



# Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2010/2011**

### **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

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*It does not seem like a year since the last Annual Report was written as the time has just flown in. During this time we have had a few changes in committee members with some going and new ones coming on board. It was sad to see some of the older established groups like Rockwell and Whorterbank folding as they had been involved with the Federation for a number of years. However it was also good to see new ones being formed, such as Fairplay and Bottom of the Hill. DFTA committee members and independent tenants have been heavily involved in meetings with the council around its plans to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 and how it intends to maintain its stock into the future.*

*The Scottish Housing Social Charter is something we take a keen interest in participating in and look forward to further involvement in the future.*

*DFTA committee members work hard to improve the housing conditions of council tenants with some committee members often doing almost a full – time job of work. Although most of the Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) in Dundee affiliate we still have a small percentage that do not. However we will continue trying to encourage them to join. There are many changes afoot within the council through restructuring and we need to keep a finger on the pulse to ensure that housing services to tenants keep improving.*

*I would 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 since last years AGM.*

*Rena Smith*

### **Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) Root & Branch Review**

The first phase of Dundee City Council's SHQS Root & Branch Review of its "delivery plan" has been completed.

### **Best Value Review Working Group**

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

### **The Scottish Social Housing Charter**

We will be discussing how tenants can be involved in assessing our landlords performance

### **Repairs Partnership Board & Tenants Repairs Forum**

Since the new Repairs Partnership Agreement is in place we no longer have Repairs Development team meetings. These have been replaced with the Tenants Repairs Forum.

Monitoring the repairs budget through the Partnership Board is ongoing.

### **Anti – Social Behaviour Strategic Working Group**

Committee members attend these meetings regularly and are kept up to date with progress.

### **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
Jim Cochrane (Vice-Chairperson)	Independent
Rita Smart (Treasurer)	Forthill Tenants Association
Graeme Lawrence (Secretary)	Woodside – Independent
Jim Scott	St Mary's Association of Residents & Tenants
Robert Law	Independent – Burnside Court
Morag Hutcheson	Forthill Tenants Association
Jean Donaldson	Mill O'Mains Tenants & Residents Association
Bill Jordan	Broughty Ferry Road - Independent
Wilma McIntosh	Balmoral Tenants & Residents Association
Rod Hunter	Dudhope Court Tenants Association

***We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to Committee Members who have served on the Executive since the last Annual Report 2009/2010 but have since left*** – Margaret Scott, Eddie Simpson, Peter Waugh, Lana Coffey, Ernie Kelly, and Steve McDade. We also want to remember Jessie Gault from Blackness who has since passed away.

#### **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 2011/12**

### **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. Over this time we 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, and Regeneration Team Leader. And other council officers attend as required i.e. Finance.

The first phase of work undertaken with the focus group on the Root & Branch Review of the Delivery Plan has been completed. The council has produced a 30 year plan showing how it will improve and maintain its housing stock beyond 2015 to 2035. Our independent advisor from the Tenants Information Service and an independent financial consultant have analysed the financial detail in the plan and think this is a positive move forward, There is still concern around Right to Buy sales and Land sales, however we will be monitoring this as the plan is moving forward. We do not have to meet monthly but will meet every quarter to discuss how things are progressing. The council is to be re inspected by the Scottish Housing Regulator in the autumn and any implications from this will also be up for discussion

The shower programme introduced by the council a few years ago has been under discussion as it was not a fair system and to our minds very costly, as the payment of the £5.00 or £10 charge per week was on top of the rent and over the lifespan of the property. The system meant that tenants on housing benefit could apply for a shower and the cost was met by housing benefit. Many tenants on low income and not on housing benefit could not afford to uptake this offer. Under this system, if a house with a shower became available for let the incoming tenant had to agree to pay the additional cost for the shower. There has been a lot of debate around the whole shower programme and it was finally agreed that this system would stop as of March 2011. Tenants who need a shower for health/disability reasons can apply through social care. Those tenants already committed to the £5 or £10 a week will continue to pay this. It is a very complex issue and various alternatives have been discussed with housing management. It was agreed that this will have to go out for further discussion and suggestions.

### **THE SCOTTISH HOUSING SOCIAL CHARTER & SELF ASSESSMENT**

DFTA will be meeting with Senior Housing Management to discuss tenants roles in self assessment.

### **TENANTS REPAIRS FORUM & HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

When the new Repairs Partnership Agreement came in to force, Housing management felt that the Repairs Development Team meetings we attended had served its purpose. We agreed on that level but felt there had to be a forum for discussing any repairs issues or concerns that tenants had. This resulted in a Tenants Repairs Forum being set up. These meetings are quarterly at the moment however can be oftener if required.

We attend the Repairs Service Partnership Board meetings on a quarterly basis and receive copies of the budget monitoring reports and performance reports along with any other relevant information.

## **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. Representation on the group currently consists of two representatives from DFTA along with one independent tenant from the East of the city; the other representative from the West of the city has now left Dundee. Those attending the meetings are Chief Executive, Convenor of Housing, Director of Housing, Director of Contract Services, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Cross Party representatives of the Council, Trade Union Representative. These meetings are held every two months.

Meetings and presentations to date have covered the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, Gas servicing procedures, revised Repairs Partnership Agreement, Available Now, Housing Need Demand and Affordability, Homelessness, Lettings IT, Relets, Lean Service Review on Void Management, a dedicated Relet squad amongst others. The Relet standard/voids and void times are an area of real concern to the council and to us as tenants. The improvement plan and Best Value Review minutes can be viewed on the Council's website.

## **OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE (OSM)**

Due to restructuring within the council our open space meetings no longer take place. The purpose of these meetings was to ensure that only housing owned ground was paid for through tenant's rents. We have been assured by the director of Dundee Contract Services that we will be fully consulted in the development of any proposals for maintaining areas of open space where these areas relate to council tenants.

## **ANTI – SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGIC WORKING GROUP**

We continue to meet regularly to discuss the work of the Anti Social Behaviour team, housing Support team, Community Mediation and Dundee Families Project. This keeps us up to speed with any issues affecting the delivery of these services on progress made on service improvements.

## **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 Partnership Board**  
**Best Value Working Group**  
**Multis Service Improvement Team**  
**Tenant Regulation & Inspection Advisory Group**  
**Tenants Information Service**  
**Anti–Social Behaviour Strategic Working Group with representatives from -**  
**(Dundee Families' Project)**  
**(Community Mediation Project)**  
**(Housing Support)**  
**(Anti Social Behaviour Team)**  
**Community Safety Partnership**  
**Tayforth region 3 of the Regional Network**  
**Review of Sheltered Warden Service**

## **INDIVIDUAL TENANT SUPPORT**

**We continue to assist and deal with concerns and complaints from tenants**

## **DFTA – REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS IN MEMBERSHIP**

Adamson/Elder Tenants Association	Forthill Tenants Association
Balmoral Tenants & Residents Association	Gardens Area Residents Association
Blackness Area Residents Association	Hindmarsh Tenants & Residents Association
Bottom of the Hill Tenants Association	Menzieshill North Tenants & Residents Association
Charleston Tenants & Residents Association	Mill-O-Mains Tenants & Residents Association
Dudhope Tenants residents Association	St. Mary's Association of Tenants & Residents
Derby Street Multis Group	Whitfield Area Forum for Tenants
Fairplay Tenants & Residents Association	Whitfield Avenue Semis Tenants Association
	Whitfield Rise Action Group

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 – East District Office, Nicola McGinty – East District Office and Helen Meek – East District Office.

### **GENERAL MEETINGS- AGM and SPECIAL MEETINGS - APRIL 2010 TO April 2011**

14 April 2010 – Scottish Government New Housing Bill

20 April 2010 – Ian Treanor from Dundee Energy Advice Project came along to talk about fuel poverty how this might be alleviated.

19 May 2010 – Scottish Social Housing Charter.

22 June 2010 - Annual General Meeting & Election of Committee.

21 September 2010 – Progress with the Council's Root & Branch Review – Update for Tenants.

23 November 2010 - Tenants Input into Rents for 2011/2012.

15 February 2011 – Ian Treanor & Alistair McVinnie came along to talk about saving money on energy and give assistance with benefit queries.

19 April 2011 – Dundee City Council's Senior Council Tax & Benefits Manager updated tenants on proposed changes to housing benefit.

We have started opening many of our meetings up to Housing Association Tenants, via their staff, where the subject matter concerns all tenants not just tenants of Dundee City Council.

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
Dundee City Council Communities Dept	Scottish Borders Joint Tenants Panel
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 & Fife Tenant Participation Forum
East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel	Tayside Fire Brigade
Edinburgh Tenants Federation	Tayside Police
Federation of Inverclyde Tenants & Residents Association	Tenant Involvement Islands, Grampian/ Highland Rural Areas
Fife Forum for Tenants & Residents Association	Tenants Participation Workers Forum
Glasgow South Federation of Tenants	Tenants Information Service
Glenrothes Area Residents Federation	Tenants Regulation & Advisory Group
Hillcrest Housing Association	Victim Support

