



# Keeping You Informed

South Lanarkshire Tenants Development Project Newsletter— March 2008

## Welcome

You will see from the content of the newsletter that the Project has been hosting and attending local meetings to find out what tenants think about the Allocation Policy Review and the Scottish Government consultation paper— Firm Foundations. As tenants representatives we have been attending these events too.

One single message that has come across clearly is that there are not enough council houses available for everyone who wants one. As well as responding to the Council's paper tenants can also be involved in the Scottish Governments National Engagement process. If you would like to know more, see page 3 or call the Project to discuss: 01698 527108.

The Editorial Team

*Larry Nugent, Madge Nugent, John Ryan -Park and Robert Lewis*

## TIS Annual Conference

**14—15 June 2008 The Beardmore Hotel, Clydebank**

### Involving Tenants: The Road to Success

'Tenants' organisations have embarked on a tenant participation journey and are involved in a range of activities across Scotland to ensure that tenants can have a say and influence how their housing service is delivered, managed and developed'.

Booking will open soon for this popular annual event. It's an opportunity to meet with tenants from across Scotland, learn more about current issues in housing and sharpen up your skills. Contact us for more details: 01698 527108

Last year tenants said:

- "The best I have been to"
- "Because this is tenant orientated and has good networking ideas"
- "As always TIS provides a good conference and networking event"
- 72% of attendees rated the event as **very good**, 28% thought it **good**

## South Lanarkshire Council Allocation Policy Review

The policy was reviewed to take account of legislation which will affect who can apply to join the council's waiting list and the way the council must treat the applicants on the lists. Since 1999, when the policy started, the council has had an increasingly smaller number of houses to rent. However, as the demand for affordable rented housing has not decreased, the council has proposed to make the changes to ensure that it will comply with legislation and be able to offer those with greatest housing need a home.

The proposals include:

### Waiting Lists

- Applicants will be placed on one of **four** lists: **Urgent Housing Need, Transfer, Waiting** and **Other** lists.
- The Urgent list will have homeless and medical applicants who will be listed in date order. The Other list will also be queued in date order. One reasonable offer of housing will be made to applicants on these lists within 6 months, if the offer is refused then the applicant will join either the transfer or waiting list.
- The Transfer and Waiting list applicants will be listed by points. The points will be awarded according to circumstances and then by date.

**Local Letting Plans:** Will allow the Council to adapt the policy to suit the different demands of the eight housing areas in South Lanarkshire

**Suspensions :** Suspension times from the housing lists will be reduced.

**Medical points:** Category A will no longer be given points, Category B will be given 100 points instead of 60, there will be no Category C.

**Medical Appeals:** Will become a two stage process with the first appeal to the independent medical officer and secondly to the Area Services Manger.

These proposed changes were set out in a consultative draft. The whole process has been overseen from the start by a group of tenant representatives (the Allocations Sub Group) who have been involved throughout the consultation. A wider range of tenants views have also been sought through the housing forums, the Central Liaison Group and local focus groups.

**What you said:** 122 tenants attended the local meetings organised by the Project. Those who attended generally agreed that using the 4 lists seemed to be a fair way of managing housing applications. Many people expressed a concern about the removal of waiting time points. Others were keen to see overcrowding and care and support points increased to allow tenants to move on to other properties. Tenants considered Local Letting Plans to be a good way to allow some flexibility into the policy; East Kilbride in particular supported this as they consider their town should be given pressurised status, Cambuslang residents also have specific concerns about the way their local housing is allocated. There was no general agreement on whether homeless and urgent medical applicants should be given one reasonable offer—some agreed with this and some felt more than one reasonable offer should be made.

**What happens now:** The consultation process has ended. The responses will be considered and the policy revised by April 2008. It will be implemented, after approval by the Housing Committee, in August 2008. The Allocation sub group will continue to meet to follow through with implementation and evaluation.

## **Firm Foundations**

The Governments' proposals to address the shortage of affordable housing in Scotland include:

- Ending the right to buy for new build houses
- Providing incentives for new Council house building
- Make more use of the private rented sector

We held an event to find out what you think of these proposals and the following comments were forwarded to the Scottish Government:

- The right to buy should be stopped for all tenants
- More information is needed on how these houses will be delivered and how developers will be used.
- If the private rented sector is to be used the tenants need better protection and more rights

This is just a sample of some of the points discussed. A full copy of the paper is available from the Project office.

## **National Engagement**

As well as responding to consultation papers, registered tenants groups (RTO's) are also invited to participate in the National Engagement process organised by Communities Scotland. The aim of the National Engagement process is to engage with tenants in the development of national housing policies. Work has already begun with tenants representatives who have agreed the process and structures for engagement. Tenants in South Lanarkshire are invited to join the Region 8 committee along with tenants from North Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire.

## **Summer Training Programme**

During the summer months the Project will offer training programmes free of charge to all tenants and residents groups. Let us know what we can help you with. Call us: 01698 527108.

## **Repairs Review**

The Council has started a review of its repairs service. A group of tenant members have been involved in overseeing the process as the Repairs Sub Group. To help with the review they have visited Cambuslang Gate, the repairs call centre and Hamilton Repairs Centre where the workshop is located and all repair jobs are allocated. The Repairs Sub Group have also examined accessing the service, the relet standard, the budget, tenant responsibilities, and the life of a job to understand the best way the repairs service can be delivered.

The Sub Group will be meeting in April to review and evaluate the information received and will then visit the Local Housing Forums to gather your views on the repairs service. The Sub Group will then reconvene their meetings with the Council and pass on your thoughts on possible improvements to the service.

## The Project Monitoring Group

The Project Monitoring Group is made up of your local representatives, their contact details are below.

### Larkhall

Robert Lewis  
07768 5287023  
Robert Murray  
01698 889896

### Clydesdale South

Margaret McGinnies  
01555 665096  
Scott Sinclair  
07876371501

### Cambuslang

Archie Cumming  
0141 641 2530  
Cathy Sweeten  
0141 641 4031

### Rutherglen

Larry Nugent  
0141 569 4457  
Madge Nugent  
0141 569 4457

### Hamilton

Kenneth Wright  
01698 425466  
John Ryan-Park  
07789845372

### Blantyre

John O'Neil  
01698 820511  
Gerry Skelton  
01698 325425

Contact us if you would like any more information on any of the subjects covered in this newsletter. Our resource centre is open and we have information on a wide range of housing topics as well as training and information for groups.

South Lanarkshire Tenants Development Support Project  
Room 3 Brandon House Business Centre  
23-25 Brandon Street  
Hamilton, ML3 6DA

Tel: 01698 527108, fax: 01698 523131, email: [SLproject@tis.org.uk](mailto:SLproject@tis.org.uk)

### **We provide independent information advice to tenants and tenants and residents groups by:**

- Giving advice to tenants groups on a wide range of housing matters
- We will use jargon free language
- We will use this newsletter to keep you up to date on housing issues

### **We support the development of tenant activity.**

- We will come out and assist you to start a new group
- We provide training to help your group get organised and be effective
- We provide resources to support tenant activity

### **We support tenants to influence and become involved in participation and consultation about the housing services they receive**

- We provide specialised support to tenants involved in round the table discussion with the Council about housing policy and the delivery of services
- We work with tenants and the Council to ensure that there are opportunities for tenants to become involved in consultation and participation