

WESTLEA RESIDENTS FORUM



CONSTITUTION 2010

Name of the organisation

Westlea Residents Forum

Overall Aim

The Residents Forum plays a strategic role within Westlea H.A. enabling residents to contribute towards determining the business and service priorities of the organisation

This includes:

Promoting the rights and responsibilities of Westlea H.A. Residents.

Promoting partnership between Westlea H.A. and Westlea Residents to ensure that residents have the opportunities to influence how all housing services are delivered in the six local standards

- **Tenant Involvement** and empowerment (including equalities, customer service and complaints)
- **Home** (including repairs and maintenance)
- **Tenancy** (including lettings and rents)
- **Neighbourhood and Community** (including Anti Social Behaviour)
- **Value for Money**
- **Governance and viability**

Ensuring Residents have influenced the development of Westlea H.A. policies, procedures and strategies.

To support the implementation of the New Customer and Community Involvement Strategy 2011 -2013

Promoting and supporting effective resident involvement across the organisation.

Quorum

No Residents Forum meeting shall take place if less than two Resident Forum Officers and five members are present.

1. To ensure all residents have had the opportunity to influence the development of Westlea H.A. policies, procedures and strategies.

To consider and comment on non-confidential Westlea H.A. Board papers by producing a written report to the Westlea Board of Management and Senior Managers.

To ensure Westlea H.A. carries out effective Resident consultation with residents and recommend where necessary, request more extensive consultation to ensure that Residents influence all housing services

To monitor, review and support the implementation of the Residents Business Plan 2011 -2012

To monitor via quarterly reports and /or give active input into the annual setting of the following budgets:

- ✓ Customer & Community Involvement Strategy 2011 -2013
- ✓ Residents Business Plan 2010- 2011
- ✓ Community Investment Fund
- ✓ DF Budget
- ✓ Westlearn Training programme

To develop and maintain an effective two-way channel of communication between Westlea H.A., the Residents Forum and Westlea Board of Management.

To consider and comment on documents from other sources such as Regional and National Government and the TSA (Tenants Services Authority) etc... that have implications for Westlea residents.

2. Promoting and supporting effective resident involvement across the organisation

To promote all forms of involvement outlined in the Westlea Involvement Guidelines.

To support Westlea H.A. to ensure that involvement reflects the diversity of the organisation's residents in a manner which is in line with Westlea Involvement Guidelines.

To work with Westlea H.A. to develop other initiatives for increasing the skills, knowledge and confidence of the Residents Forum (shadowing/mentoring, benchmarking visits to other registered social landlords).

To work with Westlea H.A. to develop initiatives for improving communication with hard to reach groups and those not currently involved via the Residents Communication Strategy 2010 -2013.

To make every effort to inform all residents so that they are aware of the role of the Residents Forum and how they can apply to become a member. This includes promoting the fact that all residents can attend Residents Forum meetings as observers.

3. Membership

The Residents Forum shall number 14 Westlea Residents who will be expected to play a full and active part in the forum.

Westlea Board members, members of the Green Square Board and Scrutiny Panel will be welcome to attend all Resident Forum meetings as observers. They will not be counted as formal members of the Residents Forum (i.e. part of the 14) and will not be allowed to vote or hold office.

The Residents Forum will be accountable to the Board, Westlea Residents and Westlea H.A. and will submit regular reports together with a list of their achievements of their work throughout the year at the AGM and via their annual impact assessment.

Membership will be open to all residents of Westlea H.A. including those in shared ownership and leasehold properties.

N.B. The only exceptions are:

Where residents belong to the same family or live at the same address;

and

Ex Westlea Board, Green Square Resident Board and Scrutiny Panel members may not join the Residents Forum for a period of two years from the date of their leaving.

The Residents Forum may co-opt extra members in line with its objectives or for specific purposes only. In certain situations and with the agreement of the group, co-opted members can become Residents Forum Officers for a limited time.

Residents Forum Officers shall include a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Finance Officer.

Members can serve for a period of four years after which time they can, if they so wish, apply for re-election to serve for a further four year period. The maximum period of membership is two four year terms.

New Resident Forum members will be widely encouraged and will be nominated by two Westlea residents at any time of the year. All new members will be required to complete an application form which will include providing a brief history of skills and experience and an outline of the reasons for wishing to join, including relevant training and experience.

The Residents Forum shall meet at least six times a year and have an additional four training days per year, plus a joint meeting with the board as well as the AGM. All meetings will be held at Methuen Park, Chippenham.

The Residents Forum will elect its officers following the AGM.

Vacancies for Officers may be filled from Residents Forum membership. They will serve until the following AGM.

Residents Forum Officers will be elected annually with the exception of the Finance Officer, who will serve for a period of 2 years.

Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without giving an adequate reason to the Chair or Vice-Chair may lose their membership of the Residents Forum.

At the discretion of the Chair this will not apply in certain circumstances e.g. long term illness.

Any member leaving the Residents Forum before the AGM must give reasonable notice of this to the Secretary, Vice-Chair or Chair.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of Residents Forum members

Members must not discriminate on any grounds including nationality, political opinion, age, race, religion, sex, sexuality or disability.

Members will at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner, treating others with respect when attending meetings or any other function in connection with the Residents Forum or Westlea H.A.

Members will:

- Adhere to and abide by the Constitution and Code of Conduct at all times.
- Disclose any interest, personal or otherwise, that is of financial or personal gain that could be considered in conflict with those of the organisation.
- Be willing to undertake relevant training or attend additional meetings or conferences, relevant to their Officer Role.
- Only attend meetings, or be members of other resident involvement mechanisms that are not in conflict with those of the Residents Forum.
- Be proactive in raising suggestions for agenda items for future consideration to the Residents Forum Officers. This could be through information gained via their specialism.
- Ensure that they have read and understood any necessary papers and documents before they attend and Resident Forum meeting.

5. Voting

When a vote is required, the Chair will decide on the style of voting and manage the procedure. As far as possible decisions will be made by a simple majority by either a show of hands or written vote.

The Chair may not vote. In the case of a financial decision relating to the Residents Forum bank account or the Residents Funding Group the Residents Forum Finance Officer may not vote.

In the event of a tie, the Chair will decide whether more discussion is needed to produce a decision or use their casting vote.

Any member can make a proposal which must be seconded by another Residents Forum member.

Before voting, any member may propose an amendment, which also must be seconded by another Residents Forum member.

Note: The amendment must be voted on first.

Only members present at the meeting may vote.

6. Annual General Meetings

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held each year, at which the Residents Forum shall present a statement of activities and achievements for the year. A report in the HOME magazine will be written detailing these.

Residents Forum members will elect Officers yearly (two yearly for the Finance Officer) at the AGM.

Residents who attend the AGM shall vote on any recommendations and amendments to the Residents Forum Constitution.

The Quorum for the AGM shall be 20 Westlea residents excluding current Residents Forum members.

7. Changes to the Constitution

The Constitution can only be changed or amended at the AGM or at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.

Any suggested changes should be sent to the secretary 21 days before the AGM or Special General Meeting which has been called for that purpose.

Changes to the Constitution must be agreed by two thirds of Westlea residents present at the meeting.

8. Dissolution

To call a Special General Meeting for Dissolution of the Residents Forum, changes to its Constitution or any other purpose requires 10 signatories (excluding Residents Forum Members)

The Quorum for a Special General Meeting shall be 20 residents excluding current Residents Forum Members.

A proposal to dissolve the Residents Forum or any other resolution put to a Special General Meeting called specifically for that purpose can only take effect if agreed by a minimum of two thirds of those present. Only those present can vote.

Upon Dissolution funds remaining in all the Resident Funding Group Accounts will become the property of Westlea Housing Association.

Signed: **(Chair)**

Print Name:

Date: