

COMMUNITY VOICE CONSTITUTION

North Lincolnshire Homes and its tenants working together to improve the quality of life for all communities within North Lincolnshire

1. NAME

- **The group will be known as Community Voice**

2. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF BENEFIT

- **Neighbourhoods, tenants and residents in areas where North Lincolnshire Homes (NLH) is operational**

3. ROLE

- **To monitor, review and discuss matters of housing policy to influence improvements to housing, the environment and the quality of life for all existing and future residents**
- **To represent the views and act on behalf of NLH tenant representatives and recognised resident groups by feeding back and consulting on issues raised at community voice meetings**
- **Following training, and with appropriate support and control, manage budget areas as requested by NLH Officers/Executive Management Team**
- **To be involved in projects and reviews**
- **To encourage and involve a wider representation of all the people living within the agreed areas of NLH**

4. AIMS / OBJECTIVES

- **The aim of the group is to involve communities in creating sustainable neighbourhoods and places where people want to live**

- The aim of the group is to provide tenants and residents the opportunity to comment on the provision of housing and related services within North Lincolnshire to review current and future policies
- To collect and represent the views of all tenants and residents living within NLH neighbourhoods

5. MEMBERSHIP

- The majority of the membership to be tenants of NLH
- Membership shall be open to all resident associations that are formally recognised by North Lincolnshire Homes. Two members of each association can attend Community Voice meetings at any one time (although ad-hoc requests can be made to CV for an additional member to attend in a non-voting capacity. Decisions taken upon these requests will be dependent on anticipated space within the meeting venue)
- Membership will also be open to the following to accommodate the diverse needs of our tenants:
 - 2 Tenant Youth representatives
 - 2 Tenant BME representatives (black and minority ethnic community)
 - 2 Tenant Sheltered Panel representatives
 - 1 Leaseholder representative
 - 1 Tenant from each of five geographical areas not represented by resident associations
 - 1 Tenant Disabled representative from an area not already represented

6. COMMITTEE

- All group members will be recognised as the Committee
- The committee make up should consist of at least 70% tenants
- Officers shall be Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer
- Officers of the committee must be tenants of NLH
- NLH Tenant Board Members are not eligible to stand as Officers of the committee
- The Officers of the committee will be elected annually at the AGM by the membership
- Officers shall stand down at the AGM but are eligible for re-election
- The Chair and Vice Chair of the group should not be a Chair or Vice Chair of any other NLH resident involvement structure. If putting up for office at a group AGM they must understand that if they are elected into post that they must relinquish any other Chair or Vice Chair positions already held in any other resident involvement structures (excluding resident associations)

7. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

THE CHAIRPERSON (or in his or her absence the vice-chairperson) or another committee member shall conduct the meetings of the group

THE TREASURER shall open and maintain a bank account in the name of Community Voice. The Resources Committee (sub group of Community Voice) shall appoint 4 signatories (one must be the Treasurer). Each of the signatories must live in a different household and must be a member of the Resources Committee. Any two of the signatories shall sign cheques for Community Voice. The Treasurer will keep a true and accurate record of all income and expenditure and will give a financial report to each AGM meeting

NLH Officers will arrange the auditing of the accounts, subject to internal and external audit requirements

All financial records shall be open to scrutiny by **NLH Officers** and **Community Voice** members

THE SECRETARY shall be responsible for taking the minutes of meetings. The minutes will be agreed with **Officers of NLH** and the **Chairperson of Community Voice**

8. SUB/WORKING GROUPS

- **New Community Voice Sub and Working Groups** will normally include invitations to **Community Voice** and **Menu of Options** representatives. To clarify:
 - a) **Community Voice** members only - when the purpose of the group is to discuss internal **Community Voice** matters such as the finance budget held by **Community Voice** or training requirements for **Community Voice** members
 - b) **Community Voice** and **Menu of Options** representatives – when the topic to be discussed is of interest to tenants at large
- **NLH Executive Management Team** and **Community Voice** shall agree sub/working groups **Terms of Reference**, size and composition of membership and method of invitations. To ensure a fair balance of representation, the level of interest from **Menu of Options** will be taken into account
- The establishment and purpose of any sub/working group must be agreed and minuted at a **Community Voice** meeting
- **Community Voice** will elect members to sit on sub/working groups
- Each sub/working group will have the authority to make decisions if this is within the **Terms of Reference** for the group or specific project

- Each sub/working group will give feedback to Community Voice for information purposes periodically or when deemed necessary

9. MEETINGS

- Meetings will be called by mutual agreement between NLH and Community Voice
- Meetings will be held on a regular basis but no less than six times per year
- Community Voice members can request the attendance of a department representative to respond to questions on a certain topic
- NLH Executive Management Team will take the decision as to which of its Officers will attend meetings
- Meetings will last for no more than four hours, unless prior agreement has been made with NLH Officers
- A group meeting will only be deemed to be quorate if at least 10 members are present. The majority of those present must be tenants of NLH
- Minutes shall be taken at all meetings and made available to NLH Officers and Community Voice members
- Invited guests may attend meetings in an advisory capacity or as observers. Notice shall be given to NLH Officers of proposed invited guests. Any decision will be subject to available space within the meeting venue and on the agenda
- Two tenant observers from the wider tenant population may attend a meeting in a non-voting capacity. Requests to attend shall be given to the Resident Involvement Section who will log names and devise a rota of attendance. Decisions on observer attendance will be at the discretion of the Chair of Community Voice
- Approved minutes to be published on the NLH Website

10. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM)

- An AGM must be held once every calendar year, at intervals of no more than 18 months
- Community Voice members will decide on the date
- A minimum of 28 days notice in writing of the date of the AGM will be provided to all members
- The AGM shall consider the accounts, balance sheets and the reports of the committee and auditors
- Members and Officers of Community Voice will be elected annually at the AGM

11. VOTING RIGHTS

- The committee will take decisions by consensus
- Usually the vote will be by a show of hands, or in very exceptional circumstances a ballot may be requested
- Each member will have one vote
- In the case of a tied vote, the chair will have the casting vote
- On tenant issues, only tenants can vote

12. FINANCE

- All monies granted or raised by Community Voice shall be applied to furthering its aims and objectives
- The Treasurer shall keep proper account of finances
- Community Voice will adhere to its financial regulations
- The Resources Committee will meet on a regular basis, but no less than twice a year to agree and monitor expenditure against the Community Voice budget
- Membership of the Resources Committee will comprise of (as a minimum), the Treasurer, the Chair and other Community Voice members that are acting as signatories
- NLH funding to Community Voice can include expenditure for items such as travel, training, administration, ICT, mobile phones, meeting venues and catering

13. CODE OF CONDUCT

- All members shall sign up to and conduct themselves with acceptable behaviour at all meetings in accordance with the NLH Volunteers Code of Conduct, which shall be reviewed by NLH Board from time to time. In addition, all members will work within NLH policies where appropriate
- Membership to Community Voice may be withdrawn to individuals that breach the NLH Volunteers Code of Conduct (see appendix for definition and appeals procedure)

14. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- Membership shall be open, irrespective of age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, sex, sexuality, transgender or disability
- The group recognises the value of diversity in its membership
- Members of the group will demonstrate a commitment to creating an environment that is free from harassment and other discrimination

15. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

- **Any proposed amendments to this constitution shall be put to a Community Voice meeting for consideration or will be discussed at a specific Community Voice Constitution Review Workshop.**
- **If the meeting has agreed to the proposed amendment, the proposal shall then be put before NLH Board for approval. If approval is granted, the proposed amended constitution should then be circulated to all members at least 10 days prior to the meeting at which it will be considered for adoption**
- **Any amendment shall require the approval of a majority of members present and voting**

16. DISSOLUTION

- **If the committee decides there are grounds to dissolve Community Voice, it will propose this to NLH Executive Management Team. NLH Executive Management Team shall be able to take action to remedy the situation and can choose to continue the group, either in the same or in any other format/structure which is appropriate to meeting the needs of the organisation**
- **If Community Voice is dissolved, then after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, any remaining assets will be donated to an organisation with similar aims – to be decided at the meeting**