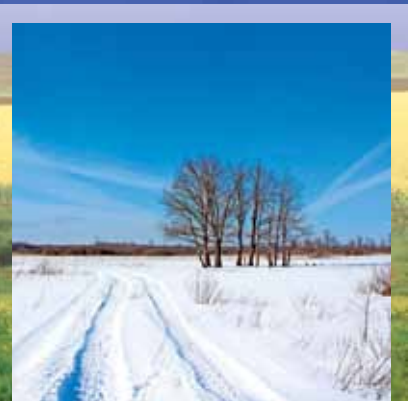




Tenant Annual Report 2011



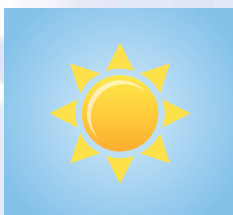


Great customer service
always shines through



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Meaning of Weather Symbols



Improving



Stayed the same



Some improvement
needed



Much improvement
needed

Tenant Annual Report 2011

Welcome

Welcome to the second Annual Report to Tenants. As tenant representatives we have worked closely with officers of Erimus Housing to produce this report for you.

As part of the process we surveyed other tenants and asked them what they felt was important to them and what they would most like to see; we hope that we have captured these views within the report.

We chose a weather theme to show how Erimus Housing is performing as we felt it is something that everybody is familiar with and it is easy to understand.

As the weather is changeable, performance can be too. Not everything is sunshine; there are times when there are clouds and rain and we look forward to things improving in these areas.

Many of the satisfaction measures within the report are taken from Erimus Housing's last STATUS survey which was in 2009. The information from this survey is very important and we have recognised the good return in numbers from the survey.

We would like to thank those tenants who took the time to return the survey and we would also like to thank any tenant or leaseholder who has responded to satisfaction surveys this year.



Grace Khurana



Brian Lord



Patrick Baker



Eddie Turner



Alan Bell



Moira Britton



Nicky Walker

A photograph of Jim Martin, who also worked on the report, was unavailable at the time of going to print.



Tenant Annual Report 2011

Message from the Chair and Managing Director

We know that you want to receive good quality, value for money services from us and publishing how we have performed over the last 12 months allows you to see clearly how we are doing. Tenant satisfaction is very important to us and your feedback is vital to help us understand what we are getting right and what we need to do to improve our services.

Hopefully, tenants are now familiar with the national standards for housing introduced by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) last year. Erimus Housing and its tenants have worked closely together to agree a set of local offers that outline the service standards you can expect from us in your area. These were published in the spring edition of the tenants' newsletter earlier this year.

We hope this annual report gives you a good insight into our performance and gives a real feel as to how we are progressing. We are also looking at how we can monitor trends and compare ourselves with other housing providers so that you will have even more information in future reports.

We would like to thank the tenants' editorial team that has given valuable time and ideas to produce this report. We hope you enjoy reading it and let us know what you think about the information.



Chris Smith
Managing Director
Erimus Housing



Mike Carr
Chair
Erimus Housing

National Standards and Local Offers

The National Standards set by the Tenant Services Authority were introduced to ensure that social landlords provide decent homes and services to tenants. The six standards cover:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment – which contains requirements relating to customer service, choice and complaints, involvement and empowerment, and understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants
- Home – which contains requirements relating to the quality of accommodation and repairs and maintenance
- Tenancy – which contains requirements relating to allocations, rent and tenure
- Neighbourhood and community – which contains requirements relating to neighbourhood management, local area co-operation and anti-social behaviour
- Value for money
- Governance and financial viability



National Standards and Local Offers

In addition to the National Standards, local offers have been developed by Erimus Housing and its tenants. These have been tailored to suit a particular place or customer group, and a number of them have been developed in partnership with more than one organisation, taking into account what matters most to tenants.

Detailed information relating to local offers made and how Erimus Housing will measure performance was issued in the tenants' newsletter, Insight, issued in spring 2011.

The local offers cover:

Contacting Erimus Housing – this is the way in which tenants wish to contact Erimus Housing and the service levels for responding to enquiries;

Repairs – this is about what will happen when you report a repair and the service levels that you can expect;

Major Improvements to your Home – how Erimus Housing will deal with major improvement programmes to your home;

Moving Home – this is the service level that you can expect from Erimus Housing when you wish to move home;

Tenancy and Estate Management – this is how Erimus Housing will ensure that neighbourhoods remain clean and safe;

Anti-Social Behaviour – this is about the processes to deal with reports of anti-social behaviour and the response levels you can expect when reports are made;

Rent and other Income Collection – how Erimus Housing will help you understand your rent payments and help tenants and leaseholders who find themselves experiencing financial hardship;

Service Charges – how Erimus Housing will help you understand any service charges you may need to pay and how we will keep you informed of any changes;

Supported Housing – how Erimus Housing will provide specialist services for older and young persons support schemes;

Resident Involvement – how Erimus Housing will ensure that opportunities are given to tenants and leaseholders who wish to be involved and influence the decisions made.








This is the first time that local offers have been introduced and Erimus Housing recognises that the needs of tenants, leaseholders and neighbourhoods change. The local offers will therefore be regularly reviewed and performance and satisfaction with them monitored. Erimus Housing will also look to expand or change local offers where changing needs are identified by focus groups and resident involvement.

This report provides you with information on how Erimus Housing is meeting the standards and what it needs to do to improve on performance.

Tenant Involvement

Customer Service, Choice and Complaints



How is Erimus Housing performing?	How's the weather?	How can Erimus Housing improve?
<p>In the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011, Erimus Housing received 105,023 calls and dealt with 7 out of 10 of these calls at the first point of contact, a small improvement when compared to the figure at 31 March 2010.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Erimus Housing will continue to develop new ways of communicating with you, for example through a text messaging service and self service access via the internet; ● An improved out of hours service will be introduced. This means that Erimus Housing staff will deal with emergency out of hours telephone calls instead of dealing with others who may not understand the tenant's need; ● There are a number of areas that need improving in relation to complaints. These include a need to reduce the time it takes to respond to complaints, assessing how satisfied tenants are with the complaints process, and an improvement in the way that information and learning from complaints is shared with our tenants and leaseholders.
<p>The number of times tenants have to contact Erimus Housing because something has not been done correctly has reduced from 27,306 calls to 7,351 calls.</p>		
<p>From 1,930 tenants asked, almost 9 out of 10 tenants told us that they were satisfied with our services compared to the national average of 8 out of 10 in a survey undertaken by the Tenant Services Authority.</p>		
<p>A total of 186 complaints were received between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011. The top three reasons for complaints were maintenance, rehousing and estate management issues.</p>		
<p>On average, it took Erimus Housing nine days to deal with a complaint.</p>		
<p>Out of 1,750 tenants who completed the STATUS survey, 8 out of 10 said that they felt staff members were able to deal with their problem when they made enquiries.</p>		
<p>Work has been done to bring the emergency out of hours telephone service in-house and train the team dealing with your enquiries.</p>		



Tenant Involvement

Involvement and Empowerment



The Chair of the Residents' Panel says:

“Tenants have played a key role in shaping this report and I am happy to say that the tenants' needs are at the heart of the quality of services provided and the priorities for improvements within Erimus Housing.”

Erimus Housing has a resident involvement framework which gives tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to be involved with the work that Erimus Housing does at levels they feel comfortable with.

It also has two area housing forums made up of tenants and leaseholders which meet on a regular basis to discuss and make decisions about the areas they represent.

A number of specific focus groups also exist. These groups look at the following specific service areas:





Erimus Housing Focus Groups		
Repairs	Voids (empty houses)	Grounds Maintenance
Anti-Social Behaviour	Estate Performance Management	Asset Management
Black Minority Ethnic	Care for your Area	Choice Based Lettings
Residents Disability Action	Rent and Income	Pest Control
Mystery Shopping	Green Agenda	Communications

If you are interested in becoming involved in any of these groups or other areas of resident involvement, contact the resident involvement team on (01642) 256170 or call in at the Residents' Resource Centre. A table in the appendix of this report shows the areas you may wish to become involved in.

Erimus Housing continues to provide tenant and leaseholder training for people who become involved to ensure they have the skills, understanding and confidence to examine and question the services provided to them.

Tenant Involvement

Involvement and Empowerment







How is Erimus Housing performing?	How's the weather?	How can Erimus Housing improve?
<p>The overall number of tenants involved increased from 958 to 1,000 in the last 12 months.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erimus Housing needs to complete and introduce the scrutiny arrangements that will ensure that tenants are able to examine performance at a higher level and work with the Board (co-regulation).
<p>This year there has been an increase in the involvement of Black and Minority Ethnic residents from 34 to 46, and the involvement of residents under the age of 18 years old from 26 to 37 in the last 12 months.</p>		
<p>Out of 1,567 of tenants who completed the STATUS survey, 7 out of 10 said they were satisfied that their views are taken into account.</p>		
<p>From 1,750 tenants who completed the STATUS survey, 8 out of 10 said they felt staff were able to deal with their problem when they made enquiries.</p>		



The Home

Repairs and Maintenance

Erimus Housing is committed to providing tenants with an efficient repairs and maintenance service monitored and influenced by the tenant and leaseholder focus groups.

How is Erimus Housing performing?	How's the weather?	How can Erimus Housing improve?
99.28% of Erimus Housing properties had received a gas service within the year.*		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a legal requirement that Erimus Housing completes an annual gas service in all its properties. Unfortunately, this has not been achieved this year. The reason for this has been that the gas engineers have not been able to gain access to all properties. Legal action has been taken to gain access where this has been the case and a number of ways to encourage tenants to allow access to properties will be implemented; ● Erimus Housing is aware that the number of complaints about repairs and maintenance increased throughout the year. The reasons for complaints in this area have been looked at and improvements identified to ensure that the issues arising do not occur again and that lessons are learnt; ● At the moment performance reports are not available on the number of appointments that have been made or the number of appointments attended by operatives. Work is being carried out to ensure that this information is available for future reporting; ● The return rate for satisfaction surveys is low. Erimus Housing therefore needs to improve the way that it carries out satisfaction surveys and encourage tenants and leaseholders to respond.
Performance information shows that repairs reported are fully completed on average within 6.1 days against a target of 8 days.		
The average cost of a repair was £57.09 against the target of £60.		
Out of 1,802 tenants who returned the STATUS survey, 8 out of 10 tenants said they were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.		
Out of 1,935 tenants who returned the STATUS survey, 8 out of 10 said they were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.		
Following the completion of a repair tenants are asked to complete and return a satisfaction survey. From those returned at 31 March 2011, 9 out of 10 tenants said they were satisfied.		

*We would remind you that it is extremely important the gas engineers carry out this work. We would ask anyone reading this report that has not had their gas safety check carried out within the last year to contact Erimus Housing on 08000 461600 which is a freephone number from a landline.

Tenancy Standard





Allocations

Erimus Housing runs a sub-regional choice based lettings service which ensures that properties which become empty are given to people in a fair and open way.

Support is provided to vulnerable applicants by identifying needs at an interview when registering on the waiting list, assisting with the process for bidding for properties and linking people with specialist support services where needed.

The potential running costs of many of our homes have been assessed and this information is shown when empty properties are advertised as available. This allows people registering for rehousing to make an informed decision on whether to bid for a particular property.

When tenants or leaseholders who require adaptations to their home decide that they would prefer to move to a property which already has suitable adaptations in it, Erimus Housing can provide a re-locator service which will help the person find a property.

How is Erimus Housing performing?	How's the weather?	How can Erimus Housing improve?
For the year up to 31 March 2011, 970 tenants ended their tenancy.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The length of time a property is empty has increased this year and this needs to be improved upon with the aim to be amongst the best performing organisations in the country;
At 31 March 2011, general needs properties were empty for an average of 30 days before a new tenant moved in.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At present the average cost for bringing a property up to standard where someone can move in is £2,295 where the property is a general needs property. This is due to the condition that some tenants are leaving the properties in;
8 out of 10 new tenants said they were satisfied with the process used for reletting.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where tenants have left properties in a bad state of repair, Erimus Housing needs to strengthen the arrangements for charging the costs for those repairs to the tenant who has left;
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Erimus Housing also needs to fully understand the reasons why people are leaving their tenancies with the view of improving any areas of service linked to the reasons for leaving; ● Erimus Housing currently offers a furnished tenancy scheme which is being reviewed to ensure that a more affordable way of providing the services is in place.

Tenancy Standard




Rents



Erimus Housing provides tenants with a guide to paying rent. This has been reviewed this year and now includes further information on the way service charges are calculated so you are clear about what you are paying for.

Rents and service charges are reviewed once a year in consultation with tenants and leaseholders, followed by confirmation to all tenants and leaseholders of the charges to be made before they are introduced.

Erimus Housing has revised its rent collection systems based on what matters to our tenants and leaseholders with a strong emphasis being placed on helping people remain in their tenancies. The financial inclusion team, Tandem, offers welfare and debt advice and ensures tenants receive all income they are entitled to. It also helps tenants make arrangements to pay off debts.

How is Erimus Housing performing?	How's the weather?	How can Erimus Housing improve?
Arrears at 31 March 2011 for current tenants were £942,425 out of rent due of approximately £37 million.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whilst Erimus Housing has reviewed the information provided on rent and service charges, the information needs some work to ensure it is relevant and easy to understand.
786 Erimus tenants sought advice from the Tandem team in the year up to 31 March 2011.		
From the satisfaction forms received by Tandem, 100% of people using the service were happy with the service offered and said they would recommend the service to a family or friend.		

If you feel you would benefit from advice from Tandem, you can contact the team on the freephone number 08000 461600 and ask for Tandem, text or ring on 07876 137679 or telephone (01642) 707900. You can also email the team on admin@tandemfinance.org.


Your Neighbourhood And Community

Neighbourhood Management

The safety and cleanliness of the areas you live in is important.

Regular inspections are carried out by officers, and 'tenant spotters' have been introduced to assist in identifying any areas that require attention between inspections.

Tenants living in a property with communal facilities have a responsibility as part of their tenancy to ensure that shared areas are kept clear and hazard free in the interests of general safety.

How is Erimus Housing performing?	How's the weather?	How can Erimus Housing improve?
<p>STATUS Survey information in 2007 showed that 7 out of 10 tenants were satisfied with the area that they lived in, and, in 2009, 8 out of 10 tenants said they were satisfied.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A number of individual neighbourhoods may benefit from further specific local offers and these will be identified through continued resident involvement and consultation.

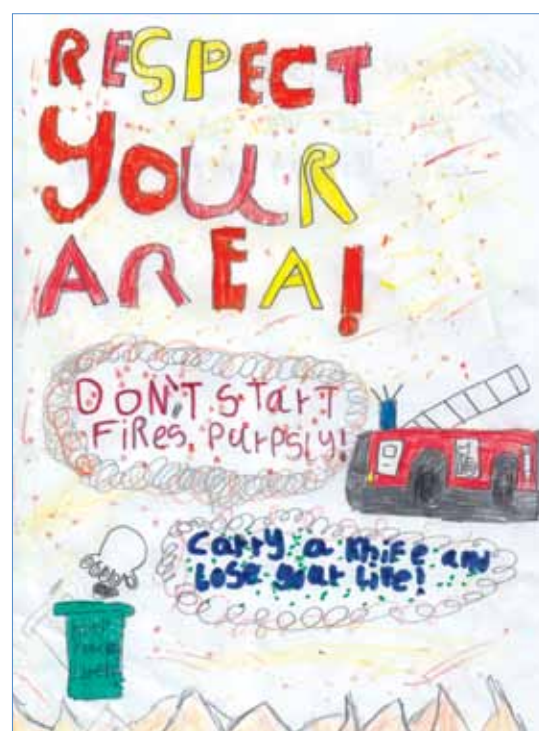
Local Area Co-operation

Local offers have been developed in partnership with other agencies to suit the needs of neighbourhoods with multiple landlords. For example Erimus Housing has worked in partnership with the Langridge Co-operative, which manages housing on behalf of Erimus Housing and another landlord, to develop an offer specifically for its tenants.

How can Erimus Housing improve?

Erimus Housing will be developing neighbourhood plans that will support communities and encourage more people to settle into communities where Erimus Housing has properties.

To be successful Erimus Housing will need to ensure that it increases joint working with other landlords and agencies.



Your Neighbourhood And Community

Anti-Social Behaviour





Erimus Housing continues to work in partnership with other agencies such as Cleveland Police to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Erimus Housing has reviewed its systems and service standards for dealing with ASB identifying what matters most in terms of service delivery to its tenants. In response to this, Erimus Housing introduced 24 hour access for ASB reports and attention has been focused on officers dealing with matters at an early stage.

The majority of ASB cases reported were due to noise (247) with verbal abuse (81) as second and vandalism (46) third.

A Victims' Charter has been introduced to help identify and put in additional support for victims where cases of ASB have been identified. This ensures the most vulnerable of tenants experiencing ASB receive the support they need.

An ASB focus group has been created this year and the group has been involved in scrutinising ASB related information to identify improvements.

How is Erimus Housing performing?	How's the weather?	How can Erimus Housing improve?
481 out of 642 ASB request cases this year were responded to within 24 hours.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whilst satisfaction is high, the return rate of surveys which are sent to all tenants and leaseholders reporting ASB is low with less than half responding. Erimus Housing, along with the ASB focus group, will be looking at ways in which the return rate can be improved; ● Erimus Housing will continue to review services in partnership with the ASB focus group and other agencies to identify and implement improvements where they are identified; ● The financial costs of dealing with ASB are not clear. Erimus Housing is therefore looking to develop a method of tracking costs in relation to this part of the service.
Following each ASB case, satisfaction surveys are sent out. From those returned this year 8.3 out of 10 tenants indicated that they were satisfied with the way they were kept informed of the progress with their ASB complaints.		
From ASB surveys returned this year, 6 out of 10 were satisfied with the time taken to resolve ASB.		
At 31 March 2011, Erimus Housing officers had dealt with 642 ASB cases with 532 cases being successfully dealt with, 97 ongoing and 13 cancelled.		

Value for Money



Each year Erimus Housing compares what it costs to deliver the services to you with the costs from similar organisations to assess whether it is giving value for money.

The value for money assessment is under review and the outcomes from the review will be reported later in the year with costs being included in next year's report.

How can Erimus Housing improve?

The way in which Erimus Housing assesses value for money needs updating and Erimus is looking at ways in which it can improve in this area;

Although Erimus Housing uses information to compare itself with other similar organisations and to ensure that it learns from others, work needs to be carried out to improve this process.

Governance and Financial Viability

A governance review completed this year has ensured that the Board remains fit for purpose. Board members also receive an appraisal to ensure they are continuing to show a commitment to Erimus Housing and its tenants and to assess their performance throughout the year.

Board members at 31 March 2011 were:



Mike Carr
Chair, Council Representative



Edna Donnelly
Vice Chair, Tenant



Bob Brady
Council Representative



Moira Britton
Co-optee



Brian Kelly
Independent



Hugh McGouran
Independent



Josephine Pottinger
Independent



Peter Purvis
Council Representative



Sarah Robson
Independent



Jenny Shepherd
Independent



Nicky Walker
Council Representative



Chris Smith
Managing Director of
Erimus Housing, Co-optee

Erimus Housing is continuing to develop its governance, strengthening its co-regulation by ensuring that tenants and leaseholders can directly influence the boards in relation to policy decisions, priorities for spending money and scrutiny of service delivery.

Work has started to form a scrutiny panel which will have direct access to the Erimus Housing Board. The group will be made up of tenants and leaseholders who will be recruited and trained to lead on scrutinising Erimus Housing's performance.

Whilst the recruitment process is taking place tenants and leaseholders will continue to scrutinise performance through the Residents' Panel, tenant regulators and service improvement groups. The new scrutiny group will ensure that the voice of tenants is heard at all levels. Next year's report will show the make up and format of the scrutiny group and will show any work undertaken throughout the year.

If you would be interested in becoming involved with scrutiny or any other resident involvement work, please contact the resident involvement team on (01642) 256170 or call into the Residents' Resource Centre.

Governance and Financial Viability



The Tenant Services Authority has recognised the improvement that has been made in this area and confirmed that all Tenant Services Authority requirements have been met fully.

Accounts are audited by independent auditors every year to ensure records are accurate. Independent auditors also carry out a rolling programme covering all of Erimus Housing's processes to ensure that risks to the organisation are reduced.

This does not mean that there is no work to do in this area and Erimus Housing will continue to ensure that requirements remain met and viability of the organisation continues.

How can Erimus Housing improve?

Erimus Housing needs to update the policies and documentation of all its financial procedures to ensure they remain relevant and up to date with any changes in financial legislation;

Erimus Housing needs to continue to implement any audit recommendations in a timely manner.

Equality and Diversity

Erimus Housing is committed to ensuring equality and diversity in everything it does.

Erimus Housing wants its board members and future scrutiny panel to be representative of its customer base and monitor the equality and diversity of the Board, taking appropriate action to fill any gaps that may be identified as vacancies arise.

Erimus Housing has worked closely with tenants, staff, partners and stakeholders to produce a new equality scheme and action plan for 2011. This will ensure that services and employment practices are fair and inclusive and will contribute to the development of good relations between and within diverse communities.

Any member of staff visiting your home will take into account the cultural or specific needs of minority groups, and those tenants and leaseholders with disabilities.

To ensure the views and needs of all people with disabilities are represented and taken into consideration a residents' disability action group is in place.



Glossary of Terms

Benchmarking	This is the name given to the way that Erimus Housing compares itself and its performance against other organisations to see how it is doing.
Diversity	This is about recognising, respecting and valuing the fact that everybody is different and that not everybody has the same needs.
Tenants	This refers to tenants and leaseholders of Erimus Housing.
Choice Based Lettings	This is the name of the system used for rehousing anyone who applies for a property.
Co-Regulation	This is where tenants work with the Erimus Housing Board to ensure that Erimus Housing is doing what it says it will do.
Financial Viability	This refers to Erimus Housing ensuring it has the finance available to deliver the services it has in place and showing that it can continue to operate as a business.
General Needs Housing	This relates to properties which have not been set aside for particular groups of tenants such as older people or people who require properties with adaptations.
Governance	This refers to the processes and structures that the Board has in place to ensure its decisions are made in an effective, open and honest way.
Joint working	Working together with other organisations that Erimus Housing does not control, for example police, councils and other housing providers.
Leaseholder	A person who has bought the lease of a property but still has responsibilities to Erimus Housing as part of the lease.
Letting	This means that a property has been given to a new tenant.
Local Offers	These have been developed by Erimus Housing and its tenants to suit a particular place or group of tenants.
National Standards	These have been set by the Tenant Services Authority and were introduced to ensure that social landlords provide decent homes and services to tenants.
Scrutiny	This refers to looking at areas of service and performance.
STATUS Survey	This is a satisfaction survey which is sent to a random sample of tenants every three years. The last survey that Erimus Housing carried out was in 2009. Of the 5,132 in 2009 a total of 2,177 questionnaires were returned, representing an overall response rate of 4 out of 10 tenants.
Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings	This is the partnership of local authorities and housing associations in Darlington, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough and Stockton using the choice based lettings process. It is called sub regional as it is part of the North East.



Feedback Request

Your views are important to us. We would therefore be grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete and return the following section to us at: Residents' Resource Centre, 14 Cinderwood, Thorntree, Middlesbrough TS3 9RH.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel:

Email:

When you return the feedback form by 31 October you will be entered into a free prize draw for the chance to win a £100 voucher to spend at a High Street shop of your choice.

This will help us improve on the report next year.

Thank you.

1. How well did you feel this report provided information that was of interest to you?

Please score between 1 and 4, where 1 is the most and 4 is the least.



1

2

3

4

2. If the report did not provide information on what is of interest to you please tell us what was missing?

3. If you found the report provided information that was of interest to you please tell us what was the most important area covered for you?

4. How do you think we can improve the report?

Appendix

The following table shows the ways in which residents are involved in the work of Erimus Housing:

Resident Involvement Strategy			
Consultation	Involvement	Community Activity	Regulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual tenants' survey • Consultation events • Strategic planning event • Customer relationship management • Satisfaction surveys • Focus groups • Tenants' conference • Residents' Panel • Area housing forums • Mobile exhibition unit • Peoples' opinion panel • Young peoples' group • Residents disability action group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident involvement statement • Resource Centre • Resident association grants • Resident training events • Estate walkabouts • Leaseholder forum • Area housing forums • Young persons group • Black Minority Ethnic group • Mystery shopping • Active learning for residents • DVD • Tenants' newsletter residents' panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area housing improvement budget • Area fun days • Sponsorship • Erimus Futures • Training • Learning shop • Healthy eating scheme • Reading with children • Computer training • Joint clean sweep community awareness working with schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant board members • Tenant regulators • Thematic best value reviews • Service standards • Annual Report to Tenants





Erimus Housing Ltd, 4th Floor, Centre North East,
73-75 Albert Road, Middlesbrough TS1 2RU.

Tel: 08000 461 600

Email: info@erimushousing.co.uk

www.erimushousing.co.uk

Part of the **Fabrick Group**