

ITEM No ...2....

REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13 JANUARY 2020

REPORT ON: DUNDEE FEDERATION OF TENANTS' ASSOCIATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019 - 2021

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO: 15-2020

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To make the Committee aware of Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations (DFTA's) Development Plan 2019-2021.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the attached Development Plan.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The Council has a longstanding and successful relationship with the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations (DFTA). The DFTA assists the Council in its statutory duties for tenant participation in housing services and in delivering the Tenant Participation Strategy.

4.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out the legal requirements for tenant participation in Scotland. The Council, as a landlord has a number of legal duties regarding tenant participation which include:

- To develop and implement a Tenant Participation Strategy.
- To maintain a register of tenant organisations and to set up arrangements for the registration of tenant organisations.
- To consult with Registered Tenants Organisations (RTO's) and individual tenants on a range of issues – housing policies (changes to policies and procedures), housing conditions and other related services e.g. anti-social behaviour, environmental issues.

4.3 The Council recognises the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations (DFTA) as the largest representative body for tenants groups in the city and as such is a Registered Tenants' Association (RTO). The Council provides grant funding and support to the DFTA to help it to be an effective voice for tenants and to ensure that we work together in partnership to deliver the Tenant Participation Strategy.

4.4 One action contained within the Tenant Participation Strategy which was agreed with the DFTA is to "Review the funding agreement between Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations and the Council to implement an outcome based contract." The rationale behind this action was that the Council had not had a service level agreement or outcome agreement with the DFTA which was out of line with relationships with some other voluntary organisations which the Council funds within the City.

4.5 It was agreed that this action would be taken forward by the DFTA Executive Committee with independent support and advice from the Tenants' Information Service (TIS). This work culminated in the production of the DFTA's Development Plan 2019/21 which is attached at Appendix 1.

- 4.6 The DFTA's Development Plan 2019/21 sets out how the DFTA will work together with the Council and deliver value for money to the tenants it represents. The Action Plan contained within the business plan has set measurable outcomes and its delivery will be supported by staff within the Housing & Communities Service.
- 4.7 The DFTA adopted the Development Plan in May of 2019 and have started to implement the action plan since June. Their achievements since June include:
- At the AGM in June, a new Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer were put in place. Three new Executive Members were gained.
 - 47 new members were gained this year within the general membership.
 - Nine training spaces were given to DFTA Executive Members in Committee Skills and Tenant Participation.
 - Themed general meetings are arranged five times a year. Recent themes have been Action Planning, Energy Advice (presentation by DEEAP), Tenant Safety and the Rent Consultation.
 - Topics planned for future general meetings include Cyclical Maintenance, Changes to Tenancy Rights and Anti-social Behaviour.
 - DFTA members contribute to various partnership groups including the Best Value Review Group, Anti-Social Strategy Focus Group, Scrutiny Panel and several are trained tenant inspectors.
 - Meet quarterly with the Neighbourhood Services Convenor and Neighbourhood Service Managers.
 - The DFTA Annual Report was produced in June 2019
 - The DFTA Code of Conduct and Constitution were revised in June 2019 (and code of conduct signed by all current members).
 - A Consultation Policy is now in place with Dundee City Council.
 - Shower Charge removal - DFTA had been in discussions with DCC to request the removal of this charge and are satisfied that this has been achieved to mean a fairer deal for all tenants.
 - Rent Consultation - DFTA help every year with the annual Rent Consultation process. This year this involved door knocking, speaking to tenants in Dundee House as well as at their General Meeting and through the RTO's (Registered Tenant Organisations)
 - Invited all RTO Chairs to discuss the Rent Consultation to encourage a response from each RTO, also to see how they could work together with the DFTA more effectively.
 - Made a pledge with Recovery Friendly Dundee to support those in recovery.
 - DFTA took part in the tenant event "How Your Rent is Spent" in partnership with the Council in June where the Chair and Treasurer gave a presentation on the new DFTA Business Plan.
 - Attended the World Community Development Conference in Dundee in June.
 - Had three tenant representatives at the Tenant Information Service Conference, and at the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland Conference.
 - A DFTA Development Day was held in May with a theme of 'Working Together' and included tenants and RTO's. This was facilitated by independent support from Tenant Information Service.
 - The DFTA Campaigned to support tenant's safety, encouraging tenants to allow access for the new fire safety system and gas safety checks.
 - DFTA participated in three Safety Roadshows in City Square.
 - DFTA attended housing events in Rapid Rehousing and with Tenant Information Service.
 - DFTA undertook a trial of electric trikes in order to find out more about sustainable transport options, particularly for those who are unable to ride bikes.
 - Took part in the Scottish Housing Day (18th Sep) where the theme was 'Housing as a Human Right'. Attended Cross Party Housing Working Group discussion and paper presentation in the Scottish Parliament.

4.8 Committee is asked to note the attached Development Plan and acknowledge the hard work and commitment that the DFTA have given to this exercise.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Management Team were consulted in the preparation of this report and agree with its contents.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Elaine Zwirlein
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 3 December 2019

Appendix 1



Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations

Development Plan 2019/2021
May 2019



Contents

- 1 Executive Summary
- 2 Our Organisation
- 3 Our People
- 4 Our Activities
- 5 Our Challenges
- 6 Our Plan

Action Plan

Executive Summary

This Development Plan provides a brief history of the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations (DFTA), describes its current structure, activities and funding base, and outlines the Federation's aspirations, aims and strategic direction over the next three years (2019-2021). Particularly, it focuses on how the DFTA will:

Work in partnership with Dundee City Council and other relevant regional and national organisations to influence Housing Policy and Services for the benefit of tenants and service users.

The Federation celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2017 and whilst remaining mindful of the vision that led to its foundation in 1987, is conscious that tenants priorities and aspirations have changed as housing and environmental standards have improved. Throughout its history, the Federation has developed a co-ordinated, participatory and partnership working approach with Dundee City Council (DCC) to influence the implementation of improved housing standards for tenants, to advocate on behalf of tenants and tenant groups, and to promote tenants' rights to be consulted and involved in decisions that affect them.

The Development Plan lays the foundation for the continuation of this work over the next three years (2019-2021) with communities across Dundee, recognising current opportunities and challenges. Strategic aims, objectives and activities are detailed in our enclosed Action Plan (Pages 12 to 19).

Through efficient and effective planning and management of resources, with the support of our Development Worker, and in partnership with Dundee City Council, DFTA will continue to: -

- Influence the Housing Services of Dundee City Council for the benefit of tenants by communicating issues of concern and representing the views of tenants.
- Promote good working relationships and communications with the Council on matters which affect their homes and communities.
- Communicate effectively with Member Associations, individual members and all tenants / service users ensuring value for money and financial accountability.
- Ensure appropriate governance, policies and procedures are adhered to by both DFTA and DCC and that decision making is clear, accurate, gives adequate time for consultation and is accessible to all.
- Ensure equal opportunities and that all tenants are given appropriate opportunities to participate. Ensure barriers to effective participation are removed arising from ethnicity, location, disabilities etc.
- Contribute to the development of tenant participation and tenant scrutiny practices and approaches throughout the city.
- Recognise that effective tenant participation involves a partnership between DFTA, DCC and Councillors and should be based on mutual trust and respect towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services.
- Promote higher levels of involvement in Local Community Planning Partnerships
- Support DFTA Member Groups to develop further and encourage the setting up of new RTO's (Registered Tenant Organisations, as registered with DCC) and tenants' groups.

- Ensure that information is available to all tenants in appropriate formats to ensure accessibility for all and in plain, jargon free language and is given within appropriate timescales.
- Be informed about national housing policy and disseminate relevant information to our members.
- Develop links and effective working relationships with other local and national organisations with similar aims and objectives.
- Identify any training resources and support required for members.
- Further develop and grow the DFTA organisation to become more representative and efficient as detailed in our Action Plan.

Our Organisation

History

The DFTA (/The Federation) was formed in 1987, with the mission ***“To Promote Dundee Tenants’ and Residents’ Rights and the Maintenance and Improvement of their Housing Conditions, Amenities and Environment”***.

At that time, key priorities were: Campaigning for an effective and efficient repairs service; Achieving acceptable housing standards; Regeneration; Promoting rights for Tenant Participation.

Key legislation since the DFTA’s formation, including the *Housing (Scotland) Act 2001*, the introduction of the *Scottish Housing Quality Standard*, the *Scottish Social Housing Charter* and the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2018* has widened and modified the Federation’s focus and sphere of influence.

Throughout over 30 years of existence, the Federation has influenced a wide range of policy areas with Dundee City Council – particularly those issues most closely related to our members’ interests. Our involvement in Working Groups on housing and related issues has ensured the tenant’s voice is heard in developing strategic policies. Our full participation has brought benefits to tenants and residents in the form of improved services and to the Council in providing a ‘real life’ view of how their services impact on service users.

Structure & Resources

The business of DFTA is managed by an Executive Committee (EC) and Office Bearers, elected annually by its members from nominations proposed by member groups and individual tenants. The Federation is fully funded through an annual grant from Dundee City Council.

Independent support is also available to the Federation from the Tenants Information Service and the DFTA have a long history of working with this service.

These resources and access to independent support and advice allow the Federation to undertake a range of activities: participating in meetings and discussions to influence housing and community services; providing information and consulting with our members; feeding back members’ views and concerns to Dundee City Council as landlord.

The Executive Committee, supported by staff, is responsible through the Treasurer for planning and monitoring the annual budget and expenditure. Financial reports are provided at monthly EC meetings and Annual Accounts are presented to the membership, for approval, at the Annual General meeting.

Aims, Vision and Values

The DFTA Constitution outlines the aims of the organisation: ***Representing and promoting Dundee residents' and tenants' rights and the maintenance and improvement of their housing conditions, amenities and environment.***

The Federation recognises that enabling active tenants associations to provide meaningful and effective opportunities for their members to participate, is the heart of our mission. Individual tenants and tenant groups with skills, influence, networks and local connections are an essential ingredient in increasing participation in local decision making and influencing the community planning process.

DFTA seeks to support Dundee City Council tenants so that they can play a full part in decisions about their housing and environment. Through joint working and partnership approaches we aim to support tenants and residents groups within local communities to have a voice and to participate fully in creating local solutions to local issues.

Our People

We are volunteers who are interested in getting involved in a range of ways to make a positive difference to the Housing Services delivered in the communities we represent.

Our Committee

In working towards achieving the DFTA mission, it is essential that the activities and operations of the Federation are understood and shared by members and partners. Our membership includes a diverse variety of local views and perspectives.

The Executive Committee (EC) is committed to its members' continued development. With staff support the EC has the opportunity to regularly discuss how the EC is progressing: ensuring reporting back mechanisms are effective; holding an induction session as its first meeting following an AGM to assist newly appointed committee members to 'settle in' (including the provision of an Induction Pack), support and train office bearers as required and identifying training and development opportunities for committee members throughout the year.

As part of the current Action Plan, the EC is considering the introduction of a 'buddying' system to encourage members to share experiences, and will review succession planning for 2019/2020 to ensure access to key skills are shared and strengthened.

Our Members

DFTA is the only umbrella organisation for tenant groups in Dundee. Our focus is tenant participation and the promotion of this.

The Federation holds five General Meetings each year, including the Annual General Meeting. These are open to all members. General Meetings are often in the format of a

presentation followed by a question and answer session and gives members the opportunity to be get the information they require and also to be involved in shaping the work priorities of the organisation. The EC also meet monthly, and our EC members sit on a variety of other groups which feed into this process- currently these include Neighbourhood Services (DCC Management) meetings, Conveners Meeting, Best Value group, Scrutiny Panel and an Anti-Social Forum.

We recognise that the nature of tenant and community participation is changing and that the Federation needs to offer a wider range of engagement opportunities to match individual tenant's preferences. Further detail on this is included in our Action Plan (Pages 12-19)

Our Partners

DFTA has a strong and long established working relationship with Dundee City Council Neighbourhood Services (formerly Housing Department, and now includes the Community Regeneration Team - these staff support the DFTA and the RTO's). Our Action Plan details the future priorities and opportunities for the continuation and development of this partnership working approach.

Our Activities

DFTA is concerned with social housing regulation, tenant participation and customer involvement in self-assessment of housing services, value for money and community issues such as addressing anti-social behaviour, estates and the environment. We also expect to become further involved in the community planning process.

The Federation has many years of experience with tenants groups and of tenant participation at all levels - working within local areas or communities to raise relevant issues and commenting on policy initiatives and consultations nationally. We share experience throughout our member organisations by providing networking opportunities, training and information events.

DFTA currently represents eight local tenants and residents associations as well as additional areas of the city through our Independent Representatives – individual tenants from areas where there is no established tenant group, our Constitution allows for 4 of these members. Working with key partners and stakeholders we have been significant in influencing the improvement, development and delivery of housing and community services in Dundee.

We do this by

- attending regular meetings with senior Housing and Neighbourhood Services staff and with Elected Representatives
- being fully involved in the consultative process
- advocating on behalf of tenants and service users
- giving information and reporting feedback from tenants on particular issues as these arise, often from our events and General Meetings.
- monitoring the Council's performance on a variety of topics.

We offer a wide range of services and support to our members and outreach activities to the wider community. These include community development, tenant participation, customer scrutiny, policy review, regeneration initiatives, consultations and other practical support.

Our Challenges

DFTA Executive Committee and its members are committed to identifying the risks we face across everything we do. These risks and challenges include: governance, external factors, regulatory or compliance conditions, financial and operational issues.

Pressure for scarce resources - Finance

In the current financial climate, resources for the Council and voluntary organisations are under pressure. The Federation strives to ensure that it represents great value for money by delivering and monitoring work activities in line with our Action Plan and reporting on our progress to our membership.

Pressure for scarce resources - Members

In common with many other organisations, DFTA is in competition for members and for volunteers to take an active role within a local Tenant's Group or to serve on the Executive Committee.

One of our biggest challenges is in the changing nature of tenant participation and community involvement. People are seeking to become involved in a range of ways, both formally through committees and informally through ad hoc activity. Short-life involvement, the use of technology and e-participation means that methods of engagement have changed dramatically since The Federation was established over 30 years ago.

Working with housing and community regeneration staff as part of Dundee City Council Neighbourhood Services, we recognise the need to be innovative and creative, to capture the imagination of those who may be interested in volunteering their time and to ensure our structures are flexible and adaptable enough to attract individuals to our organisation. In partnership with others, DFTA will seek to develop relationships and engagement with under-represented groups.

The Federation also recognises that the Executive Committee needs to seek solutions to enable people who have additional support needs and want to engage, to have the opportunity to be involved in a way that enables them to have a say and use their time effectively. Through our experienced staff and partnership working with Dundee City Council, we are confident that we have the skills and enthusiasm to make this happen.

Our Plan

In consultation with our members and with Dundee City Council Neighbourhood services, and following the DFTA Executive Committee Business Planning Review and recent Development sessions, the following strategic aims have been agreed for the next three years. The aims and the activities associated with these aims are included in our Action Plan.

1. To influence the Housing Services of Dundee City Council, through working in mutual partnership, for the benefit of tenants and service users, thereby assisting Dundee City Council to meet statutory requirements.
2. To develop tenant participation and tenant scrutiny practices and approaches throughout Dundee City.
3. To influence the national housing policy agenda and feedback relevant information to our members
4. To support DFTA Member Groups to grow and develop and encourage the setting up of new groups.
5. To communicate effectively with Member Associations, individual members and all tenants / service users, ensuring value for money.
6. To develop and grow the DFTA organisation.
7. To develop links and effective working relationships with other local and national organisations with similar aims and objectives.

Equal Opportunities

DFTA is fully committed to and proactive in promoting equal opportunities. We work to ensure that there are no practical barriers in place that would result in a member not being able to take part. We wish to increase engagement with hard to reach groups. The EC will work with Dundee City Council to take part in equalities training and this Business Plan will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

1. To influence the Housing Services of Dundee City Council, through working in partnership, for the benefit of tenants and service users, thereby assisting Dundee City Council to meet statutory requirements.

Action	Comments	Measurement	Timescale/Target
1.1 Consult with RTO Members and tenants to identify their priorities to take forward with Housing & Communities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an Annual Consultation and Report • Gathering views at quarterly general meetings • Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes.(STAR) • Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions.(STAR) 	By July 2019 Quarterly 90% 90%
1.2 Work with the Council to update, monitor and review the Tenant Participation Strategy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a revised Tenant Participation Strategy • Discuss quarterly updates of the Tenant Participation Strategy and raise any issues at quarterly meetings with the Council/Convenor 	March 2020 Quarterly
1.3 Agree a programme of consultation and participation annually with the Council reflecting the priorities of our members	This may include eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate walkabouts • Capital programme • ASB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication of DFTA priorities to the Council 	July 2019, and during NSMT meetings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Etc <p>An approach to this might be through an annual conference/Seminar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement of a consultation programme with the Council (including tenant scrutiny) 	By September 2019- Consultation Policy in place August 2019
1.4 Promote consultations undertaken by the Council	Other consultations should be defined as a result of 1.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of consultations responded to • Number of activities to promote consultations- • 1 undertaken with DCC- Tenants Event 'how your rent in spent' June 2019 • Attended 2 Tenant Safety events (City Square, June and Oct) • 3 planned during rent consultation (Dundee House, East and West) • Percentage of RTO's responding to rent consultation • Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes. (STAR) 	<p>Rent 1 by Nov 2019</p> <p>4 to date</p> <p>3 more planned</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>78%</p>

2. To promote tenant participation and tenant scrutiny throughout Dundee City.

Action		Measurement	
2.1 Take part in scrutiny activities	Refer to 1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote opportunities for tenant scrutiny and participation DFTA are on the scrutiny panel Tenant participation encouraged at the General Meetings- held in September (theme of Tenant Safety) and November (Rent Consultation) and via social media Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes. 	No. posts media promotions- various on Facebook and Twitter Number of tenants- c30 at general meetings 90%

3. To influence the national housing policy agenda and feedback relevant information to our members

Action		Measure	
3.1. Consult with members and respond to/attend national policy events/consultations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend national policy /housing events -Rapid Rehousing Event, Edinburgh August 2019 -Scottish Housing Day 'Housing as Human Right' Paper launch, Scottish Parliament, September 18th 2019 Report outcomes to tenants through bulletins/newsletters/social media/website and annual report- Annual Report Produced June 2019 Newsletter due November 2019 	Number attended 2 Number of reports made 1

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction of membership with consultation/ information provided (members survey) 	90%
--	--	---	-----

4. To support DFTA Member Groups to grow and develop and encourage the setting up of new groups.

Action		Measure	
4.1 Increase number of RTO/individual members of the DFTA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of RTO's Focus on Glens area Potential in Charleston Number of new individual members 44 	<p>Encourage New RTO's- 0 to date. 1 in progress in Dryburgh.</p> <p>Target: 100 new individual members (per year)- 44 so far</p>
4.2. Improved knowledge and skills of RTO's/individual members	This might include e.g. diversity, budgeting etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of information sessions Training sessions delivered <p>Committee Skills training- 3 members attended this- August 2019 DFTA Training Session held by Tenant Information Service, September 2019, attended by 5 EC members Minute taking/Secretary training sought</p>	<p>8 training spaces filled</p> <p>2</p>
4.3. RTO's meet satisfactory standards of governance	Work with Community Regeneration Team to achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As assessed by Community Regeneration Team 	Encourage RTO's to achieve this- Balmoral closure in

	this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with closure of Balmoral tenants group 	progress
4.4. Agree a strategy for involvement of RTO's/members in LCPPs	Work with CR Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement of strategy Number of RTO's represented 	To investigate how to involve tenants in this- some DFTA EC members involved
4.5. Agree a plan to expand diversity of RTO's and include hard to reach groups	Should be agreed with CR Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact with representative from Traveling Community made 	Date to be agreed

5. To communicate effectively with Member Associations, tenants, service users and the Council.

Action			
5.1. Improve Communication with our members and tenants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of newsletter- June done, Nov due Attendance at community events Use of social media Satisfaction with communication (DFTA membership survey) Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions. 	<p>3 per year- 1 done</p> <p>Number attended- 1 attended (June tenants event)</p> <p>Number of posts/followers</p> <p>90%</p> <p>90%</p>
5.2. Review of the DFTA's Website		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web-site becomes operational 	By August 2019

		Discussion that website may not be necessary- social media and use of DCC website and promotional items currently used instead.	
5.3. Review members database and ensure data security		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete review by October • Publish privacy notice • Social Media Strategy 	Completed August Completed August Due, not priority task

6. To develop and grow the DFTA organisation and ensure good governance.

Action			
6.1. Strengthen the membership of the DFTA Executive		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the training and development needs of the DFTA Executive Committee • Recruit new members to the DFTA Executive Committee • Deliver training/development in line with needs identified • Develop an induction programme for new members • Overall satisfaction of members with the DFTA (membership Survey) 	Annually in November/December (first done Dec 2018) Aim for 100% of office bearers and a target to recruit 1 new EC member per year- 3 have been recruited , Vice Chair also put in place July 2019 2 undertaken 90%

6.2 Prepare an annual budget and assessment of resource requirements and submit this to the Council		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget submitted • Budget is being reviewed and updated expected October/Nov 	
6.3 Demonstrate good financial governance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a budget progress report to quarterly general meetings • Present audited accounts to the council • Produce an annual report for the Council and our members at our Annual General Meeting 	<p>Treasurers report to be given at Annual/General Meeting, and monthly at EC meetings</p> <p>Annually at the AGM in June</p> <p>June each year- done June 2019</p>
6.4 Demonstrate good administrative governance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our policies and procedures • Code of Conduct Review- signed by all members at July EC meeting. • Constitutional Review- undertaken at June AGM. 	<p>By March 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>June 2020</p>
6.5 Demonstrate accountability to our membership		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an annual satisfaction survey with our members 	Complete by August 2019

7. To develop links and effective working relationships with other local and national organisations with similar aims and objectives.

