

CHAPTER 1

SCHEDULE 2

DOVECOTES TENANT MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. Relevant equal opportunities legislation governing activities of the TMO

1.1 The TMO is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and access to all of its services for the whole of the community. In doing so it will have regard, but not exclusively, to the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Code of Conduct for Local Authority Employees
- Standing Orders - Dealing with Elected Members
- Code of Confidentiality - TMO Board Members
- Sections of the MMA
- Chapter 7 (5.1)
- Chapter 1

2. Irrespective of race, gender, age, disability, lifestyle, employment, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, ability, faith & spirituality, the TMO will seek to address the needs of all individuals and groups within the community served by the TMO, including in particular:

- people with learning or physical disabilities
- gay men and lesbians
- transsexuals
- minority ethnic groups
- people without formal qualifications
- people whose first language is not English
- single parents
- carers
- people with Aids or who are HIV positive
- ex-offenders
- those without permanent homes
- people with or at risk of mental ill health
- people with or at risk of physical ill health
- people at risk due to their age
- people not in paid employment or those on low incomes

3. Membership of the TMO

- 3.1 All lawful residents of the area aged 18 or over are eligible for membership of the TMO immediately upon being granted a tenancy in the area.
- 3.2 Residents are actively encouraged to join the TMO being informed by leaflets prominently displayed in the TMO Housing Office and the TMO registered office and by reminders in the TMO newsletter
- 3.3 On admission to membership, all members will be given a copy of the "Members Handbook" containing information about:
 - the constitution of the TMO:
 - general meetings and Board meetings and the procedure by which members can call a special general meeting
 - how members may stand for election to the Board or elect other Board members
- 3.4 Minutes of all meetings of the TMO are available for inspection by any member calling in person at the registered office during normal office hours.
- 3.5 The TMO newsletter contains information about the Board's activities including opportunities for involvement and training, and is distributed at least quarterly to all households in the area.
- 3.6 The TMO considers tenant consultation and participation to be a basic principle of good practice. Dependent on the nature of the matter in question, this will be enabled by:
 - providing all tenants in the area with information in the format required, including by way of a personal visit,
 - conducting and considering the outcome of resident surveys
 - holding consultation meetings for individual neighbourhoods in the area

Residents will be kept informed of the results of any consultation exercise or the outcome of general or open meetings through the TMO newsletter.

- 3.7 The Annual General Meeting and elections to the management Board will be notified to all members in advance. Prior to any Annual General Meeting the Board - after consultation with the membership - may take steps to ensure that the composition of the Board reflects the population of the area as a whole. This may be, for example, neighbourhood representation.

4. Breaches of policies and procedures

- 4.1 All Board members are required to adhere to the agreed Code of Conduct and Confidentiality. The Code of Conduct & Confidentiality defines acceptable behaviour, relationships between members and paid officers, and

confidentiality. Any serious breach of the Code of conduct & Confidentiality will be grounds for immediate suspension from the Board, and subject to investigation may result in removal of the member from the Board.

4.2 All complaints received regarding the conduct of individual Board members will be investigated by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson or Secretary of the TMO, who will report to the Board & recommend any necessary action to the first available Board meeting or exceptional meeting as appropriate. Members have recourse to the usual remedies made available within the terms of the Companies Act regulations.

4.3 Complaints received against the Chair, vice Chair or Secretary of the organization will be dealt with within the terms of the Code of Conduct & Confidentiality.

5. Ensuring the TMO achieves its equality and diversity objectives in delivering its services

5.1 The TMO will ensure that it achieves its equal opportunities objectives in delivering its services by way of its policies and procedures regarding:

- all tenancy/leasehold management functions
- all aspects of property allocations & lettings
- repairs & maintenance
- local office responsibilities and opening times
- rent account management
- consultation and involvement

The objectives are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

6. Action to be taken by the organisation to ensure that it fulfils its equal opportunities objectives in respect of the TMO staff and contractors working for the TMO

6.1 Day to day management of the property is carried out by staff employed by the TMO who are required to adhere to and implement the objectives of the equality and diversity policy. The Board will monitor that the policy is implemented with particular regard to:

6.1.1 employment:

- advertising of jobs

- recruitment and selection
- access to training
- career development
- job descriptions and person specifications
- health and safety
- disciplinary and appeal procedures
- conditions of service
- making reasonable adjustment to allow people with disabilities to carry out their work role

6.1.2 access to housing:

- access to the waiting list
- time spent on the waiting list
- type and condition of accommodation offered
- refusal rates & reasons

6.2 In employing individuals, contractors or agencies to carry out work or services on its behalf, the TMO will follow its procedures governing:

- advertising and tendering of contracts
- legal, statutory & best practice requirements regarding as a minimum equal opportunity, health & safety
- monitoring of the relevant policies of the contractor or agency
- selection procedures

7. Implementation

7.1 The TMO will:

- Adhere to the Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance for Social Housing Providers.
- Implement procedures for handling harassment and nuisance, which ensure prompt effective action is taken, which complies with statutory requirements
- Collect and monitor records of those groups with 9 protected characteristics of all those applying for housing; and implement changes to policy/procedures as necessary to ensure lettings reflect the profile of the community served.
- Provide services which meet the diverse needs of the community served.
- Advise contractors, consultants and other agencies working for the TMO of the obligation on them to as a minimum meet the equal opportunities commitment of the TMO; and obtain details of their own equal opportunities policy and practice.
- Monitor the provision of services to ensure that no inequalities exist and publish regular performance information.
- Take disciplinary action against any employee or member whose conduct or actions are inconsistent with the TMO's commitment to equal opportunities.

- In the composition of the TMO Board and sub committees, reflect the communities served by the TMO.
- Provide training on equality and diversity to TMO board members and staff.

8. Review & Responsibility

8.1 The TMO staff will monitor and produce a three monthly report to the Board and appropriate sub committees on the effectiveness of its policies with specific regard to assessment of need, housing allocation and harassment. The Board will have responsibility for:

- Recommending to Wolverhampton City Council the adoption of new or modified policies
- The development and implementation of procedures to meet policy requirements.
- Monitoring of statutory legislative & good practice requirements

9. Equal Opportunities Statement

9.1 In all its activities the TMO will:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

9.2 The TMO will actively promote its image to residents within the TMO area and to all external agencies and statutory bodies.

9.3 Language used in all written or other material will be plain English or its translated equivalent, and jargon or other exclusive language avoided.

9.4 The TMO is committed to achieving equal access to all facilities at the TMO Housing Office and its Registered Office and to the provision of a range of facilities which meet the needs of those with disabilities or who require translation, crèche and child-minding facilities.