above and is in addition to any code of conduct or terms of references that already exist. Protocol for all members of all groups and panel meetings within this compact agreement:

#### **1.0 Common Principles**

- 1.1** These principles are there for tenants, leaseholders and officers to understand and appreciate their respective positions and responsibilities if a strong partnership is to exist.
- 1.2** Tenants, leaseholders and officers are required at all times to act in a courteous manner and strive to develop and maintain a balanced relationship of mutual respect which is open and honest. Personal attacks, offensive and abusive comments are not acceptable.
- 1.3** In carrying out our role no tenants, leaseholders or officers will not discriminate against any person in a manner that is contrary to the Council's or Ascham Homes Equal Opportunities Policy on any ground against any other member of the group or panel.
- 1.4** Tenants, leaseholders and officers shall ensure that everybody is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, religion, or any other matter which causes people to be treated with injustice.
- 1.5** Officers attending meetings are responsible to the Council or Ascham Homes. Their job is to carry out the Council and Ascham Homes work under the direction and control of the elected councillors or Board Members. They will work with, and give advice to, tenants, leaseholders, Board Members and elected councillors as directed.
- 1.6** Tenant or leaseholder representatives are responsible for representing the best interests of the tenants and leaseholders of their recognised area/estate. They should try to reflect and understand the views of the whole community and not just a few.
- 1.7** Tenants, leaseholders and officers must declare if they have any personal, financial or material interest in any matter being considered. (for example, if a panel is considering a change in a policy, a member must inform the panel if they have a close relative who might gain advantage from the change; or if they have an interest in a contractor whose work is being discussed).
- 1.8** Tenants, leaseholders and officers shall at all times operate within the rules laid down in their individual constitutions and terms of reference of the meeting they are attending.

## 2.0 Principles for Officers of the Council and Ascham Homes

- 2.1 At all times, officers will act in a professional manner and will treat tenant and leaseholder representatives, Councillors and Board Members with courtesy and respect.
- 2.2 Requests for tenants, leaseholders representative to attend meetings shall be kept to a reasonable level. Both the Council and Ascham Homes acknowledge that tenants and leaseholders representatives give their time on a voluntary basis and demands on their time outside prescheduled meetings should be kept to the minimum possible and are subject to the expense payment requirements.
- 2.3 Meetings organised by the Council or Ascham Homes for tenants' or leaseholders' representatives should be held in a suitable venue which is accessible and, as far as possible, where they require tenants or leaseholders of an estate to attend, held at a time which does not exclude full participation (e.g. members of the TRA who are from the Black or multi ethnic community, who work or have child care responsibilities).
- 2.4 The Council and Ascham Homes officers will make themselves available to tenants and leaseholder representatives providing reasonable notice is given, their reason for attendance is specified and demands are not excessive and meet the Council and Ascham Homes employment regulations.
- 2.5 The Council and Ascham Homes shall, with reasonable notice, supply on request information to tenant and leaseholder representatives regarding the housing service for the estate and area activities. This will not include information relating to individual tenants (except at that individual's request) or of staff, which is confidential.
- 2.6 The Council and Ascham Homes officers will not base their judgement or give favourable treatment to tenant and leaseholder representatives, in relation to the provision of housing services, nor should tenants and leaseholders expect the Council or Ascham Homes officers to treat their members more favourably.

## 3.0 Principles for tenant and leaseholders

- 3.1 Tenant and leaseholder representatives should be courteous at all times in their dealings with officers, councillors, Board Members, contractors, agencies, other residents and members of the public.
- 3.2 Tenant and leaseholder representatives should not ask council or Ascham Homes officers for their personal views about policies, management decisions, staff, Board Member or elected councillors of the Council.
- 3.3 Tenant and leaseholder representatives must respect the impartiality of officers and must avoid making political statements of a negative nature either at meetings or in their role as a residents' representative.

- 3.4 Ascham Homes and Council officers will try to attend all relevant meetings outside normal hours. However tenant and leaseholder representatives must appreciate that such availability will sometimes be restricted by private commitments. Tenant and leaseholder representatives should give at least three weeks notice if they require officer(s) to attend unscheduled meetings.
- 3.5 Where tenant and leaseholder representatives are representing their estate at external meetings on behalf of their members it is the responsibility of that representative to relay the outcome of the meetings to their membership.
- 3.6 From time to time, tenant and leaseholder representatives will have access to confidential information and information that has not yet been made public. Where such information has been revealed as being confidential it must not be disclosed to others under any circumstances nor must it be used for personal gain.

#### 4.0 Breach of Code of Conduct

- 4.1 Should there be a breach of this protocol by a tenant or leaseholder representative, an officer of the Council or Ascham Homes the presiding Chair of the meeting has the power to give a verbal warning to the individual(s) concerned. In addition, any member of the group or panel has the right to propose a motion that such a member be given a verbal or written warning under this code.
- 4.2 If, despite official warning, an officer of the Council or Ascham Homes or a Tenant or leaseholder representative continues to breach this protocol on more than two occasions or they commit a breach which contravenes, an Association code of conduct or the regulations which govern both the Council or Ascham Homes they can be expelled or suspended from meeting(s) by the Chair of the meeting or the Committee.
- 4.3 Where the Chair of a panel or meeting commits such a breach then the Community Advice & Involvement Service will have the right to carry out the above expulsion by majority vote on behalf of the group, Council and Ascham Homes.
- 4.4 Where a tenant or leaseholder wishes to appeal against a warning or expulsion then this may be done through the complaints procedure.
- 4.5 Where an officer of the Council or Ascham Homes is warned or excluded then this will be addressed through the normal disciplinary procedure.

*Our mission is to ensure that residents have an excellent housing experience by providing one of the best housing services.*