



Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

THE MISSION

***“To Promote Council Tenants’ Rights and the
Maintenance and Improvement of their Housing
Conditions, Amenities and Environment”***

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



This has been my first year as chairperson and it has been an extremely busy one. As always, those on the DFTA committee attend many meetings to put forward tenants' views on a variety of issues affecting all council tenants. Although most of the Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) in Dundee affiliate we still have a small percentage that do not. It is our genuine wish that we can remedy this in the forthcoming year as a united approach is always the most effective. The following report highlights the main activities we are involved in. Some of these are ongoing and while progress is sometimes slow we feel the outcomes are worth waiting for. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the tenants and RTOs who have given their support and participated in the many meetings we have held.

Rena Smith

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) Root & Branch Review
Dundee City Council's SHQS Root & Branch Review of its "delivery plan" is still work in progress.

Best Value Review Working Group

Two representatives from DFTA sit on the Best Value Review Working Group.

Repairs/Review of the Repairs Partnership Agreement

Monitoring the repairs service is an ongoing piece of work; however the revised Partnership Agreement should be concluded in June/July this year.

Anti – Social Behaviour Strategic Working Group

Committee members attend these meetings regularly and are kept up to date with progress. We are not actively involved at this time.

Tenant Participation

We continue to actively encourage and support wider tenant involvement in the shaping and development of housing services.

Open Space Maintenance

This has been integrated into the Repairs Partnership Agreement.

Convenor of Housing

These meetings allow us to take concerns directly to the Housing Convenor for full and frank discussions on issues that can have an impact on tenants.

DFTA Information

Executive Committee

Rena Smith (Chairperson)	Balmoral Tenants & Residents Association
Margaret Scott (Vice-Chairperson)	Mill O'Mains Tenants & Residents Association
Rita Smart (Treasurer)	Forthill Tenants Association
Graeme Lawrence (Secretary)	Woodside – Independent
Eddie Simpson	Rockwell Tenants & Residents Association
Jessie Gault	Blackness Area Residents Association
Robert Law	Whorterbank Area Tenants & Residents Association
Lana Coffey	St Mary's Association of Residents & Tenants
Bill Jordan	Broughty Ferry Road - Independent
Morag Hutcheson	Mill O'Mains Tenants & Residents Association
Jim Cochrane	Blackness Area Residents Association
Peter Waugh	Rockwell Tenants & Residents Association

We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to Committee Members who have served on the Executive since the last Annual Report 2008/2009 but have since left – Eunice Henderson & Agnes Campbell

How the DFTA is funded

Financial Support to DFTA - Dundee City Council (DCC).
Financial Support for Independent Advisor (Kirsty Wells)
(Tenants Information Service) - DCC
DFTA Staff - DCC

Staffing

Development Worker
Part-time Senior Clerical

DFTA'S PRIORITIES FOR 2010/11

Scottish Housing Quality Standard Root & Branch Review



Just to remind everyone that on 29 April 2005, Dundee City Council (DCC) submitted a “delivery plan” called the Scottish Delivery Plan (SDP) on how it proposed to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). This is the minimum standard that Dundee City Council must achieve by 2015. The Council’s plan involved looking well ahead, making judgements about what is needed, when it will be needed and how this would be paid for.

DFTA along with other council tenants have been involved in the Council’s Root & Branch Review of the delivery plan since 2008 to see if this is working as planned or whether changes will have to be made. These meetings are also attended by DCC’s Housing Strategy Manager, Housing Investment Manager, Regeneration Team Leader. Other council officers attend as required i.e. Finance.

The work undertaken with the focus group on the Root & Branch Review of the Delivery Plan is still work in progress.

This is a major piece of work for tenants as information on council housing stock, what needs done to bring it up to the SHQS, the projected cost of this based on financial assumptions over the next twenty years, is often difficult to understand, work through and envision what will be needed in the future. The Council has been very up front and has detailed its financial situation and concerns around some of the areas which need addressed e.g. the current shower programme, door entry systems, multis, new build & exemptions.

The current shower programme is a very complex issue which needs to be addressed by tenants. The Dundee Standard had included showers over baths as standard for everyone; however the council’s finances did not allow for this. The Council then made a decision that any tenant could apply for a shower at a cost of £5 or £10 a week (dependent on shower type) in addition to their weekly rent. This cost would apply for the life span of the property. For those on housing benefit this will be included. Because it is for the life time of the property this throws up a lot of concerns e.g. how lettable the property would be, could the next tenant afford the rent with charges, would it have to be someone on benefits.

Apart from this, we have reservations about the cost being for the life of the property as this works out at a great deal of money over the years. We want to see some form of fairness in this as many tenants cannot afford to put a shower in if they are on a low wage but not eligible for benefits and many tenants already have a shower or would prefer to put their own in because of cost. These are some of the things that concern us and we want to involve tenants in trying to address what is a very complex issue.

Progress with the Review and consultation on rent setting for 2010/2011 was delayed, due to council staff working on identifying whether Derby Street multis should be retained as tenants in these blocks wanted to continue staying there. After in-depth financial investigation it was decided that the blocks should stay in the demolition programme. Some multis, Pitalpin and Lochee multis have been brought back into the SHQS programme and are to get security improvements, kitchen and bathrooms.

Dundee faces problems because of multi housing having to be removed as this is very expensive and the historical debt from prudential borrowing is being picked up by tenants. 39 pence in the pound of tenants rents goes towards this with the remaining 61 pence paying for other things. The 39 pence is expected to go up to 41 or 42 pence in the next few years and it is foreseen that there will be a higher level of debt up to 2017 there after things are expected

to get better. This is the state of play at this time although this could change over the next few months. The submission date for the revised delivery plan is now June 2010.

Flats in the Whitfield Skarne blocks may have a new lease of life as Angus Housing Association has shown some interest in these as they are next to Skarne blocks already owned by the Association. Discussions between the Council and Angus Housing Association are currently taking place.

The Council's Housing Department and DFTA will be hosting a Tenants Conference, possibly in May/June 2010 to seek council tenants opinions on recommendations from the focus group, and to find out what tenants want to see happening in the future.

CAPITAL CONTRACTS

The project plan and key dates are up to date although capital investment costs for the multis have to be worked out.

BEST VALUE REVIEW

The Scottish Housing Regulator inspected Dundee City Council in August 2008 and in light of the findings from the Regulators Report in March 2009, the council developed an improvement plan to demonstrate how it was going to improve areas of concern.

A Best Value Working Group was set up to monitor and guide the implementation of the plan until re - inspection of the housing services in 2011. Representauiou on this group consists of two representatives from DFTA along with two independent tenants, the Chief Executive, Director of Housing, Director of Contract Services, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Cross Party representatives of the Council, Trade Union Representative. These meetings were initially held monthly but are now held every two months.

Meetings and presentations to date have covered the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, gas servicing procedures, draft revised Repairs Partnership Agreement, Available Now, Housing Need Demand and Affordability, Lettings IT, Relets, Lean Service Review on Void Management amongst others. The improvement plan and Best Value Review minutes can be viewed on the Council's website.

OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE (OSM)

This is now part of the new revised Partnership Agreement and will be monitored through the Repairs Partnership Board meetings.

UPDATE ON CURRENT WORK OF DFTA

DFTA's Executive Committee members are involved in an extensive and diverse range of work with representatives on the following:-

Housing Convenor Meetings
Housing Department Management Team Meetings
Repairs Development Team Working Group
Repairs Partnership Board & Open Space Maintenance
Best Value Working Group
Tenant Regulation & Inspection Advisory Group
Tenants Information Service
Anti-Social Behaviour Strategic Working Group with representatives from -
(Dundee Families' Project)
(Mediation Project)
(Supporting People)
(Anti Social Behaviour Team)
Community Safety Partnership
Tayforth Regional Network Forum

INDIVIDUAL TENANT SUPPORT

We continue to deal with concerns and complaints from tenants.

DFTA – REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS IN MEMBERSHIP

Adamson/Elder Tenants Association	Hindmarsh Tenants & Residents Association
Balmoral Tenants & Residents Association	Mill-O-Mains Tenants & Residents Association
Blackness Area Residents Association	Rockwell Tenants & Residents Association
Charleston Tenants & Residents Association	St. Mary's Association of Tenants & Residents
Craigie Residents Association	Whitfield Area Forum for Tenants
Derby Street Multis Group	Whitfield Avenue Semis Tenants Association
Forthill Tenants Association	Whitfield Rise Action Group
Gardens Area Residents Association	Whorterbank Area Tenants & Residents Association

The above groups are supported by the Housing Department's Tenant Participation Officers (TPOs) who provide invaluable advice, assistance and ongoing support to the RTOs they work with.

Tenant Participation Officers are in alphabetical order, Mary Docherty – West District Office, Andy McBride – East District Office, Nicola McGinty – West District Office and Helen Meek – East District Office.

GENERAL MEETINGS AND AGM APRIL 2009 TO MARCH 2010

28 April 2009 – Update on the Council's Root & Branch Review of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan & The Scottish Housing Regulators Report.

23 June 2009 - Annual General Meeting & Election of Committee.

27 October 2009 – Progress with the Council's Root & Branch Review – Update for Tenants.

17 November 2009 - Tenants Input into Rents for 2010/2011.

23 February 2010 - This meeting covered housing's letting/allocation policy and the process used by the Anti Social Behaviour Team when addressing complaints.

DFTA once again take this opportunity to extend a special thank you to all RTOs and their Representatives and to Individual Tenants for their continued support. We would also like to extend thanks to all speakers who came along to our General Meetings, to Kirsty Wells, our Independent Advisor from TIS and to the Convenor of Housing.

DFTA LINKS WITH OTHERS

Aberdeen Federation of Tenants & Res. Association	Insight Counselling Service
Celebrate Age Network	Lend a Hand Project
Clackmannanshire Tenants & Residents Association	North Lanarkshire Tenants & Residents Dev Support Project
Coatbridge Federation	Perth & Kinross Tenants Federation
Community Safety Partnership	Renfrewshire National Housing Project
Community Safety Wardens Advisory Group	Scottish Borders Joint Tenants Panel
Dundee City Council Communities Dept	Scottish Executive/ Renamed Scottish Government
Dundee City Council Housing Department	Scottish Government
Dundee Community Mediation	Social Work Department
Dundee Families Project	South Lanarkshire Federation
Dundee Voluntary Action	Tayforth Regional Network
East Dumbartonshire Federation	Tayside Carers
East Fife Tenants Area Group	Tayside Fire Brigade
East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel	Tayside Police
Edinburgh Tenants Federation	Tenant Involvement Islands, Grampian/ Highland Rural Areas
Federation of Inverclyde Tenants & Residents Association	Tenant Participation Advisory Group
Fife Forum for Tenants & Residents Association	Tenants Information Service
Glasgow South Federation of Tenants	Tenants Regulation & Advisory Group
Glenrothes Area Residents Federation	Victim Support

DFTA WEBSITE

Our website is www.dfta.co.uk