

## RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION STATEMENT

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Saxon Weald is committed to involving residents in the way we make decisions and in empowering our communities. Residents' associations in local communities are an important part of our customers options for getting involved and having their say.
- 1.2 This policy covers all residents receiving services from Saxon Weald, including leaseholders and shared owners and aims to set out our approach to recognising and supporting residents' associations.

### 2.0 Definition and scope

- 2.1 A residents' association is formed by a group of people living in a specific geographical neighbourhood, who come together as an organisation to represent their mutual interests.
- 2.2 A residents' association can be made up of tenants, leaseholders and other residents. In some cases, the residents' association may be specific, for example to leaseholders or to residents at a particular scheme.
- 2.3 Recognised residents' associations are groups that meet the Saxon Weald requirements set out in this statement.

### 3.0 Legal and regulatory requirements

#### Legal requirements

- 3.1 The recognition of residents' associations is in Schedule 19 of the Housing Act 1980, as amended by the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and 1987.

#### Regulatory requirements

- 3.2 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide opportunities for involvement.

Residents' associations are just one of a range of engagement options for customers.

## 4.0 Statement

4.1 We require residents' associations to meet reasonable standards for formal recognition and eligibility for grants. It is essential that formally recognised groups do not exclude people for reasons of age, disability, race and ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender.

4.2 Residents' associations wishing to be formally recognised must show annually that they are democratic, accountable and meet the following criteria:

- have a written constitution that is approved by Saxon Weald
- demonstrate an active involvement and wide membership, for example well attended open meetings
- have membership clearly open to all potential members in their catchment area and demonstrated by distributing newsletters, leaflets etc. encouraging everyone to join
- make minutes of meetings open, public and available
- demonstrate and promote equality and diversity
- hold regular meetings including an annual general meeting (AGM) with a quorum, annual reports and democratic elections
- have a code of conduct
- keep a proper record of accounts and present them at the AGM
- send AGM minutes, reports and accounts to Saxon Wealds main contact at least two weeks prior to the AGM

4.3 Residents' associations not meeting the recognition criteria will not be recognised or acknowledged by Saxon Weald.

If Saxon Weald wish to withdraw recognition from an association, we will provide six months' notice of withdrawal.

### **Annual reviews and continued recognition**

4.4 Each year, residents' associations will have participation, accountability, activities and accounts reviewed by Saxon Weald using the recognition criteria. The recognition of the group will be renewed provided that

- the residents' association income has been used for the purpose intended
- the residents' association has not been subject to a vote of no confidence or official complaint
- the residents' association can demonstrate that decisions have been made democratically and in the interests of the wider membership
- the residents' association has not been in breach of their own code of conduct

- 4.5 Additionally, recognition may be suspended as a result of disputes between two or more groups, between residents' groups and Saxon Weald, or between committee members of the same group. This is to allow time to investigate the cause of the dispute and to make recommendations to resolve it.
- 4.6 Where residents' associations fall short of any of the above criteria, Saxon Weald will, where appropriate, agree a support and action plan with the committee to help them to achieve the required standards.

### **Support offered by Saxon Weald to Resident Associations**

- 4.7 Housing and Scheme Managers are the main point of contact for support and advice to resident associations. The Customer Experience team will provide advice and support to staff when setting up or working with resident associations. (See the guide to setting up residents association).

## **5.0 Data protection, information exchange and confidentiality**

- 5.1 All information regarding residents' associations will be dealt with in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). All information is stored securely and will not be disclosed unless the members have given their consent.

## **6.0 Monitoring and review**

- 6.1 The management of residents' associations will be monitored for standard and compliance purposes on a regular basis by the relevant Regional Housing/Scheme Manager.
- 6.2 This statement will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure that it reflects the needs of our customers, good practice, and changes to legislation or regulation.

## **7.0 Equality and diversity**

Equality and diversity affect all aspects of our business and, as such, its principles are integral to everything we do. As a landlord and an employer, Saxon Weald aims to recognise and respond positively to people's differences, while providing equality of opportunity in relation to the services and careers we provide and support.

This means that no person or group of people, either working for Saxon Weald or seeking housing, services, employment or contracts from us, will be treated less favourably because of their or their partner's, family's, friend's or associated person's protected characteristics, which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. This includes individuals either already serving on or applying to join our Board.