

Ascham Homes
Resident Participation Compact
2010 - 2013

Inside this compact	
Section 1	
• Introduction	
• Glossary of terms	
• What is a compact	
• The Compact Promise	
• Process for the review of the Tenant Participation Compact	
• The role of Waltham Forest Council and Ascham Homes	
• What does the Compact mean to you?	
• Strategic aims	
• Equal opportunities	
Section 2 Getting involved and keeping involved	
• Standards of involvement	
• Access to independent advice and information	
• If we can't agree	
• How to get involved	
• The right to manage	
Section 3 Supporting resident involvement	
• Our Partners	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching out to everyone 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from the Resident Involvement Team 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support 	
Section 4 Measuring the impact of resident involvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring involvement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring the compact 	
List of Appendices	
Appendix 1 Resident Involvement Register	
Appendix 2 Key performance Indicators	
Appendix 3 Contact Numbers	
Appendix 4 Related documents	

Introduction

Welcome to the Resident Participation Compact 2010 to 2013. This is the second compact negotiated with our residents and we hope it will build on the successes already achieved.

Successes include:

- Reviewing Contract Panels resulting in wider membership
- Reviewing and increasing the number of estate stakeholders
- Reviewing and increasing the numbers registered on the Resident Involvement Network
- Introducing tenant inspectors
- Introducing two local compacts

The compact review group made up of residents and staff from Ascham Homes agreed what should go into this Compact and that it should link to our Business Plan 2010 to 2013. This ensures a connection between the important documents that chart our aims and commitments to delivering an excellent service and improving and increasing resident involvement.

The strategic aims in this document are linked to the initiatives in the Business Plan and the main issues in the Council's Housing Strategy Statement.

We hope you are able to take up the invitation to take part and help to make a genuine difference to the homes and communities in our borough.

This Compact has been signed by the Chair of Ascham Homes Board, the Council's Portfolio Member for Housing, Chair of Tenants Council and Head of Housing Services.

For more information

We hope that you will find this document a useful guide to what we hope to achieve over the next three years. However if you need help understanding the document or if you would like to get involved in the service please contact our Resident Involvement Team on 020 8496 4934.



Glossary of terms

Agendas Agendas set out the issues that are to be discussed in a formal meeting

AGM Annual General Meeting

ALMO Arms Length Management Organisation – the organisation responsible for the management of the Council owned housing stock

Ascham Homes The name of Waltham Forest Council's Arms Length Management Organisations

Ascham Direct Ascham Homes' customer contact centre who are the first point of contact when you ring us

Audit Commission The Government organisation that inspects and assesses the performance of local authorities, ALMO's and housing associations

BME Black and minority ethnic minorities

Business plan A plan which sets out goals and aims for what will be achieved in the coming years and projects income and costs for the same period

CCI Community Cohesion Initiative is a scheme from which Tenants and Residents Association's can make funding bids

Capital work the work we carry out to repair, improve or redevelop Council homes. It also includes repairing and maintaining other areas of council estates such as roads and footpaths. The Decent Homes work is an example of major work

Community Councils These are supported by the London Borough of Waltham forest and give residents an opportunity to comment on local services. There are six Community Councils covering the borough and each have an annual budget to spend in their local area

Compact Formal agreement

Contract Panels These are supported by Ascham Homes and give residents to comment on the services provided

Contractor A company that provides a service

DCLG Department of Communities and Local Government

Design brief this sets out the plans for the work we want to carry out, including diagrams, drawings of how the work should look when it's finished

DDA Disability Discrimination Act

ESOL English for speakers of other languages

Glossary A list of words, phrases and letters with an explanation of what they mean

Guarantee A promise

Housing stock Bedsits, flats, marionettes and houses that are owned by Waltham Forest Council

Key lines of enquiry A number of questions and statements that the Audit Commission inspectors use to assess and measure the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services

Lead person or officer The main person responsible for overseeing work or consultation we carry out. He or she will be the person to contact if you have any questions or complaints

Leaseholder Any person who owns their home on a long lease

Local Councilor An elected member of local government

Local Strategic Partnership The local strategic partnership is an organisation that brings together public, private, voluntary, community sectors and local communities so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together to improve services

LBWF Waltham Forest Council

LGBT Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender

MRA Major Repairs Allowance is the notional amount of money that the CLG assumes each Local Authority will spend on repairs each year. A proportion of the Council's capital funding that is delegated to residents to decide how it is spent

Minutes Minutes record what happened and what was discussed during a meeting. Agendas set out the issues that are to be discussed

Model Constitution The written set of rules TRA's must follow in order to become recognised by Ascham Homes

Mystery shopper A panel of residents tests our services by making un-announced visits, telephone calls or writing to Ascham Homes then report back on the service they receive

Patch manager the member of Ascham Homes staff responsible for overseeing a particular area or estate (patch)

National framework for tenant participation compacts Guidance produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to help Council's and tenants

NVQ National Vocational and Qualification is a qualification that is attached to a form of study

Provider Contractor that is responsible for providing services

Quoram/Quarate Having the necessary number of people present for decisions to be made

Resident This term applies to both tenants and leaseholders

Resident inspector A resident who is trained to test the service standards and levels of performance

Resident Involvement Team A team of Ascham Homes staff that deal exclusively with resident involvement

Social exclusion this is where certain groups of people (for example the elderly) find it hard to play an active part in society because they do not have access to services, jobs, transport and so on. As a result they often have low incomes and a poor quality of life

STATUS Survey A survey carried out regularly by an external body to measure the residents' satisfaction with the housing service provided by an organisation

Street properties properties that are not within the boundaries of an estate

Summary This is a short version of a longer, main document and sums up what the main document contains

Tenant Any person who rents their home from the Council (the London Borough of Waltham Forest)

Tenants Council The Council's resident panel that oversees its housing management functions

TMO A Tenant Management Organisation is where the residents on an estate are responsible for carrying out a number of the management functions on an estate. It is a formal and legally recognised organisation.

TRA Tenants and Residents Association's is a group of residents that live on an estate or within easy reach of each other that have formed a group to deal with issues of mutual interest

TSA Tenants Services Authority is an organisation established by Government to regulate social housing

Underrepresented some groups of people, for example young people or ethnic minorities find it more difficult than other groups to become involved in formal organizations and structures. When this happens there may be very few people from certain groups involved in recognized structures although there are a lot of people from that particular group living in an area or on our estates

Walkabouts where residents can take members of our staff around their estates to point out any problems or show them where things can be improved

We us Ascham Homes, the arms length management organisation which manages the Council's housing

What is a compact?

Tenants' Compacts were introduced by the government in 1999 as part of the agenda to improve services. Tenants' Compacts are intended to be negotiated agreements, initially at borough level, between tenants and leaseholders and their landlord. The purpose of a Compact is to define how tenants and leaseholders can be effectively involved in decisions affecting their homes and estates.

The National Framework for Tenants' Participation Compacts was revised in 2005. The up to date requirements that compacts should cover are:

- Housing services with regard to the opportunities that exist for tenants and leaseholders to become involved, particularly with decision making;
- Resources that are available to support tenants and leaseholders participation;
- Standards for meetings;
- Standards for residents' groups;
- Involving tenants groups in decision making;
- Monitoring and measuring performance

The Resident Participation Compact is a binding agreement between residents, Ascham Homes and the Council. It is a living document (one that's continually changing) which aims to place all Council tenants and leaseholders at the heart of delivering services and making decisions. It sets out what residents, the Council and Ascham Homes want to achieve based on the government's standards in the National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts,

It sets out a range of options for residents to become involved in local decisions on housing matters that affect them. It also sets out guarantees for residents as individuals and as members of Tenants and Residents Associations or Forums.

Our compact sets out what we want to achieve by working together. It describes our aims for involving residents and our commitment to making sure those residents are directly involved in all decision making processes. The Compact sets out the range of options and guarantees on the way our residents can shape, influence, monitor and directly control the services that we provide. Our Compact links into the Council's housing strategy and the local strategic partnership.

This compact covers the whole borough and out borough estates and sets basic standards for working in partnership with residents. It looks mainly at the housing services we provide.

Through Local Area Compacts, we will negotiate with specific resident groups to make sure we work closely with residents to improve local services and quality of life.

The Compact Promise:

Ascham Homes is committed to putting residents at the heart of decision making, we need residents to have a real say about the service they receive and most importantly we will make sure that every resident has the opportunity to get involved in a way and at a level that they feel comfortable with.

Our vision is of safer and stronger local communities where all residents have real opportunities to be involved in improving their housing services and quality of life. Our neighbourhoods will be places that people are proud to live in and that will have a positive effect on present and future generations.

Strategic aims

Our vision

Working together to provide quality homes in a thriving community.

Company Priorities

People: Listening and responding to your needs

Resources: Making the best use of your money - doing more for less

Improvement: Achieving very high resident satisfaction through service improvement

Development: Rewarding the can-do attitude and commitment of our staff

Environment: Community impacts through joint action

Our aims

- We will work together to make sure that Council tenants and leaseholders are properly informed, consulted and involved as part of an effective partnership. We will recognise and respect the needs of everyone in our community.
- We will deliver a customer focused and cost effective housing service of the highest standard to meet the needs and priorities of our residents now and in the future.
- We will make sure that as many of our residents as possible have better opportunities to take part in their housing services and in managing and maintaining their homes and local neighbourhoods.

Our objectives

To achieve our aims we will:

- Help you and other residents including traditionally under represented and disadvantaged sections of our community to play a central role in the decision making processes for your housing services;

- Work with you to involve you in monitoring, reviewing and putting effective policies, strategies and performance standards into practice for your housing service. This includes policies and strategies for involving residents;
- Develop new ways of reaching and involving all sections of our community, with the widest possible range of opportunities for all our residents and residents groups, within our community to become involved at the level they choose;
- Listen to you and respond to what you tell us, with the aim of always improving performance to provide services that meet the needs and wishes of current and future residents;
- Constantly try and improve communication and feedback between you, us and the council and make sure that you have accessible information about housing policies, strategies and service standards;
- Provide support and resources within our budget and the law, to give you the chance to take part in managing your homes and surrounding area and fully support you if you have special needs, in a way that means you can take part actively in the decision making process.

To achieve an increase in resident involvement and resident satisfaction we will:

Involve residents in shaping the service

How this will be done

- Increase opportunities for residents to get involved
- Demonstrate improvements made to the service on issues that residents have raised through complaints made and when completing the annual STATUS survey.
- Demonstrate improvements made to performance of staff based on the results of mystery shopping.

Ascham Homes is also committed to make every neighbourhood a good place to live where local services are available to all residents.

To build successful and thriving communities we will:

Increase the chances for local residents to make use of the benefit from local community opportunities in the neighbourhoods where they live.

How this will be done:

- We will work closely with other organisations, and the Local Strategic Partnership to improve the way services are delivered and to increase opportunities for residents – such as youth and sports provision, access to training and employment, and health services.
- We will increase opportunities to get funding for projects on our estates – such as refurbishing playgrounds and green spaces.
- We will promote the use of local community facilities as places to deliver community services.

We have devised a set of service standards which govern how we inform and consult residents.

These are:

- Presenting information in Plain English, avoiding jargon where possible;
- Making information available in different languages, Braille, audio cassette, CD and in large print;
- Providing an interpreting service if English is not your first language;
- Providing comprehensive and up to date information on our website;
- Producing our Ahead newsletter at least four times a year;
- Sharing information with residents through letters, newsletters, phone calls, text, email, website, in person and in communal areas;
- Asking your opinion through surveys and focus groups to ensure we deliver a good service and provide you with feedback;
- Consulting residents formally and informally on how we manage and improve the services you receive;
- Offering a range of opportunities to be involved at whatever level you wish, at a time and in a way that suits you;
- Providing regular training for interested residents;
- Providing expenses to ensure involved residents are not out-of-pocket, including travel, carer, stationery and communication costs;
- Consulting interested residents from all backgrounds, including traditionally 'hard to reach' groups, in strengthening the community.
- Publicising the dates and venues of meetings and events in advance on our website www.aschamhomes.org.uk.

This compact sets out a programme of activities that Ascham Homes and the Council will deliver to support and encourage you to be fully involved in whatever level you wish in the way your homes are managed. It will demonstrate how we will be proactive to ensure we understand our residents' needs and report back on actions or changes that have been made as a result of residents getting involved.

These opportunities will enable those traditionally not involved to be able to take part and will help build the skills and confidence residents need to get actively involved.

Reviewing the Resident Participation Compact

Ascham Homes and the London Borough of Waltham Forest produced their first Tenant Participation Compact in 2005. The Compact is reviewed annually and performance against the Compact is monitored through Contract panels and Ascham Homes Board.

To make compacts meaningful they have to be monitored on a regular basis to make sure that commitments that are made are kept to, and to give everyone feedback on what has been happening since the compact was first set up. The Resident Participation Compact will be monitored by a Compact Review Group annually, with a progress report being produced and circulated to residents and staff and it will also be available on the Ascham Homes website www.aschamhomes.org.uk

The review of the compact will provide an opportunity to monitor progress against the aims and commitments we have agreed with residents. The review process will include keeping information and standards up to date.

This version of the Compact has been developed in consultation with a group of residents during 2009 called the Compact Review Group. This group will meet annually to review future performance against the Compact.

The Compact Review Group is made up of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Contract Panels, members of Contract Panels and Tenants Council as well as Ascham Homes staff working in the Policy and Operations team.

We thank all residents that helped set up this Compact and the group of representatives who have continued to work with us since our first Compact was set up. Without the involvement of our residents there would be no Compact.

Ascham Homes and Waltham Forest Council

Waltham Forest Council is your landlord and owner of the council housing stock. The Council sets the rent and service charges for its properties and decides on important policies and strategies that relate to how your home is managed.

The Council's retained housing service will involve and consult residents on:

- Allocations and the Council's letting policies
- Tenancy conditions and agreements
- The regeneration programme
- Annual rent setting
- The Council's housing policy and strategy
- The Right to Manage process.

The Council will:

- Ensure that the Compact is regularly reviewed and updated
- Monitor the performance indicators for resident involvement
- Manage the borough's Local Strategic Partnership, which includes council, voluntary groups and residents, private tenants, home-owners, and housing associations and their tenants
- Work with residents on option studies

Ascham Homes is the arms length management organisation (ALMO) set up and owned by the Council to manage the council homes. Ascham Homes is responsible for providing the day to day services to your home. Ascham Homes will carry out the consultation and participation work to deliver its tasks under the management agreement. This compact describes the ways that work will be done.

Ascham Homes will involve and consult residents on:

- Antisocial behaviour policies and procedures
- Best Value and performance plans
- Budgets and finance
- Complaints
- Customer care standards
- Customer satisfaction
- Environmental works on estates
- Equality and diversity issues
- How we clean estates
- How we can improve the service
- Leaseholders management and charges
- Letting of contracts
- Major works programme and the Decent Homes programme

- Rent and arrears collection
- Resident involvement
- Reviewing the repairs service.

To facilitate residents becoming involved Ascham Homes will:

- Work with residents on empowerment and capacity building
- Offer training and support to residents
- Carry out community development work on estates
- Recognise resident and community groups
- Fund recognised TRA's
- Review the Resident Participation Compact.

What does the Compact mean to you?

Involving residents in decisions that affect them.

As a council tenant or leaseholder you have the right to:

- Join an existing tenants and residents association;
- Get support to start an association in your area;
- Receive training and information;
- Stand for election to your local Contract Panel or as a resident board member;
- Sit on forum meetings, following the protocol rules;
- Be consulted and have access to information;
- Use the Tenants Resource Centre.

As a Tenants and Resident Association you have the right to:

- Representation at tenants Council;
- Negotiate a local compact to give you influence over spending and setting priorities for local services;
- Receive regular funding (where appropriate) to cover the activities of your association and for the community, events and other special projects,
- Support from the resident involvement team;
- Have regular walkabouts with staff;
- Have staff take part in your meetings;
- Have access to training, information, independent advice from other tenants and residents associations and groups around the country.

As an estate stakeholder you have the right to:

- Have regular walkabouts with staff;
- Help and support with newsletters;
- Access to training;
- Support with reporting and following up communal repairs.

As a member of a forum you have the right to:

- Advise on budgets if you sit on a Community Council;
- Influence housing policy;
- Make recommendations to us,
- Send delegates to working parties or groups.

This compact also includes:

- Special measures to consult and involve residents from under represented or diverse communities.

Equal Opportunities

Our residents, staff, board and Waltham Forest Council are committed to making sure that all members of our community have real opportunities to be involved in their housing services and quality of life at a local level.

Standards for involving residents from all sections of the community

In conjunction with the Council's tenant support and resettlement service we provide support for vulnerable tenants.

Our diversity action plan sets out the actions we are taking to ensure all sections of our community are involved with the housing service.

To achieve this we will:

- assess the profile of our community and keep up to date records on the six diversity strands. These include disability, age, ethnicity, gender, faith and sexual orientation. Legally we are required to collect this data and use the information gained to tailor our approach to involving residents, who use our services and access them;
- we will make arrangements to consult with and involve all under-represented sections of our community for example through our community facilitators, the voluntary sector and forums.
- We will make sure that information is available in other formats on request;
- We will make sure that under-represented sections of our community are aware of how they can be involved in the arrangements for consulting and involving residents, for example through tenants and residents associations, community groups and forums.
- We will work with existing tenants and resident associations to help them represent the views of under-represented groups in their community and helping them to provide feedback;
- We will encourage groups from all communities to understand and respect each others' needs;
- We will promote the awareness of equalities legislation to our tenants and residents association and how it affects them;
- We will monitor our equal opportunities policy including levels of input and involvement. This will include involving people from traditionally under-represented sections of our community and reporting twice yearly to the Boards Performance and Development Committee and residents.

Getting Involved and Keeping Involved

Standards of involvement

We have agreed a set of minimum standards with our residents that make sure all our residents have the same opportunities to be involved in decision making.

These standards cover issues about how information is provided and shared with residents and support for resident involvement. The Council, Ascham Homes, providers and residents groups are signed up to these principles.

The minimum standards deal with:

1. Equal opportunities

Aims

Equal opportunities seek to influence behaviour to prevent discrimination. It promotes the rights of all members in society, particularly minority or underrepresented groups.

We want all our residents to be able to give their view on how we run and improve our service and we need to ensure that equality plays a central role in enabling this.

We need to encourage groups from all communities to understand and appreciate each other's views and we will promote and support contact between tenants and residents associations and local community groups.

Our minimum standards are set out on our website www.aschamhomes.org.uk under our diversity framework.

2. Consultation

Aims

We will follow the terms of the Housing Act 1985 (Provision of Information and Consultation Section 105) when consulting tenants and leaseholders on introducing new programmes or changing policies relating to management, maintenance or demolition of tenants homes, or the provision of services or amenities and we will give them or their representatives an opportunity to make their views known.

There are various levels at which this consultation will be organised, depending upon the circumstances of the changes and the number of tenants likely to be affected. This consultation may be through a variety of way such as:

- Individual tenants/leaseholders or as part of a group (for an estate, block or area)
- A recognised Tenants and Residents Association
- A leaseholders Association
- Organised meetings such as contract panel, leaseholder forum.

Standards for carrying out consultation

Aims

We will publicise consultation events locally and borough wide. We will be clear about what the consultation is about and the result of the consultation.

Residents can expect the following standards when Ascham Homes carries out consultations.

- Details of what residents are being **asked to consider**.
- Details of the **timetable** for consultation.
- Information to help residents to take an **effective part** in the consultation.
- Be clear about the level of influence residents will have over the final decision:
 - sometimes Ascham Homes will simply be providing **information** to residents.
 - sometimes residents' **views** are being sought so that Ascham Homes can take these into account before making the final decision.
 - sometimes Ascham Homes will be involving residents and resident groups in **decision-making**.
- The **name** and **contact details** for the lead officer dealing with consultation.
- Details of how **all** residents can be involved.
- On estate-based consultations, events will be carried out **locally** to provide an opportunity for residents to meet with the officers who are doing the consultation.
- Details of how residents can **make their views known** to Ascham Homes.
- Residents will receive **feedback** on the results of the consultation.
- How the **final decision** will be reached and details of who will make the decision.
- Information on how and where to **complain**.

3. Information

Aims

We will make sure that the information we provide to residents and their representatives meets their needs and that the information resident groups give their members meets their needs.

We will comply with legal requirement about information including the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act. You can ask what information is held about you and how information is being used. You can request a copy of information held about you in accordance with the Access to Personal Information regulations.

We will provide residents with information about the service they receive and the officers or partners who provide it. This information – such as job descriptions and delivery plans – is available on request. If a request for information cannot be met this should be the exception and a clear and reasonable justification will need to be given.

We will:

- provide information in different formats on request;
- respond to request for information received via email, in person or over the telephone as soon as possible and in any case in a maximum of 10 working days;
- provide information via our website www.aschamhomes.org.uk and on notice boards;
- provide information that meets your needs;
- ask residents to approve publicity information before it is sent out; and

we will survey residents about the information they receive via the STATUS survey We will target information to ensure it is straightforward, easy to read and understand. We will present information in clear and simple language, avoiding jargon where possible. If jargon is unavoidable, an explanation will always be provided,

We will provide information and summaries of important documents in different languages and in different formats on request.

Residents will be involved in the proofreading of public information before it is distributed via our 'Tick' scheme. The Tick scheme is explained in the how to get involved section of this compact.

Information about Ascham Homes' service will be available on our website www.aschamhomes.org.uk. Information about the council's services are available on the Waltham Forest website www.walthamforest.gov.uk.

Regular information

All residents will receive regular information about Ascham Homes and how it is performing. This will be in a variety of forms as shown in the how to get involved section of this compact.

Information packs

A number of information packs will be available:

Setting up and running a tenants and residents associations – the guide includes how to set up a group, different ways to get involved, how to deal with funding as well as information on getting support and funding for a group.

Guide to consultation – a good practice guide for staff and residents carrying out a consultation.

Resident's handbook – this is given to all tenants and contains information about the services Ascham Homes delivers as well as tenants rights as secure tenants.

Leaseholders' handbook – explains the responsibilities of Waltham Forest Council as the freeholder, leaseholder's responsibilities and the service leaseholders will receive from Ascham Homes.

Information leaflets explaining the different services and the standards that residents can expect are available from Area Offices and the website.

These documents are available on our website www.aschamhomes.org.uk.

4. **Standards for meetings**

Aims

When arranging a meeting as much notice as possible will be given, and the time and venue should be convenient to residents. There should be good communication and feedback in meetings between attendees. The following standards will apply to all meetings with residents arranged by Ascham Homes or its contractors and all meetings arranged by residents with Ascham Homes and its contractors. We support these standards with the agreed code of conduct for staff and residents.

- A **schedule of planned meetings** will be made available on our website www.aschamhomes.org.uk.
- Meetings will only be **cancelled or rescheduled** in unavoidable situations. Where this happens we will notify people in advance.
- Meetings will be **publicised** effectively and in good time. A minimum of seven days' notice will be given for all meetings.
- Meetings will keep to the **agreed times**.
- Meetings will be held in **accessible venues and a hearing loop** will be provided if requested.
- **Reasonable expenses** will be reimbursed for attendees either through TRA's or the meeting organiser.
- Meetings will be held at **times suitable** to residents and in easy to get to places to maximise the number of people who can attend.
- Meetings will have a **clear reason** explained in advance. Any information needed to help the discussion during the meeting will be sent out beforehand to those invited to attend.

- An **agenda** for the meeting will be sent out beforehand to those invited to attend.
- Meetings will be **properly chaired** and conducted in a fair and democratic way so that everyone gets a chance to have his or her say.
- **Notes of the meeting** with a record of key points raised and any actions agreed will be taken by the organisation that called the meeting. The minutes will be circulated to all people attending the meeting.
- Ascham Homes or officers representing it will give details on how **feedback and progress reports** will be given to those who attended. This will include timescales for action and the contact details of Ascham Homes officers responsible for carrying out the actions.
- Recognised residents' groups have the **right of access to relevant Ascham Homes' officers** including their attendance at resident's groups meetings. Groups need to provide ten days' notice of the meeting and an agenda of the matters to be discussed. If the officer is unable to attend, they will provide another date where they can attend which is no more than 15 working days later than the original date for the meeting.

5. Code of conduct

Aims

We will ensure that a resident's experience of attending activities, meetings and events is a good one, free from offensive remarks or unacceptable behaviour. We will ensure that comments made are not unreasonable, unwelcome, and offensive or create an intimidating, hostile or humiliating environment. To achieve this together we have devised a Code of Conduct that applies to everyone attending meetings or events.

Both residents and officers should expect an acceptable level of behavior when attending meetings or dealing with each other via the telephone, by letter or by email. We, the Council and our contractors will at all times abide by the code of conduct set down by their organisation.

Our TRA's have adopted our Code of Conduct and residents attending their meetings have also signed up to the Code of Conduct. The chair has the right to exclude members who deliberately or frequently break the code. The Code of Conduct can be found on our website www.aschamhomes.org.uk.

We will:

- ensure residents are informed of an event, meeting or activity that is relevant to them; and
- ensure that all residents can participate in meetings providing they ask to speak via the chair and follow the protocol.

The following advice is offered to those who run or chair a meeting. What to do if someone makes an offensive comment or acts in an offensive way:

- Wait until the speaker has finished their sentence;
- Politely interrupt and make it clear that what was said was unacceptable and unwelcome in the meeting;
- Explain why the comment/behaviour was unacceptable;
- Outline the code of conduct;
- Ask for the comments or behaviour to stop and make it clear that if they do not stop they may be asked to leave or the meeting may be called to a close.

6. Influencing services

Aims

Residents will have direct influence on the services that Ascham Homes delivers through:

- Residents sitting on **interview panels** appointing staff including senior managers and board members interviewing for directors.
- **Locally based** consultation on all major works and estates schemes.
- Resident involvement in **prioritising** the major works programme.
- Resident involvement in **developing** the works and design briefs for major works.
- The Contract Panel meetings **managing** the MRA budgets for estate improvements.
- Resident involvement in **selecting** contractors and **monitoring** the contract.
- Resident involvement in **all service reviews** and the development of new policies and procedures.
- Resident involvement in **reviewing and setting** performance standards.
- Acting on the information from **residents' feedback** and the regular surveys.
- Residents accessing training and information to give them the **skills to participate equally**.
- Ascham Homes clearly showing how the housing service has been **commented on and influenced** by residents in the feedback it gives to residents.

Through Tenants Council, residents will have a clear influence on Council matters including rent setting and the developments over the management of their homes. Further information is available in the how to get involved section of this compact.

7. Supporting Tenants and Residents Associations

Aims

We will help residents to start up a group and will support Tenants and Residents Associations.

We have developed the 'Setting up and Running a Tenants and Residents Association booklet' to assist residents interested in setting and running a Tenants and Residents Association. This sets out the recognition criteria for Tenants and Residents Associations and can be found on our website www.aschamhomes.org.uk.

Existing Tenants' and Residents Association's are required to meet certain criteria so that they can be recognised as being representative of their block or estate/area and this entitles them to a grant. We do not want to make the conditions too demanding for residents. The aim is to promote active and responsible Tenants and Residents Associations.

We need to adopt a flexible approach when setting criteria that encourages Tenants and Residents Associations. This means looking at new ways of engaging with residents.

Recognised Tenants and Residents Associations

All residents groups will be monitored to make sure that they meet the basic criteria which can be found in our 'Setting up and Running a Tenants and Residents Association booklet'. Where groups meet the criteria they will:

- receive support during the development stage and funding for recognised groups;
- be able to apply for CCI funding for activities and events;
- receive expenses for hiring of hall, rooms, travel, child-care, postage and phone calls either via grant funding or development support;
- access the resident involvement team and Tenants Resource Centre for using equipment such as computers, printers and photocopiers;
- receive stationary;
- receive help with designing information and distributing newsletters;
- receive advice and administrative support;
- be monitored to ensure they are complying with the recognition criteria and its aims;
- receive regular information from us;
- be invited to take part in the service reviews;
- be able to invite our staff to their meetings to talk about housing issues;
- be invited to consultation meetings and conferences;
- send a representative to sit on the Contract Panel;
- send a representative to sit on Tenants Council;
- be able to access independent advice;

- receive community development support;
- receive tailored training for our residents' representatives based on their needs;
- receive specific training on contract procurement and recruitment and selection for representatives who want to be involved in staff and contractor selection; and
- attend occasional joint training for with staff, board and council staff.

8. Informal and formal groups

To encourage all parts of the community, Ascham Homes will work with and recognise informal and formal groups. These include groups made up of people with disabilities, the LGBT community, youth, BME, single parent or women groups who are brought together to promote and improve the quality of life for the membership.

Where an existing group has been formed we will work with them to improve working relations and will look to be affiliated to the group.

Other groups may be established to work on a specific issue or projects such as the Customer Care Working Group. We may form a group or work with an existing group to carry out consultation on a specific issue.

Basic criteria for recognition

For informal and formal groups, the basic criteria are that the group should:

- Have a clear equal opportunity statement.
- Clearly state what they cover.
- Have a minimum of 10% of their membership living in homes managed by Ascham Homes and owned by Waltham Forest Council.
- Have a simple constitution or set of rules that the group works to,
- Have simple financial rules (if they are collecting subscriptions or receive funding).
- Have a Code of Conduct or Protocol.

All residents will be given the opportunity to be involved in improving our services. It is acknowledged that only a minority of residents want to get involved in the traditional ways such as Tenants and Residents' Associations and attending meetings. To get the maximum number of residents involved, we are looking at different ways that individuals can pick to suit their own circumstances and time commitment; this will be coordinated via the Resident Involvement Register.

9. New approaches

We will look to use new methods and ways of engaging with residents particularly with those groups under represented within the involvement structures.

We will:

- look at providing informal structures including using cultural and multicultural activities, arts and sports to encourage new residents to get involved so that the structures are realistic and can be maintained;
- a menu of options to involve residents;
- work with local schools and youth groups;
- work with the voluntary sector;
- participate in local events and activities such as festivals;
- publicise information in different formats and through different media.

10. Training

We will provide training for residents and representatives either ourselves or in conjunction with our partners to ensure they have the skills and abilities to get actively involved in the running of the housing service.

We will provide:

- information about training and opportunities provided by ourselves or our partners in a easy to understand way;
- training for resident representatives to enable them to carry out their functions based on their needs;
- certified training for resident inspectors;
- training at accessible times and in accessible venues;
- training for residents interested in pursuing the right to manage process via the Council; and
- training on contract procurement and recruitment and selection for those representatives involved in the selection of contractors and staff.

11. Standards for monitoring and measuring performance

In conjunction with residents we will monitor and measure the performance of our resident involvement work to ensure it meets our aims and objectives and achieves what it has set out to achieve.

We will:

- assess the benefits and outcomes against expectations and report these each year to our residents and our board;
- assess whether different approaches to involvement offer value for money;
- set service standards and targets for consulting residents to measure our progress;
- monitor our resident representatives and groups against agreed standards and targets for their views from traditionally excluded or under-involved sections of the community to make sure there are equal opportunities; and
- measure the satisfaction with opportunities to participate and our resident involvement work via the STATUS survey.

Access to independent advice and information

The following organisations are useful sources of independent advice and information.

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)

Tel: FREEPHONE 0500 844111

Open Monday to Friday.

A free helpline and information bank on tenant participation funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations (NFTMOs)

Web: www.nftmo.com

Represents tenant management co-ops, estate management boards and other forms of tenant management organisations (TMOs). It supports existing TMOs and encourages the development of new ones.

Community Matters

Web: www.communitymatters.org.uk

A national organisation that supports community organisations and community centers through its information sheets, advice service and training programme. Waltham Forest Council is a member.

Tenants and Residents Organisations of England (TAROE)

Web: www.taroe.org

TAROE, the Tenants' and Residents' Organisations of England, is a national organisation which unites tenants' and residents' groups from the regulated housing sector across England

Tenant Services Authority

Web: www.tenantservicesauthority.org

The Tenants Services Authority is a regulating body established to raise the standards of services for affordable housing tenants.

If we can't agree

The organisations responsible for this compact aim to make sure that we deal with any collective disputes and grievances quickly and fairly to the satisfaction of the representative or group concerned. The procedure includes an in-house appeals procedure and an independent arbitrator when all other avenues have failed.

Complaints Procedure

This procedure is separate to and independent of the company's complaints procedure which deals with individual complaints. You should continue to use the existing procedure for complaints about housing management services for example, repairs, cleaning, grounds maintenance and so on. This allows you to go through the three stages of the procedure including referral to the Board's Performance and Development Committee and then to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Complaints about the compact

Any recognised representative or residents group who raises a collective complaint or grievance for the residents they represent about the standards included in this compact should do so with the officer concerned. If the matter is not dealt with to the satisfaction of the representative or group, they may then take the matter to the Head of Housing Management who will try to make sure that the issue is sorted out to the satisfaction of the representative or group. The Head of Housing Management may involve other staff or council officers to resolve the issue.

If the resident representative or group believes that the issue has not been resolved, they should take the matter to their local contract panel. The contract panel will try to sort out the issue by mediating between the people involved or by taking the issue on behalf of the group or representative to our Board's Performance and Development Committee.

If the collective complaint or grievance is to do with the contract panel or if they believe that an issue is still not been dealt with, they may decide to refer the matter to the Board's Performance and Development Committee.

We or the council may choose to involve an outside organisation to review a dispute. They will review the matter and make suggestions about how to reach a solution that everyone is happy with.

If all measures have failed to reach a satisfactory conclusion the matter can be referred to an independent arbitrator. This person will be appointed by us or the council to review the case and arrive at a conclusion. The conclusion is binding and everyone must keep to it. We believe that this final stage will be used very rarely.

Level	Response Times	Action
Level 1	10 days	The complaint should be made to the officer concerned.
Level 2	14 days	Complaints not settled at Level 1 will be passed to the contact panel.
Level 3	30 days	Unsettled complaints from Level 2 will be referred to the Board's Performance and Development Committee.
Level 4	90 days	An independent arbitrator will consider the complaint. Everyone involved must accept this final decision. Level 4 is used only in extreme cases.

As the compact will be regularly monitored by residents and by an annual review, we expect that most complaints about the compact will be successfully settled at Levels 1 and 2.

How to get involved

Type of involvement	What it is	Who can be involved	Time
Information			
Ahead	As part of the Waltham Forest News, the bi-monthly newsletter contains information on Ascham Homes and the work it is doing	All residents	20 minutes or more
Tick Scheme	Residents will be working with officers to ensure that the information Ascham Homes produces for residents is understandable and free of jargon. Information is sent to residents to comment on before it is printed	All residents.	As much or as little time as you want
Connect newsletter	Connect is a newsletter produced by residents for residents. The editorial group is made up of residents who write articles and agree the content of the newsletter	All residents	
Getting Involved			
Resident Involvement Register	Residents who want to be involved in the running of the service can register their interest	All residents	10 minutes to three hours depending on what you are interested in
Community Achievement Night	Residents attend the annual event to celebrate our diverse community and the work of residents throughout the year	Available to all residents	Up to three hours.
Focus groups	When services such as repairs and caretaking are reviewed, focus groups are used to help us gain a better understanding of residents' issues and concerns	Residents that have used the service in last six months or residents on the Resident Involvement Register	Two to three hours per session
Completing			

surveys			
STATUS survey	The annual STATUS survey surveys residents on their preferred way of being consulted and informed	All residents.	10 minutes or more
Satisfaction surveys	Residents will be asked information about their satisfaction with the service they have received	Residents who have used the service in last six months will be targeted or residents on the Resident Involvement Register	10 minutes
Individual			
Suggestion boxes	Suggestion boxes can be found in each of our offices. Residents are encouraged to make suggestions or comments either good or bad on the housing service they receive and will receive feedback on all suggestions made	All residents	A couple of minutes
Resident Inspection Team	The Resident Inspection Team is a team of residents who are inspecting the housing service in great detail. The Inspectors receive training with a CIH level 2 qualification in housing. There are currently five inspectors	All residents.	Training time plus one to two days per inspection
Mystery shopping Team	The team carries out mystery shopping including writing correspondence, sending emails, personal visits, telephone calls, surveys and one-to-one interviews with residents and staff. Following the exercise residents report their findings back to the policy team	All residents	One to two days per mystery shopping exercise.
Community Facilitators	We employ the services of volunteers who have expressed an interest in the Community	Residents from under represented groups	Dependent on the project

	Facilitators scheme. The scheme allows people from the BME and other under represented groups to work with the Company to assist with consultation, involvement and service improvement. Volunteers are reimbursed for any expenses incurred as part of their work with Ascham Homes.		
Interview and Tender Evaluation Panels			
Interview panels	Residents sit on the interview panels to appoint Ascham Homes staff. Residents are given training on Ascham Homes recruitment and selection process and how to carry out interviews	Available to all residents who have undergone Ascham Homes' recruitment and selection training.	Training time plus one or two days per interview
Tender Evaluation Panels	Residents sit alongside housing officers on the Tender Evaluation Panels that choose the new contractors such as the repairs or lift contractors	All residents	20 to 30 hours per contract

Different ways residents can get involved on their estate

Type of involvement	What it is	Who can be involved	Time
Estate or area based			
Exhibitions and fun days	Where estates are undergoing major works, exhibitions and fun days will be held. Housing officers and our contractor's staff will be on hand to speak to residents about the proposals.	Available to all residents living on the estate	From one to two hours

Youth Festival	Annual youth festival organised by residents living on Avenue Road Estate and Slada	Available to all residents living on the estates	One day per year
Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI)	TRA's can apply for funding from the CCI scheme to fund local events targeted at young people, health and well being or community involvement.	All residents covered by a TRA	Dependent on the activity
Tenants and Residents Associations	Tenants and Residents Associations play an important role in making sure residents' voices are heard. These groups do a lot of different things, some groups organise social activities for residents while other groups are more involved in the housing management on their estates, or a mixture of both. Information on the TRA's can be found in chapter 2	Available to all residents living on the estate.	A minimum of two to three hours per month
Estate Stakeholder Scheme	Estate stakeholders carry out an inspection of their block or estate with Ascham Homes staff. During the inspection, the resident will be invited to grade the service provided by our caretaking and grounds maintenance team. The estate stakeholders meet twice a year as a group and may carry out inspections with other ALMO's	Available to all residents	Two 2 hour meetings a year plus a monthly inspection lasting up to a maximum of 4 hours
Hotspots Inspections (also known as Priority estate inspections)	Hot spot estates are inspected four times a year by Ascham Homes. Residents, the Police Safer neighbourhood Team and Councilors are invited to	Residents on estates	2 hours per inspection which take place four times a year

	<p>take part in these inspections. It is an opportunity for residents to show officers first hand the issues on their estates. Dates of the walkabouts will be set each April and advertised on the Ascham Homes website www.aschamhomes.org.uk, notice boards on the estates well in advance. Feedback including actions is published in the Hotspot Newsletters sent to residents on the estate.</p>		
Estate Inspections	<p>Estate inspections are carried out on a regular basis by estate supervisors' staff as part of their job. These inspections involve visiting blocks or estates and grading the caretaking and grounds maintenance service. For information about estate inspections on estates telephone 020 8496 4197 and ask for our estate services team</p>	Available to all residents on an estate/block	A couple of hours four times a year
Local compacts	<p>Resident groups can have a local compact, which is an agreement with Ascham Homes that sets the standards for their estate. Residents and officers work together to monitor the compact</p>	Resident groups	Two to three hours a month
Tenant Management Organisations (TMO)	<p>Tenants have the right to take over the management of their homes. Tenants receive extensive training to form a Tenant Management Organisation and receive a budget from the council to run their own estates. TMOs can</p>	Recognised residents groups who have 20% of the estates as members	The first few years of setting up the TMO can be very time-consuming with meetings taking place every week. Once the TMO takes on the

	manage a single service such as caretaking, all of the housing management service or anything in between		management time commitment can reduce to monthly meetings
Scheme meetings	Our decent homes contractors will hold at least one scheme meeting to discuss the proposed works on a block or estate. Further meetings may be organised depending on the length of time the contractors will be on site	All residents living in a block or estate	Minimum two hours, could be more depending on the length of the contract
Get to know your neighbours day and the Big lunch	These are annual events that are run on particular estates	All residents living on particular estates	Two hours

Area and borough-wide groups

Leaseholders Forum	This is a twice yearly meeting allowing leaseholders to meet with Ascham Homes and discuss matters that affect them	All leaseholders receive an invitation to attend the meeting	From two to three hours, twice a year
Sheltered Homes meetings	Twice a year we meet with residents living in each sheltered homes. We use the meetings to update residents on the work of the Company and to deal with any individual issues they have.	Residents of sheltered homes	2 hour meetings twice a year
Contract Panel	There are five Contract Panels. The Contract Panels deal with local issues that affect residents. They prioritise the Major Repairs Allowance programme and have a budget for small estate improvement	All residents living in a contract area	Up to three hours, four times a year
Resident Leadership and Coordination Meeting	This is a meeting of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Contract Panels and residents nominated by Tenants Council. It meets	Chairs and Vice Chairs plus some members nominated by Tenants Council	2 and a half hours per meeting

	approximately 6 times a year and reviews and plans Contract Panel meetings. It also provides an opportunity for the Chairs to meet without Ascham Homes staff		
Billericay and Wickford MRA panel	This Panel meets annually to discuss the MRA allowance and prioritise schemes	All residents living in Billericay and Wickford	Two hour meeting
Ascham Homes Board	A board of 17 directors manages Ascham Homes. The board consists of seven resident board members, five independents Residents can stand to sit on to the board, and residents elect their area representative. All residents can attend Board and Committee meetings and five council nominees. Residents can attend board and committee meetings	All residents can stand for election	Up to three hours for monthly board meetings and a further three to six hours to sit on committees and read board papers
Council or contractor forums			
Tenants Council	This is a borough-wide group that is managed by Waltham Forest	Tenants and Residents Association Representatives	Two or three hours, four meetings a year

	Council. Tenants Council meets four times a year and discusses strategic issues such as setting the rent, service charges and policy and strategies		
Community Councils	Community Councils meet four times a year to discuss local issues in their area. The Community Council's have a small budget which can be spent on local issues. Prior to the Community Council's partners hold a surgery to deal with individual issues	All residents	Two hours, four meetings a year
Kier Forum	Kier Building Maintenance holds forum meetings with residents three times a year	All residents	Two hours three times a year

The right to manage

Under the legal right to manage, you have a right to set up a tenant management organisation (TMO) to manage the housing services in your area as long as you can meet the legal requirements and are competent. You can get a grant to help develop this option for involvement from the DCLG with a contribution from us.

The TSA will fund option studies on council estates. Option studies involves residents working with an independent advisor to develop action plans to tackle the problems in their area. Residents explore different ways of managing and maintaining their estates. These 'options' can include local compacts, local committees, tenants panels or tenant management.

The Council currently has two TMO's in the Friday Hill and Samson and Acacia area. These groups have their own management committees made up of residents who manage the housing services for the residents in their area. The TMOs are responsible for the day-to day running of services such as repairs and collecting rent. All TMO's receive a management and maintenance allowance from the housing revenue account under the terms of the TMO statutory guidance.

The Council will encourage and support you to develop a TMO in the following ways:

- We will help you examine different options for involvement to suit your needs including setting up a TMO.
- If you have looked at the available options and have decided to use your right to manage, we will provide practical help and support and help you set up your own TMO.
- We will make sure that you work closely with us during the right-to-manage process and after it has finished.
- We will work with you and the TMO once the organisation is set up and managing its agreed responsibilities.
- We will set up appropriate ways of monitoring the organisation to give support and advice to TMO's.
- We will make sure that any TMO continues to be effective and efficient, and that it responds to your needs.

Supporting resident involvement

Our partners

Different ways to get involved with our partners

Our decent homes and maintenance partners work with Ascham Homes to deliver a number of services. These will be specific to work being carried out on your block or estate such as Decent Homes work or repairs work. Our partners employ staff that carry out a resident liaison function which involves keeping you up to date whilst works are being carried out and any special initiatives or projects that they are running.

Ascham Homes also work with other partners such as Waltham Forest Council; the Police and community groups to deliver services that are not specifically housing related these include youth activities and environmental projects. Below there are a number of ways you can get involved.

Type of involvement	What it is	Who can be involved	Time
Social and community events			
Our Area Matters	The Council has identified a number of wards that are part of the Our Area Matters initiative. As part of the initiative, residents can attend a ward walk with Council staff, Police and partners. Following the ward walk, organisations will be tasked with actions to resolve issues identified	All residents	Up to 2 hours for the ward walk.
Youth activities	Youth activities are provided during the school holidays or after school. Organised activities are advertised on the Council or Ascham Homes website	Young people	From 2 hours to all week depending on the activity
Adopt a flower bed	The Council runs a scheme where a community group can adopt a local flower bed. As part of the scheme, the residents will be provided with	All residents	Initial meeting and a couple of hours a week

	assistance to maintain the flower bed		
Borough wide			
Residents Panel	The Council run a residents panel who participate in discussions regarding priority borough wide issues	All residents	2 hour meeting four times a year
Youth Panel	The Council run a youth panel and has a youth ambassador. The panel is working on the Borough's youth strategy for 2010 to 2013.	All young people	2 hour meeting four times a year
Better Neighbourhood Initiative	The Council has three better neighbourhood initiative areas. In these areas a number of projects are run to improve the health, well being and environment for residents. Further information can be obtained from the Council's website www.walthamforest.gov.uk	All residents in the Better Neighbourhood areas	Dependent on the project
Community Centers	The Council has a number of Community Centers which run local events and activities	All residents	Dependent on the activity
Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels	The Police have established ward panels that meet to determine the priorities for the Police Safer neighbourhood Teams in their area. Further information can be obtained from the metropolitan police website www.met.police.uk	All residents within a ward	2 hour meeting every six to eight weeks
Annual Surveys	The Council carries put an annual survey of resident satisfaction across all of its services	A selection of residents	30 minute survey
Education and employment			
Worknet	Worknet is a Council funded service that assists people in finding training or employment. Worknet use the Tenants Resource Centre at our offices one morning a week	All residents over the age of 16	Depending on the individual requirements

CLASS and local education centers	The Council offers a wide range of education and skills training through CLASS, local colleges and schools. Further information can be obtained from the Council's website www.walthamforest.gov.uk	All residents over 16	Dependent of individual needs
Apprenticeships	Our decent homes partners provide apprenticeship schemes for local people. The number of apprenticeships will be dependent on the amount of work being carried out	All residents over 16	Dependent on the length of the apprenticeship
Customer care / Safety awareness			
Metropolitan Police	The Police Safer neighbourhood Teams offer advice and guidance to residents on preventing crime	All residents	Dependent on the issue involved
Crime prevention initiatives	The Safety Net Partnership runs a number of campaigns to prevent and reduce crime. This includes placing the crime prevention trailer at key locations in the Borough and offering advice to residents about Halloween and Fireworks through Waltham Forest News and campaigns, talks on specific issues for example bogus callers and events and activities. Further information can be obtained from the Council's website www.walthamforest.gov.uk	All residents	Dependent on the activity
HEET	Ascham Homes delivers security works to residents through HEET, this includes installing fire proof letterboxes, spy holes and chains	All residents	Dependent on the issue
Environment and sustainability			
Fire Brigade	The London Fire Brigade offer advice and assistance about fire prevention. Further information can be obtained from the Fire Brigade web site www.london-fire.gov.uk	All residents	Dependent on the issue

Reaching out to everyone

Waltham Forest is a vibrant, diverse borough and our residents mirror this. We want to give all Ascham Homes residents the opportunities to get involved in a way that suits them best. The compact introduces a variety of ways to get involved to ensure that this can be done.

Ascham Homes is collecting detailed information on its residents including ethnicity, disabilities and the languages that residents speak. This database will inform what methods are used to involve residents in improving the service.

The majority of residents do not get involved in how their homes are managed for a variety of reasons. Ascham Homes wants to make sure that when residents do not get involved it is because they have chosen not to and not because they do not have the opportunity to do so.

Some people will have extra difficulties they have to overcome and have traditionally not been actively involved because of:

- **Language barriers** – for example English is not their first language or they are blind or deaf.
- **Cultural barriers** – for example Waltham Forest residents come from a diverse cultural mix and over 60% are non-white UK citizens.
- **Personal commitments** – for example looking after small children or elderly relatives.
- **Physical barriers** – for example not being able to attend a meeting because they are housebound or can't get into a building.
- **Faith barriers** – for example not being able to attend meetings due to the timing of the meeting or venue.
- **Learning difficulties** – for example having reading problems.
- **Economical barriers** – for example not being able to afford to travel to meetings or get time off work to attend.
- **Misconceptions** – for example people not understanding the nature of transgender
- **Sense of not belonging** – for example young people are often seen as the problem and so are not encouraged to take part.

To enable these residents to be actively involved Ascham Homes will:

- **Meet with** 'hard to reach' groups and residents identify changes we can make to get more people involved.
- **Develop recognition criteria** to allow community groups to be formally consulted.
- **Produce information** in plain English and on request in the most common languages, on tape and in Braille.

- **Send information** to organisations that work with ethnic minorities' communities and hard to reach groups including, ethnic media, and newsletters to sheltered housing residents.
- **Provide** child/carer and travel allowances.
- **Organise events** in consideration of faith and cultural event.
- **Place staff** on training course to deal sensitivity with issue of sexuality.
- **Carry out** outreach work with hard-to-reach groups.
- **Targeting** BME and disability groups that are under-represented.
- **Adopt** good practice and new ways of working.

Support from the Resident Involvement Team

Ascham Homes has its own team – the Resident Involvement Team – dedicated to supporting resident involvement and influence over the service. The work of RIT includes:

- Developing, with residents groups, ways to increase resident power and influence over local services.
- Working with Ascham Homes staff to improve standards of resident consultation and involvement.
- Monitoring residents' groups.
- Setting up new forums for resident involvement where needed.
- Supporting and training for residents and their representatives.
- Providing advice and support to resident forums.
- Working and supporting new and re-launched groups.

To support each Tenants and Residents Association, RIT provide a stationery pack that includes:

- headed paper
- stamps
- envelopes
- pens
- pencils, and
- lined pads

Executive committee member of the association are provided with photo ID cards to help them carry out their business around the estate.

New and re-launched groups

RIT will provide help and advice with all stages of setting up your resident group. TRA's are supported in the development stage as well as when they become established groups. Their support includes:

- arranging meeting rooms;
- helping groups with their newsletters and leaflets;
- providing training, support and advice at meetings;
- advising the group how to become registered; and
- helping them apply for grant funding.

Existing groups

RIT will continue to offer advice and support to all groups. Groups can request additional help on special projects or to help the group to attract new people. Officers from Ascham Homes will be available to attend your meetings to give advice and information on local housing issues.

Tenant Resources Centre (TRC) and meeting room

The TRC is located in Willow House. It is available for residents who need to hold meetings and to access administrative and computer access. The centre or meeting can be booked by contacting the RIT.

The Centre is used by external agencies that provide advice and guidance for residents such as Worknet and the Citizen Advice Bureau.

Training

There are a number of organisations that put on excellent courses for residents. Rather than reinvent the wheel, RIT will encourage residents to attend these courses. The RIT will send out updates on training available both locally in Ascham Homes and nationally to all residents' groups.

Where training is identified as a need or a resident group asks for training, RIT will organise locally based training for their estate. Residents who identify their own training courses and conferences can apply for funding for the course and travel costs. RIT can also make a contribution to travel costs were the course fees are already covered. These courses must relate to resident involvement or housing management. Each case will be judged on its merit to ensure equity.

Board training

To ensure that residents are given the skills to play an equal role on the main Board, each year Ascham Homes will run training for board members and employ a board mentor. The Company has also been working with the Board Development Agency during 2009.

For residents interested in becoming a board member, we run meet the Chair sessions. This gives residents an opportunity to meet the Chair of the Board and find out more about being a board member.

Housing qualification

As part of the Resident Inspection Team, we have been working with an external agency to establish the scheme and provide training which has been accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing. Through the training, residents have received a qualification in NVQ level 2 in Housing

Shadowing

To get a better understanding of how Ascham Homes works from the inside, there will be the opportunity for residents to apply for placements within the organisation through our Human Resources Team. This will also enable residents to learn more about Ascham Homes and staff to find out residents' views and vice versa. This would be useful for residents who are thinking of working in housing.

Capacity-building programme

Ascham Homes are looking at how we can work with external organisations to help residents develop skills.

Resident Liaison

Our Property and Investment Team support tenants whilst decent homes are underway through our partners resident liaison function. Resident liaison work is also carried out by Ascham Homes staff directly to assist tenants when day to day repair works are underway.

LBWF Community Engagement Team

The Council employs a Community engagement team who carry out resident involvement for the Council. Activities carried out by the Community Engagement Team include

- Community Councils
- Surveys
- Residents Forum
- Young Peoples Forum and Youth Ambassador
- Consultation on specific projects
- Coordination of involvement and consultation events across the Borough.

The Council will also work with residents interested in exploring options such as the Right to Manage.

Financial support

Regular grants

Start-up grants

New groups need funding to get started and grow. Residents looking to set up a TRA are supported during their first year. During this time, we will facilitate meetings, training and publicity information.

Once Associations are established they are required to comply with our requirements as laid down in the Setting Up and Running a TRA booklet. A start up grant of £250 is given plus an allowance for the number of properties covered by the TRA.

Revenue Grants

Where an Association has been running for more than a year, a grant can be applied for that covers the day-to-day running and to increase membership of the group. The maximum grant at any one time is £750.

It can be spent on telephone calls, stamps, stationary, computer programmes, IT equipment including Internet access, newsletters, hall hire, photocopying, travel costs to meetings and out of pocket expense.

No of homes	Baseline funding	Finding per household
Up to 50	£150	£2.00
51 - 149	£250	£2.50
150 - 200	£300	£3.00
201+	£350	£3.50

Funded TRA's are required to have a treasurer who keeps a record of all income and expenditure to the TRA. The accounts are audited by our RIT annually.

Childcare and Carers Allowance

The Childcare and Carers Allowance is available to residents who are members of a consultation group who have paid for a child minder or carer so they can attend meetings and events. When practical and where there is a demand a crèche will be run at consultation events.

Travel and subsistence

RIT will pay travel costs to residents who attend meetings as members of consultative groups. Alternatively residents groups can pay out travel costs to their members from their grants. Normally travel costs will be for public transport, where residents have a mobility problem the cost of taxis can be claimed. Where residents are taking part in all day events either refreshment will be provided.

For some events, transport will be provided by Ascham Homes.

Attendance allowance

Where residents are asked to attend focus groups or customer panels a small payment may be paid via vouchers in our appreciation. Residents will also be able to claim child and carer allowances and travel costs.

Measuring the impact of resident involvement

Ascham Homes

Ascham Homes Board is responsible for monitoring the performance of Ascham Homes at a borough and area-based level. Information on resident involvement will be included in any performance monitoring report presented to those committees. Performance reports can be found on the Ascham Homes website www.aschamhomes.org.uk.

Waltham Forest Council

Performance Indicators (PIs) are part of the Ascham Homes delivery plan. Ascham Homes will report on their performance against the indicators in all monitoring reports to the council.

Reviewing the compact

The Contract Panels will review the working of the compact, monitor it against the set performance indicators and ensure that the opportunities of involvement in Ascham Homes reflect the residents' requirements. A report on the performance will be presented to the Contract Panels at each meeting.

Reports will include what work is being done to publicise and implement the compact. Future meetings will look at how the compact is being built-in to the work of Ascham Homes.

A group of resident representatives, Ascham Homes' officers and council officers will review and update the compact each year.

Appendix 1

Resident Involvement Register

Appendix 2

Performance indicators

Indicator	Target	Performance 09/10
Satisfaction of tenants with the overall service provided (STATUS)		
Satisfaction of tenants with the opportunity to participate in management and decision making (STATUS)		
Number of residents involved at area and borough level		
% of residents involved at contract panel and borough level that are from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities		
Number of residents registered on the Resident Involvement Network		
% of Board and Contract panels regular members that are from BME groups		
Number of Board and Contract panel members that are under 40 years of age		
Number of Ascham Homes documents proof-read by Tick scheme		

Appendix 3

Contact Numbers

Ascham Direct	02084964197
Ascham Homes Resident involvement Team	02084964934
Waltham Forest Council	02084963000
Waltham Forest Council's Community Engagement Team	02084964613
Waltham Forest Council's Community Safety Team	02084966843
Friday Hill Tenant Management Organisation	02084985830
Samson and Acacia Tenant Management Organisation	02089268944

Appendix 4

Related Documents

Setting up and Running a TRA booklet

Resident Involvement Register

Local Compacts

Resident Engagement Strategy

Resident Information Pack

Code of Conduct

Contract Panel Terms of Reference