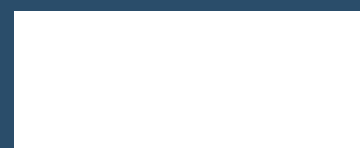


Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

Making your views count



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If you want to know more about getting involved, please e-mail us at housing@cararthenshire.gov.uk, or contact your tenant participation officer or tenant network chair using the details below.

Tenant participation officers

Janet Griffiths
(Amman and Gwendraeth)
– phone 01269 598311
Pat Evans (Llanelli)
– phone 01554 742216
Maria Evans or Christopher Lloyd
(Taf, Teifi and Towy)
– phone 01267 228933

Tenant network chairs

Brian Thomas (Amman)
– phone 01269 598311
Lady Dena Waterford (Gwendraeth)
– phone 01269 598311
Clem Thomas (Llanelli)
– phone 01554 834738
Doreen Valentine (Taf and Myrddin)
– phone 01267 231877
Lloyd Thomas (Teifi)
– phone 01239 711297
Trish Tyler (Tywi)
– phone 01550 750220

Foreword

by Councillor M Hugh Evans – Executive Board Member for Housing and Public Protection

I believe that this plan gives us a clear framework that will allow everyone involved in providing and receiving housing services to work towards improving them. It also includes the main themes of the Welsh Assembly Government's National Tenant Participation Strategy.

As a housing service we have set ourselves a number of challenging aims, as set out in our local housing strategy. Most importantly, from a tenant's viewpoint, we will make sure that all council properties meet the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard.

We know that we cannot achieve these aims without the contributions of all our partners. By publishing this plan, we are making it clear that our tenants have a central role to play in making sure that we meet the commitments we have made.

I am confident that, by achieving the aims of this plan, we will have a significant, positive effect on tenant involvement over the next three years. It will also give a clear sense of direction of what else we will need to do to make sure that we continue to provide a high-quality, customer-focused housing service.



Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

Purpose of this plan

- 1 The purpose of this plan is to make our customers even more satisfied with the services we provide. By developing this strategy, we will also meet the requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government's National Tenant Participation Strategy.

What the plan will cover

- 2 This plan will set out things that we will do to improve the opportunities for you to get involved, particularly in improving our services (we call this 'tenant involvement'). This will make sure that you have a say in what we do and how we can help develop your community and social inclusion (see figure 1 below).
- 3 We recognise that, by getting involved, you can help bring about improvements in the services we provide and feel more satisfied. We also recognise that any contact we have with you is a form of involvement. As a result, this plan will also identify ways to improve the contact between you and our housing officers and sheltered-scheme officers. This contact is important as a way of encouraging you to get involved and increasing your level of satisfaction with what we do.

Figure 1 What do you mean by 'social inclusion'?

A number of people in our communities are not able to fully take part in things we take for granted because of the range of disadvantages they face. These could be a lack of employment or skills, poor health or discrimination. Together, these disadvantages are known as 'social exclusion'. So, 'social inclusion' is the process through which we tackle social exclusion.

Who the plan is aimed at

- 4 In this plan, the term 'tenant' refers to both council tenants and leaseholders. However, we recognise that there will be times when we need to involve residents so that they can give their feedback or have a say about local issues.

Our vision

- 5 By this, we mean what we would like things to be like in the future. We have summed this up as 'Healthy, Happy and Safe in Carmarthenshire'.

Our mission

- 6 To make our vision a reality, we have set ourselves a mission:
'By working together, we will deliver modern, excellent services that will improve the health and well-being of the people of Carmarthenshire'.

How you can currently get involved

- 7 The way we involve you is very important because it puts our mission statement to the test and allows us to work in partnership with you. We listen to your comments and use these to help make our services better. There is a range of options for you to get involved, mainly by:
 - accessing information;
 - being consulted;
 - taking part; and
 - taking control.



The legal bit – your rights

The 1985 Housing Act relates to secure tenants. If you are a leaseholder, please see Appendix 2 for more information on consultation and management.

1985 Housing Act

- 8** This gives you the right to expect basic information about our housing service. We must let you know how we are going to provide this information – to do this, we use our newsletter ‘Housing News’, which we will send you every three months.
- 9** We must also consult you about managing, maintaining, improving or demolishing your homes. This does not include consulting you about rent and service charges. However, we have a duty to consult you on how and when your rent rises, and how we make service charges. This law also affects any other services we provide as well as changes to policies that may affect you.
- 10** This housing act also sets out how secure tenants have the ‘right to manage’. This means you can form a tenant management organisation to take on the responsibility for the day-to-day management of housing services where you live.

1998 Data Protection Act

- 11** This act gives people the right to access information being held about them on computer (and in some cases, paper). The Act also sets out specific rights in relation to accessing local-authority housing records.

Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI)

- 12** You may have heard of this being referred to in the past as ‘best value’. The WPI is the legal duty local authorities have under the 2000 Local Government Act to continuously improve services. As a council, we must regularly review all our activities and identify the best ways in which we can improve our services. By promoting a continuous improvement in how we provide services, we will give tenants much more influence over how we go about this. This is to make sure that our services are cost-effective, efficient and effective.

2005 Freedom of Information Act

- 13** This Act gives you the right to find out information about:
 - housing services and how we work;
 - our performance; and
 - our finances.



Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

Access to information

- 14** Making our information easily available to you is the starting point for getting you involved effectively. We recognise that you do not always want to receive all the information that is available to you but you do want to know how to get it when you want it. In line with our Welsh-language policy, we treat both English and Welsh languages equally.
- 15** Throughout your tenancy, we will regularly provide summaries of new policies and strategies through your 'Housing News' newsletter. This information adds to the information we gave you in your tenancy agreement and tenants' handbook.
- 16** We are committed to giving you information in a way that is convenient for you to access, rather than in a way that is convenient for us to produce. We have achieved a number of quality assurance awards, which will make sure that the information you receive is accurate, relevant, in plain language, clearly presented and appealing.

How we consult you

- 17** When we talk about consulting you, it is where we have an idea and want your views before deciding whether to start using the idea. We mostly consult you through your tenant network, although we do use other forms of consultation including:
- roadshows;
 - conferences;
 - surveys and questionnaires;
 - estate inspections with tenant representatives; and
 - newsletters.
- 18** The results of any consultation we carry out with you will form part of a report (where this applies) to the relevant Executive Board of County Councillors. We currently give you feedback through your tenant network about the decisions we have made.

How you can participate (take part)

- 19** We believe that you are taking part in shaping our services when we involve you in making decisions.

Our formal tenant participation system

- 20** We have a formal tenant participation system that is designed to make sure your influence begins in your local communities and works its way up to the Housing Service Advisory Panel.

Tenants' and residents' associations

- 21** These groups are very important as they help us both identify and agree solutions to issues which may be concerning tenants and residents living on estates or in sheltered schemes.
- 22** We recognise that an important role of our staff (tenant participation officers, housing officers and sheltered-scheme officers) is to continually raise awareness and interest in these groups. This is as well as developing tenants' and residents' associations in areas where there are currently none.



Tenant networks

24 We have 16 tenant inspectors who are responsible for inspecting various parts of our service. This is a very valuable source of information as it allows us to judge how 'tenant-friendly' our services currently are and how we should prioritise our service improvements.

'Task and finish' groups

25 We set up task and finish groups to deal with particular parts of the housing service. They usually only last for a short period – a recent example is the group that developed the major-work agreement.

Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Liaison Group

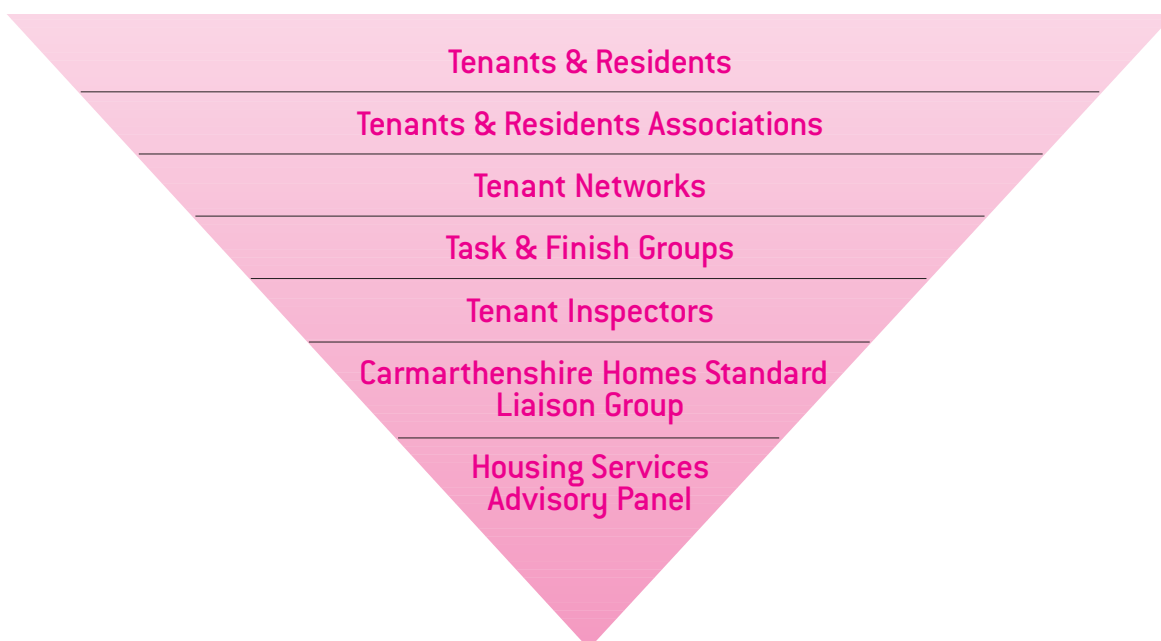
26 Bringing the condition of all council housing up to the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard is one of our main aims as a housing service over the next seven years. We believe making these improvements will have a very positive effect on the health and wellbeing of our tenants and residents.

27 The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Liaison Group is just one example of our commitment to giving you real opportunities in making decisions, which affect your home. The group includes council officers and a representative from each of the six tenant networks, and has a central role in deciding how and when we bring all council properties up to the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard.

Housing Services Advisory Panel

28 The Housing Services Advisory Panel – which includes county councillors, tenant network members and council officers – is also very important. This is because it assesses and monitors the progress we are making in bringing homes up to the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard and improving our services.

Figure 2 Tenant participation diagram



Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

Our informal system for taking part

29 We appreciate that not everyone wants to take part in more formal ways such as the groups and panels we have set up. Because of this, we also have a lot of informal opportunities for you to take part in a way that suits you.

30 You can:

- write to us;
- phone us;
- text us;
- e-mail us;
- fill in a complaint form;
- contact your local councillors;
- visit your area housing office;
- respond to our written questionnaires;
- take part in our telephone surveys;
- take part in a telephone survey carried out by the tenant inspectors;
- join in an estate walkabout with your housing officer and other tenants;
- ask your housing officer to visit you at home.

31 These may be good ways for you to get in touch if you are busy, find it difficult to leave your home or simply prefer not to join a tenants' and residents' association.

How you can take control

32 If you are a secure tenant, you and other secure tenants have the right to set up a tenant management organisation and take on the responsibility for the day-to-day management of your estate. Setting up an organisation like this is quite a long process. Because of this, we look at ways you can volunteer to take control of some of the things we do. An example of this is your tenant network, which decides how we should spend the estate improvement budget for your area.

How we make sure we provide equal opportunities

33 Our activities to involve you fully promote the principles of our equal-opportunities and Welsh-language policies. We make sure that all our activities include equal opportunities by encouraging everyone to take part, no matter what their race, religion, sex, sexuality, or wealth. We also encourage people living in supported housing to get involved. We provide signers (people who can communicate in sign language), and publications in large print, in Braille or on audio tape, and make sure that people who have problems moving about can easily access public meetings.

34 We are committed to making specific efforts to help overcome the difficulties that prevent you from taking part. We make sure that all groups know that we care about their needs and want to help them overcome any obstacles to getting involved.



How we link tenant involvement into our other strategies

35 It is clear that we should not see tenant involvement as separate from other strategies that we and the Welsh Assembly Government have developed. There are clear links between this plan and the:

- local housing strategy;
- health and wellbeing strategy;
- community strategy;
- BME (black and minority-ethnic) strategy; and
- national tenant participation strategy.

All these strategies have a common theme of involving you in a way that it is convenient to you. You can find more details of these and other strategies on our website at www.Carmarthenshire.gov.uk or by contacting your local area housing office.

36 Our tenant participation officers also regularly take part in meetings with officers from other regions across the country. These meetings help make sure that our approach to tenant involvement reflects best practice.

Making the links with Communities First

37 While this plan mainly focuses on our landlord service, we fully recognise that it plays an important and relevant role in developing your community. What we define as tenant involvement and what we define as community development have a lot in common. A very clear example of this is in the Communities First areas throughout Carmarthenshire.

38 Like our plan for involving tenants, the Communities First agenda is based on a process, which brings about change through encouraging people to work together at a local level to deal with common issues. So, it is clear that there are significant benefits in making sure that the schemes we carry out to involve you work alongside those schemes in the Communities First areas. Your tenant participation officers have already created a close working relationship with the project officers for these areas to help set up tenants' and residents' associations and work on grant applications. This is a relationship that we will develop further.

The role of your local county councillor

39 As the person chosen by voters to represent the ward you live in, your local county councillor has an active interest in making sure you are involved in improving our services. You may want to contact your councillor about any issues you need advice on that are affecting you or your local community.



Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

The standards you can expect from us

40 You can expect the following standards from us, no matter where you live in Carmarthenshire.

We will:

- give you an up-to-date list of all tenants' and residents' associations for your area;
- help you set up a tenants' and residents' association if there is enough interest in your area, and come to meetings if you ask us to;
- give tenants and tenant groups information, support and advice on housing-related issues;
- if you keep to the set conditions, provide a starter grant and funding to all tenants' and residents' associations which have a constitution;
- invite you to your local tenant network meeting every eight to 12 weeks (these will be in a different area each time);
- give you free transport to where the meeting is being held, or refund your reasonable travelling expenses;
- give you minutes (a written summary of what was discussed) of all tenant network meetings if you ask for them;
- if you are on our mailing list, give you at least seven days' notice of a tenant network meeting, and give you an agenda and minutes of the previous meeting;
- make sure tenants set the agenda for tenant group meetings;
- make sure we provide information in an easy-to-understand way and in a variety of formats;
- help arrange training and development events to meet the joint needs of tenants and staff; and
- make sure we set aside enough time to consult you.

Resources we have to help you get involved

41 We will make sure that we provide enough funding for this plan. To support and encourage you to get involved, we will give you access to the following resources.

- three full-time tenant participation officers to promote new tenant groups and support existing ones.
- starter grants of £250 for tenant groups, and funding for existing groups to help them continue their work.
- a tenant resource centre for the Llanelli tenant network.
- a tenant resource centre, which is shared by the Taff, Teifi and Towy tenant networks.
- opportunities for you to go to local and national conferences.
- for 2008, a £300,000 estate improvement budget for the county.
- for 2008, a sheltered-scheme improvement budget of £1,500 for each of our sheltered-housing schemes.



Listening to your views

42 Through our consultation in preparing this plan and reviewing the results of the 2006 tenants' survey and your previous comments, we identified a number of issues we need to deal with, including:

- giving you more feedback on surveys and questions in general;
- providing joint training where appropriate;
- making tenant involvement more of a priority;
- providing a tenant resource centre for both the Amman & Gwendraeth tenant networks;
- setting up a young persons' group, as the current tenant representatives are mainly our older tenants;
- finding an alternative to traditional meetings, such as fun days and music events;
- and
- making it clear what role your housing officers and sheltered-scheme officers have in involving you.

43 Tenant representatives on the tenant involvement strategy focus group also identified topics in which they would like more information and training, including:

- how to use information technology (computers and so on);
- tackling antisocial behaviour;
- the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard;
- recycling;
- managing estates;
- the tenant inspector service;
- and
- our service standards.



Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

Acting on your views

What we have achieved so far

- 44** We know there is still a lot of work to be done, but we have already achieved a lot through working together. We have:
- introduced six tenant networks, each with an elected executive committee, covering the whole of Carmarthenshire;
 - given tenant networks the authority to decide how to spend the estate improvement budgets each year;
 - created and supported over 20 active tenants' and residents' associations across Carmarthenshire;
 - hosted three yearly tenants' conferences;
 - created the Housing Services Advisory Panel;
 - created the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Liaison Group;
 - successfully achieved ISO 9001:2000 (an award given for organisations that can show they are consistent in the way they provide their services);
 - successfully achieved Charter Mark status (an award given for organisations that provide a high level of customer service);
 - updated our register of current tenants' and residents' associations;
 - supported tenants in going to local and national conferences;
 - supported tenants in getting three tenant-empowerment grants (funding for tenants to look at ways of improving services they receive)
 - successfully developed and put in place a major work agreement; and
 - provided tenant resource centres for a number of our Tenant Networks.

What else we will be doing

Improving our customer focus

- 45** The 2006 survey found that you are more satisfied with some of the services that we provide. However, it also found that your views have not changed or, more worryingly, that you are less satisfied with a number of other services. Because of this, we have developed a 'customer focus action plan'. This action plan sets out our commitment to identifying and improving the services, which you have said you are not satisfied with. We will include regular progress reports on the customer focus action plan in future issues of 'Housing News'.

Helping people who are considered 'hard to reach' to get involved

- 46** You have told us that we are not doing enough to involve certain under-represented groups (young people, single parents, people from a black or ethnic-minority group and people who live in our rural areas). As a result, we have set out below what we are going to do.



Tenant meetings

- 47** We keep the current meetings as informal as possible, and we hold them in venues, which you can get to easily and at times which are convenient for everyone. However, we are keen to introduce alternatives to these meetings to try to encourage 'hard-to-reach' tenants to take part.
- 48** Fun days, music events, fashion shows, cute-baby and best-kept-garden competitions, and a rural roadshow bus are a few of the suggestions that you have made in the past. We have asked your tenant participation officer and some members of your community to further develop these different options. Hopefully, this will help attract tenants who usually 'shy away' from formal meetings but are more likely to be attracted to going to an informal setting that does not necessarily associate itself with Housing Services.

Tenants living in 'scattered' housing or rural areas

- 49** We recognise that, if you live in 'scattered' housing (housing not on council estates) or rural areas (in other words, the countryside), you may find it harder to get involved because where you live can make it difficult to get to meetings. We are committed to overcoming these problems by making sure that we refund any travelling expenses that you may have to pay, and holding meetings in different venues to encourage you to take part. We are also looking to set up a 'responsible-tenant scheme'. These 'responsible tenants' would live on a rural estate or in a sheltered scheme and would be a local point of contact and source of help for our staff.

Young people

- 50** At the moment, it is mostly our older tenants who go to the formal tenant participation meetings. While we greatly value their contribution, their views and opinions do not represent everyone in the community. We know that young tenants, with or without children, are difficult to reach as they are often too busy or don't feel the way we involve them is relevant to them. Young people are often more comfortable with texting and e-mail and we are looking to use these ways of communicating more so that we can gather a wider range of views.
- 51** We are also going to examine how realistic setting up a 'young tenants' action group' (a network of young tenants between the ages of 18 to 30) will be.

Single parents

- 52** We know that one problem single parents face in getting involved is the difficulty in going to meetings because of their childcare responsibilities. We have tried to tackle this by offering crèche facilities where necessary and paying parents the costs for a registered childminder, as well as organising events at appropriate times and venues.

Black and ethnic-minority groups

- 53** We are aware that there are different ways of making decisions in different cultures. This makes it difficult for some tenants to understand or get involved effectively with the way we make decisions or the way that most tenant groups organise themselves. We also understand that different groups may have problems speaking English or Welsh, which makes it harder for them to understand how we or other tenants communicate.



Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

54 A starting point in tackling these problems is for us to keep a record of how all our tenants prefer to communicate with us, and make sure we can access these records easily and effectively. This will allow us to reach the relevant tenants when we need to. It is very important that people in all the groups we have mentioned get the message that we value their views and want them to be able to use our services easily. Communicating with these groups in a way that works for them helps us to get this message across.

Increasing the role of our housing officers and sheltered-scheme officers in involving you

- 55** We know every time we communicate with you – whether we speak to you in person or on the phone, or answer your letter, text or e-mail – that this is a form of involvement. The importance that we place on the way we communicate with you is supported by our published service standards. We are fully aware that if we get this right, we have more chance of both involving you in improving our services and making sure you are more satisfied with our services.
- 56** We have highlighted the relationship that you have with our housing officers and sheltered-scheme officers as these staff play a vital role in involving you in the services we provide. This relationship starts when they accompany you to visit your new home and fill in the necessary paperwork to start your tenancy. This is an important opportunity that we will use to make you aware of the tenant groups in your area and encourage you to go to your tenant network meetings.
- 57** We appreciate that we need to make more people aware of our housing officers and sheltered-scheme officers by making sure the officers take part in your tenant group and tenant network meetings. This will not only help you put a face to a name but we will also be able to give more informed answers to the housing management questions that you and other tenants regularly ask at these meetings.
- 58** Both our housing officers and sheltered-scheme officers are heavily involved in making sure both our estate and sheltered-scheme improvement budgets fund the improvements that you want. We recognise that this is a very good opportunity for them – with the support of your tenant participation officer – to encourage and support you in setting up tenant groups.
- 59** We will devote enough time and resources to train all our staff to make sure we provide you with a service that keeps you both informed and involved.



Aim 1 – To increase your opportunities to improve our services

What we will do	By when?
Bring in other methods of consultation for tenants who do not like to take part in formal meetings.	March 2009
Develop individual community agreements and special interest agreements.	March 2010
Set up young-tenant action groups for tenants aged 30 and under.	March 2009
Set up specific focus groups for 'hard-to-reach' tenants.	January 2009
Develop an information pack and training package on setting up and running a tenants' and residents' association.	December 2008
Review and publish amendments to the tenants' handbook.	March 2009
Create a leaseholder focus group.	January 2009
Set up a tenant resource centre for the Gwendraeth tenant network.	March 2009
Develop and support 12 new tenants' and residents' associations.	March 2010
Further develop the role of the tenant inspector service.	March 2009
Introduce a tenant involvement strategy implementation group.	March 2009

Aim 2 – To make sure we are meeting our responsibilities

What we will do	By when?
Work with tenant groups to review our tenant participation compact.	March 2009
Assess the role of tenant networks in managing the estate improvement budgets.	September 2008
Review how we provide funding to help existing tenants' and residents' associations continue their work.	June 2008
As part of delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard, measure the effects of the major-work agreement.	December 2008
Further consult with tenants on how we accompany them when they visit their homes.	September 2008
Develop a compensation scheme for when we have failed to meet our published service standards.	September 2009



Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

Aim 3 – To help develop your community and social inclusion

What we will do	By when?
Introduce 'responsible tenant' schemes in our rural areas.	March 2009
Assess whether it would be possible to extend the mediation scheme (a scheme to find agreed solutions to disputes between tenants) to focus on tenant issues.	March 2009
Develop our partnerships in our Communities First areas by developing a joint projects list.	September 2008
Set up a mobile-homes user group.	March 2010
Develop on-line housing applications and rent-statements.	March 2009
Develop on-line repair appointments.	March 2009

Aim 4 – To develop the role of our housing officers and scheme officers in involving you

What we will do	By when?
Assess whether our sheltered-scheme improvement budget is being used successfully.	March 2009
Develop an information guide and training package for Council staff on the benefits of involving tenants.	June 2009
Develop a roadshow to promote sheltered housing	March 2010
Introduce individual guides for each of our sheltered-housing schemes.	March 2009
Introduce an ongoing programme of area updates (by our housing officers) at the tenant network meetings.	June 2008
Review the success of the joint housing officer estate inspections with both local county councillors and members of tenant groups.	September 2008
Introduce housing officer 'surgeries' (local meetings where you can discuss any concerns you have with your housing officer) in our tenant resource centres and sheltered-housing schemes.	September 2009

How to tell us when things go well or wrong

62 Telling us when things go well or wrong – either by giving us a compliment or making a comment or complaint – is an important way of making sure we involve you effectively. Compliments, comments and complaints tell us important things about how you see our services. We can use this information to make services better.

63 If you have a compliment, comment or complaint, send it to our Complaints Officer, Jane Ruel, who will acknowledge that her complaints team have received it and add it to our records. You can contact Jane in the following ways.

- By phone on 01267 228385.
- By e-mailing JRuel@carmarthenshire.gov.uk.
- By writing to: Jane Ruel, Complaints Officer, 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen, SA31 1LE

How we will keep the plan on track

64 We will set up a joint tenant involvement strategy group to monitor how effective this plan is. This group will meet every three months and will include representatives from the tenant networks and staff. We will report our progress on monitoring the strategy to the Housing Services Advisory Panel and the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

65 We will regularly publicise our progress through your 'Housing News' newsletter, and fully review how we are doing each year.

66 We will also use the following 'key performance measures' to assess how well our plan is involving you.

Table 1 Key performance measures

Measure	Where we are at now	Where we want to be by 2010
Overall satisfaction with our landlord services	67%	80%
Satisfied with your neighbourhood	67%	76%
Satisfied with your opportunities to take part	50%	60%
Satisfied with how we consult you	60%	70%
Satisfied with how we communicate with you	66%	75%
Your awareness of current tenants' and residents' associations	47%	60%
Number of active tenants' and residents' associations	23	35
Number of tenants' resource centres	2	4
Number of young-tenant action groups	0	3
Number of responsible-tenant schemes	0	2

Note: The levels of tenants' satisfaction and awareness were those recorded in the full tenant survey we carried out in 2006.



Appendix 1

Your rights to get involved

There is no single law, which sets out your rights to get involved. You receive your legal rights in a number of ways, including Acts of Parliament and contracts (for example, tenancy agreements and leases). Table 1 is a summary of your main rights to receive information, be consulted, get involved and take control.

Table 2 Summary of your rights to get involved

Secure tenants	Secure tenants
<p>Under the Housing Act 1985, you have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be informed and consulted about proposed changes in managing or providing services; and • set up a tenant management organisation. 	<p>Under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, you have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive information about service charges and whether they are reasonable; • be consulted on major work; • receive information about insurance; • be consulted about managing agents; and • get recognition for a tenants' association.
	<p>Under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987, you have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appoint a new manager.
	<p>Under the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, you have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • join with other tenants to buy the freehold; or • ask for a management audit to be carried out.
	<p>Under the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, you have the right as leaseholders to collectively manage your shared areas.</p>

You can find a summary of the rights of secure tenants in 'Your Rights as a Council Tenant: The Council Tenants Charter'. The Welsh Assembly Government issued a revised version of the charter in March 2001.

There are also a number of general rights, which provide access to information under the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2005.



Appendix 2

How we prepared the plan

The plan was first developed by the tenant participation team and then discussed at a tenant focus group. The group had one tenant representative from each of the six tenant networks. To work alongside this group, we also set up a staff working group to give opinions and suggest amendments on the draft document.

The tenant participation team felt that it would be a good idea to create a draft strategy before the focus groups met. This would include as much information as possible on what is currently available on involving tenants and what we aim to achieve in the future. The tenant participation team fully understood that this draft paper would be amended after we received suggestions from tenant and staff representatives.

Role of the focus groups

Both focus groups had the task of reviewing our existing methods for involving tenants and developing a programme of consultation. The tenant focus group also carried out an assessment of our existing methods for involving and consulting tenants and receiving feedback, which looked at:

- the existing arrangements for involving tenants and how effective they are;
- creating an updated register of tenants' and residents' associations;
- carrying out a survey with the tenant networks to assess how successful they were the previous year;
- how we currently provide information;
- the consultation process; and
- training issues for both tenants and staff.

Wider consultation

We then sent the strategy to:

- all representatives of the tenants' and residents' associations;
- all executive members of the tenant networks and tenant inspectors;
- all housing services staff;
- the community development section;
- Communities First;
- the youth service;
- staff in customer-service centres; and
- the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Cymru.

Best practice

In developing the plan, we made sure it reflected best practice by reviewing many sources of good practice. These included:

- the Welsh Assembly Government's National Tenant Participation Strategy and Guidance;
- TPAS Cymru (www.tpascymru.org.uk);
and
- The Welsh Tenants Federation (WTF) (www.welshtenantsfed.org.uk).



Our plan for involving you 2008-2010

