



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Erimus Housing is committed to genuine involvement of residents; this includes tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and people in supported housing. This policy also encompasses the tenants' compact of Erimus Housing to ensure a coherent, inclusive and diverse approach to involving residents. The Resident Involvement Strategy is the mechanism for delivering our objectives;

- To establish effective consultation with residents and customers to inform decision making;
- To maximise resident involvement to influence & shape services;
- To promote, encourage & support community activities & initiatives that provide benefits for communities;
- To involve residents in the self regulation of Erimus Housing ensuring continuous improvement.

1.2 Erimus Housing will provide the support, resources and structures required to make resident involvement a meaningful and integral part of its work. We will encourage and value the input of residents and use their involvement to establish, shape and improve the services and standards offered to them.

1.3 Erimus Housing wants to encourage involvement and enable tenants and residents to contribute towards the monitoring and continuous improvement of our services, in order to achieve maximum customer satisfaction and value for money.

1.4 The overall aim is to maximise opportunities for tenants and residents to become involved in the decision-making process of Erimus Housing. We will seek to engage tenants and residents in ways which they feel comfortable and which are most effective, with the key aim of increasing numbers of tenants and residents we involve across all sectors of the community.

1.5 Erimus Housing encourage involvement equally and fairly amongst all tenants and residents, whilst recognising the needs of special interest groups such as the elderly, disabled black minority ethnic (BME), and young people.

- 1.6 Erimus Housing aim to provide various ways to encourage tenants and residents to become involved. Erimus Housing recognises that involvement and participation can benefit the business, tenants, leaseholders and residents; and assistance will be provided in the following ways:
- Provide a framework which allows tenants, leaseholders and residents the opportunity to become involved (see appendix 1);
 - Provide the necessary training and support to all those who wish to be involved, either as an individual or as part of a recognised tenants group;
 - We will ensure involvement is interesting, fun and a positive experience for all;
 - Involvement opportunities will be open and accessible to all and reflect the diverse communities we engage with.
- 1.7 Erimus Housing's employees and Board Members will adhere to the principles laid down in this policy and have an individual and collective responsibility to ensure that this policy is actively applied in practice.
- 1.8 The resident involvement statement will provide a clear, consistent, co-ordinated approach to resident involvement, providing a wide range of ways to become involved. In conjunction with our Impact Assessment this will provide a framework for monitoring and improving our approach to resident involvement.
- 1.9 Erimus Housing will ensure that adequate resources are allocated to the resident involvement and consultation process. Those resources will include staff and budgets that enable tenants, leaseholders and residents to be involved and informed of the opportunities on offer and at a level they feel comfortable with.

2. REFERENCE MATERIAL

- 2.1 Putting people first – Housing Corporation.
- 2.2 Housing Corporation Policy.
- 2.3 Erimus Housing Involvement Strategy.
- 2.4 KLOE – Audit Commission.
- 2.5 Tenant Regulators Terms of Reference.

3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Tenant - means an individual who holds an assured tenancy (or comparable successor tenancy), lease or licence from and occupies a property belonging to the Company.

- 3.2 Leaseholder - means an individual who holds a lease or licence from and occupies a property belonging to the Company.
- 3.3 Resident – means an individual who occupies a property within an Erimus Housing estate.

4 POLICY CONTENT

4.1 Policy Objectives

4.1.1 Erimus policy objectives are aligned to those included in our involvement strategy and strategic plan. The resident involvement strategy seeks to deliver and develop the overall aims and objectives of this policy. They are: -

- To ensure that tenants are at the heart of decision making;
- To establish effective consultation with tenants and residents to enable them to inform decision making;
- To maximise resident involvement to influence and shape services;
- To provide, encourage and support community activities and initiatives that provide benefits for communities;
- To involve residents in the self regulation to ensure continuous improvement;
- To be an inclusive landlord.

4.2 Policy Principles

4.2.1 Erimus Housing will ensure that no individual, group or community is excluded or disadvantaged and will ensure that young people, people with disabilities, BME community and vulnerable groups and individuals are included, involved and consulted with.

4.2.2 Erimus Housing will ensure that there is clarity about how decisions are made, who makes them, and how much influence tenants, leaseholders and residents have over decisions.

4.2.3 Erimus Housing will develop a range of methods of involvement that allows people to be involved at a level they feel comfortable with. This will enhance the company's objective to provide more choice.

4.2.4 In order to deliver its commitment to equality, Erimus Housing recognises the importance of information about the profile of the communities it serves and the nature of resident involvement. Erimus Housing will maintain and develop a database to support the tenant consultation and participation process, and ensure that training and information initiatives are appropriately formulated and targeted.

4.2.5 All tenants, leaseholder's and residents will be kept fully informed and made aware of how all Board Members are selected and of the

opportunities available for them to participate in the selection process of tenant Board Members.

- 4.2.6 Work will be done with tenants and community representatives to address matters that affect opportunities to be involved, such as the suitability of venues, times for meetings, the need for resources to meet the costs of travel and dependent care and the need for training on equalities issues.
 - 4.2.7 Individuals and groups will be consulted to ensure that information is provided in their preferred method of contact.
 - 4.2.8 Residents and groups will be provided with appropriate and relevant information to assess performance across a range of customer facing services including rents, arrears, re-let times, responsive repairs and anti-social behaviour. Tenants, leaseholders and residents will be provided with the opportunity in identifying specific indicators to be monitored.
 - 4.2.9 Erimus Housing will actively encourage tenants, leaseholders and residents to participate within an environment of choice and to provide a framework where they can make their views known on the way in which its services are managed and provided. There is no hierarchical responsibility or structure associated with the framework but a range of activities and groups that link into the decision making and involvement activity.
 - 4.2.10 Erimus Housing will ensure that all officers are aware of the procedures to involve and consult tenants, leaseholders and residents; provide training and support to ensure effective implementation of this policy to ensure they understand the involvement framework.
- 4.3 Involvement
- 4.3.1 Tenants, leaseholders & residents will be able to be involved at the level they feel comfortable with by the provision of relevant information, advice, training, resources and support. A framework/menu of involvement methods allows them to progress at their own pace and builds the capacity of individuals to progress to Area Housing Forums, Resident's Panel and the Erimus Housing Board.
 - 4.3.2 Erimus Housing is committed to empowering tenants, leaseholders and residents, whether they are existing or future tenants or leaseholders, to enable them to influence decisions about their housing service. Erimus Housing will consult and involve tenants, leaseholders and residents on a range of issues that affect their homes and neighbourhoods and the way that they are managed.
 - 4.3.3 Tenants and leaseholders will be encouraged to become involved in all aspects of the organisations activities. Such involvement will range

from the provision of information through opportunities to influence and participate in decision-making; and governance of the organisation, ensuring tenants' views are reflected in how services are provided.

- 4.3.4 Adequate resources will be allocated to the Tenant Participation and Consultation process. Those resources include staff, budgets and support that enable tenants, leaseholders and residents to be involved and informed.
- 4.3.5 Where appropriate and necessary, or when requested and relevant, training will be given to those who require it to enable them to participate in the decision making process.
- 4.3.6 Erimus Housing is committed to active resident involvement and this is promoted through resident involvement standards and the customer charter which are published and made available through our customer access points.
- 4.3.7 One third of the Board of Erimus Housing is designated for tenant Board Members, ensuring tenants' views are integral to the decision making process, that they can influence service delivery and the strategic direction of the company.
- 4.3.8 Erimus Housing will engage with and support local residents groups to address issues of particular local interest. The scope and range of these local groups will be determined by local residents through their terms of reference and/or constitution. Erimus Housing will provide an outline constitution where required.
- 4.3.9 Grants will be provided to start up and support residents groups where they agree to abide by agreed standards/constitution/terms of reference. The resident involvement team will support groups to ensure all groups in receipt of grant funding meet the constitutional requirements.
- 4.3.10 Erimus Housing will actively involve residents in a number of key activities that influence decision making and front line service delivery. Specifically these include: -
 - Strategic Planning;
 - Service Standard formulation;
 - Major service reviews of customer facing services;
 - Selection of contractors delivering services into homes and estates;
 - Mystery shopping of services;
 - Estate walkabouts;
 - Regulation;
 - Board Membership.

4.4 Consultation

4.4.1 Erimus Housing tenants, leaseholders and residents will be consulted upon issues that are likely to have a significant impact upon service delivery, their home or estate at the earliest possible time. In particular consultation will be undertaken in the following circumstances: -

- **Changes to policy or procedures affecting all or many tenants and leaseholders.** Where it is proposed to change an existing policy or the level of service and it will substantially affecting all or many of our residents.
- **Service Changes.** Where it is proposed to substantially change the level of customer facing service provision to residents.
- **Matters affecting individual residents.** Where it is propose to substantially change the level of service given to an individual.
- **Erimus Housing performance.** Tenants, leaseholders and residents opinions and feedback on key service areas will regularly be sought via a number of methods. The resulting information will be used by Erimus Housing to monitor, review and amend our services, to ensure continuous improvement.
- **Tenancy Agreement Alteration.** Where it is proposed to change to a tenancy agreement clause, term or condition.
- **Improvements to homes.** Consultation will be implemented with any tenants affected by improvements to their homes prior to the commencement of work on site, while it is in progress and then to assess satisfaction upon completion. It will also include choices of materials, colours etc if appropriate.
- **Estate Environment.** Where Erimus intends to implement significant improvements to the local environment consultation will be implemented with local residents prior to the commencement of work on site and then to assess satisfaction upon completion.
- **Regeneration Programmes.** Where it is proposed to implement programmes/initiatives etc that will substantially impact upon local communities and residents.

4.5 How we consult

4.5.1 A variety of consultation methods will be used. The method will be dependent upon the circumstances and the nature of the subject matter but is likely to involve one or more of the following methods:

- Residents panel (see terms of reference for further information);

- Residents' Associations/Groups (or their representatives);
- Focus groups;
- Single issue groups;
- Annual Tenant Survey ;
- Service satisfaction surveys;
- Talking to ethnic minority groups and associations;
- Personalised letter where possible;
- Specific consultation with people with disabilities, young people and those living in sheltered accommodation;
- Exhibitions, road shows and conferences;
- Engaging with those who do not take part in the formal consultation process, particularly those who are living in isolated communities;
- Estates officers to facilitate consultation and communication with tenants, leaseholders and residents;
- People opinion panel;
- Tenants newsletter;
- Personal visit;
- Telephone canvassing;
- Mobile exhibition unit;
- Conferences and one off events.

4.6 Community Activity

4.6.1 In order to promote and encourage community involvement to improve the quality of life within communities, there will be engagement at a level that is relevant to local residents; access those who would not normally be involved; improve communication and ensure local priorities are being supported.

4.6.2 Community activity will be delivered through a range of activities that are linked to delivering employment, learning, inclusion and community safety objectives. The approach involves, but is not exclusive to, the following range of activities: -

- Long term projects within schools;
- Short term projects within schools;
- One off projects within schools and the community;
- After school clubs;
- Work placements;
- Extended work placements and career opportunities;
- Special events;
- Awareness sessions;
- Sponsorship of local events;
- Attendance at community events/celebrations;
- Area fun days;
- Erimus Futures.

- 4.6.3 Erimus Housing recognises the importance of delivering the projects/initiatives, in partnership with a diverse range of agencies and bodies in order to maximise the impact and reach of the community activity approach.
- 4.6.4 Funds will be made available to finance individual projects and sponsorship; drawn from a range budgets dependent upon what need or objective is being met.
- 4.6.5 Co-ordination across directorates will be expected to ensure community activity is aligned with the organisations corporate and social responsibility strategy, and to inform the Erimus Housing sustainability assessment matrix. Additionally this approach will have a remit to secure additional funding opportunities, developing the brand and marketing Erimus.
- 4.6.6 In partnership, Erimus Housing will evaluate the projects and report accordingly. Evaluation will inform the organisation of the immediate and long term impact the projects are having within estates and communities, as well as determining their impact on sustainability.
- 4.7 Tenant Regulation
 - 4.7.1 Erimus Housing will encourage tenants, leaseholders and residents to participate in the management and or regulation of their homes and neighbourhoods using a variety of methods including tenant regulation, thematic best value reviews and tenant management organisations.
 - 4.7.2 Tenant regulation is not intended to replace or duplicate the current system of external, professional regulation. Rather it is about a partnership approach to organisational self-regulation where the Board, staff and residents have clear roles and powers.
 - 4.7.3 Tenant regulation is a self regulation approach where tenants (including leaseholders) have a formal, influential role to assess and influence the performance, service delivery, plans and behaviour of Erimus Housing.
 - 4.7.4 It is envisaged that many of the existing options for resident involvement will be utilised in resident-led self-regulation. For example, options such as customer consultation, resident mystery shopping, and service review groups will inform the resident-led approach to self-regulation of service delivery. These will be complemented by other existing opportunities whereby residents have a formal role in setting policies and contributing to strategic direction.
 - 4.7.5 Terms of Reference have been drawn up by the Tenant Regulation Working Group, setting out the role and responsibility of the Regulatory Panel in undertaking their work, and impacting upon Erimus housing.

- 4.7.6 Tenant regulators are to be involved in the self regulation of the organisation to work with the Board to ensure that Erimus Housing complies with the Regulatory Code and delivers continuous improvement, with specific regard for customer facing services, the home and community.
- 4.7.7 It is the expectation that all Tenant Regulators will uphold and promote the following principles that support the tenant regulation approach:
- Providing specific identifiable rights for tenants to be involved;
 - Allowing scrutiny of customer facing services and issues;
 - Broadening the accountability of Board and management in regard to decision making and service delivery;
 - Ensuring greater transparency in how Erimus Housing operates;
 - Improving customer service across the organisation.
- 4.7.8 In order to respond to greater calls for sanction (Cave Review) and also to ensure that tenant-led regulation has meaningful influence, tenant regulators will have power to report directly to the Audit and Governance committee. This would apply if Erimus Housing significantly failed to deliver or improve services and or address issues referred previously to the Corporate Management (CMT) Team for consideration.
- 4.7.9 The regulatory panel will perform a scrutiny role across the organisation encompassing inspection of services, the scrutiny of three key subject per year and being a consultee for existing audit and external regulatory processes.
- 4.7.10 Erimus Housing will also undertake thematic best value reviews; assessing progress against specific strategic priorities to understand strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A tenant regulator will be a member of the thematic review panel.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 5.1 Erimus Housing will ensure that this policy and practices are non-discriminatory and will aim to promote equal opportunity by preventing and eliminating discrimination on the grounds of gender, colour, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age, HIV status, sexual orientation or marital status.
- 5.2 Erimus Housing will be accessible, responsive and sensitive to the diverse needs of individuals and officers will be trained to a high standard in valuing and promoting equality and diversity in the delivery of the resident involvement and consultation process.
- 5.3 Erimus Housing will take measures to ensure that people from the black minority ethnic community, people with disabilities and young

people, have equal access to involvement and consultation activities with the population as a whole.

- 5.4 The impact of the policy will be monitored, to ensure that it promotes equality of opportunity to individuals and minority groups. In order to achieve this, all those who are actively involved will be asked to provide details of their ethnic origin and any other demographic information. This information will be utilised to set targets to ensure a fully inclusive approach to involvement and consultation is taken.
- 5.5 Erimus Housing will ensure that all those wanting to be involved have equality of information about the service and equal opportunity to become involved and consulted. This will be facilitated by:
- Advertising the opportunities widely in a variety of accessible media;
 - Providing practical assistance to those who may have difficulty in understanding the requirements of getting involved;
 - Providing tailored assistance to those who may have difficulty in participating and expressing their views;
 - Monitoring the profile of those who are involved and encouraging those from minority and hard to reach groups, to get actively engaged in the involvement and consultation process.

6 CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Erimus Housing recognises the importance of working in partnership with customers to develop and continuously improve services and raise standards.
- 6.2 Erimus Housing actively involves all customers in at the beginning of the decision making processes and ensures tenants are empowered to play a part in wider consultation and involvement structures, as detailed in full in our Resident Involvement Strategy. To demonstrate this commitment, this policy has taken account of the following:
- Consultation has been undertaken with officers from Erimus Housing;
 - Continuous consultation with other recognised tenants groups; local voluntary and statutory agencies on a regular basis to ensure continuous development of good practice;
 - Good practice guidance by the Housing Corporation, National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing;
 - Consultation has been undertaken with Erimus Housing resident's panel and area housing forums;
 - Feedback from residents following display of the policy at the resource centre for information and comment.

7 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 7.1 Monitoring

7.1.1 The monitoring of outcomes is essential for Erimus Housing to track the impact and effectiveness of the approach to Resident Involvement. Monitoring of the implementation of the policy and the associated procedures will consider:

- How easily residents can be involved in the decision making process;
- The performance against service standards and targets set out in The procedures;
- The cost of and impact of resident involvement activity;
- Resident satisfaction with opportunities to be involved and influence decision making.

7.1.2 Monitoring information will be reported to the relevant committee on at least an annual basis; and publicised to customers through the tenants' newsletter, website and other media.

7.2 Review

7.2.1 Monitoring results will be used by Erimus Housing to inform future policy review in this area. All reviews will consider whether:

- The current policy adheres to legislative and regulatory requirements, and reflects current good practice;
- The aims and objectives of the policy being met;
- the current policy outcomes meet the needs and aspirations of our diverse customer base;
- Service users are aware of and understand the policy and believe it to be consistent and fair;
- The policy provides sufficient choice for customers;
- The service offers value for money;
- Partnership arrangements are working effectively.

7.2.2 Overall monitoring and review of the policy will be undertaken in consultation with:

- Staff groups;
- Board members;
- Existing and future service users;
- Resident and community groups;
- Relevant partners, local voluntary agencies and other statutory services as relevant.

7.2.3 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or in line with legislative/regulatory changes, code of practice or good practice guidance.

8 RESPONSIBILITY

- 8.1 The Director of Housing retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 8.2 The Resident Involvement Manager is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and the associated procedures, under the guidance of the Head of Agency Services. This includes responsibility for monitoring and review, staff awareness and training, policy development and communication to customers.

Erimus Resident Involvement Framework



