



making a difference

**A Positive Partnership
Tenant Participation Strategy
Jan 2012 – Dec 2014**

TP STRATEGY – A POSITIVE PARTNERSHIP

Foreword by Elgar Lewis - Chair of Hafod Board

1. Realising our vision

Hafod's Corporate Plan 2008/2012 states the Association's ongoing commitment to delivering service excellence to our customers. It affirms our over-arching aim which is to build thriving and sustainable communities and put the needs of our customers first. Our vision is simple:

"We want to be the provider of choice of high quality homes and services and to create communities which everyone feels proud to live in."

We have not stood still over the last four years and, in particular, significant progress has been made against priorities detailed in our Corporate Plan including:

- Creating a thriving tenant and resident involvement framework
- Developing specialist tenant working groups
- Improving opportunities for customer feedback to measure the quality of our services and identify areas for improvement
- Allocating staff resources to encourage and empower tenants and residents

Our over-arching strategic vision and themes provided by our Corporate Plan are reflected not solely within our Tenant Participation Strategy but also are evident across a number of key strategy documents including: Continuous Improvement, Community Investment; Equalities; and Targeted Services. Our message is clear: we are committed to a customer centred approach, which recognises individual needs and preferences and tailors services accordingly.

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2. Making a Difference

Hafod's Community Investment Strategy aims to 'make a difference' at a grass roots level. We have 3 Community Development Officers (CDOs) working in 9 communities, 5 of which are Communities First designated areas. We see the work of these officers as vital to delivering not just good community development activities and initiatives but adding considerable weight to our local TP programme. Community development is seen as an ideal vehicle to initially engage with tenants and residents, and a host of community partners, to resolve local issues.

Our Community Investment 'Framework for Action' makes it quite clear how our Community Development Officers will support our Tenant Participation Programme and their responsibility under Aim 1 to build the capacity of both communities and individuals.

Aim 1: To ensure that residents, including young people, have a "voice" in decision-making, and are actively involved in identifying and addressing local priorities.

- 1.1. To support the aims and objectives of our TP strategy, and associated Action Plan, in 'mainstreaming' TP and building the capacity of new and existing Tenants & Residents Associations.
- 1.2. To encourage young people to 'have their say' and get involved in community initiatives.
- 1.3 To support vulnerable & hard to reach tenants and promote equality of opportunity for all.
- 1.4. To support the work of community partnerships, including the Communities First programme, and encourage tenant representation.
- 1.5. To provide community assets where there is an identifiable need.
- 1.6. To provide funding advice as appropriate.
- 1.7. To provide financial support to other tenant/community groups
- 1.8. To ensure that the hard work and commitment of our active tenants is recognised and rewarded.

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Under our Community Investment Strategy we recognise the synergy between tenant participation and community development. To do either well requires not only the involvement of tenants in making decisions, but also their input into finding local solutions, and being actively involved in implementing change.

3. National context

Good practice in tenant participation is at the core of the Welsh Government's agenda to deliver high quality homes. In April 2007 the then Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) published a new strategy for improving tenant participation in Wales: the National Tenant Participation Strategy (NTPS). The underlying aims for this strategy were:

- To improve the efficiency and quality of housing services of Local Authorities and Housing Associations.
- To place tenants at the heart of housing management, in accord with WAG's citizen centred approach.

The major requirement of the NTPS is that all social landlords in Wales are required to produce a Local Tenant Participation Strategy by working with tenants to agree:

- How their homes and local environment should be managed
- What services and service improvements are needed
- Priorities
- How to work together to achieve these

Guidance for the development of Local Tenant Participation Strategies (LTPS) by social landlords was first published in May 2008. Subsequently TPAS Cymru has provided individual feedback to the Association on its TP Strategy and accompanying Action Plan, as well as issuing a Good Practice Report and new Assessment Criteria.

Whilst Hafod has received a score of 'excellent' on its previous TP Strategy 2008-2011 there is no complacency and the feedback and guidance provided by

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TPAS Cymru is both welcome and useful. It will be duly considered as we sit down with our tenants, staff, Board members, and other partners to decide how best to take our tenant participation programme forward over the next 3 years.

4. Meeting Legislative Requirements

We are mindful that there have been a number of legislative changes that will need to be taken into account in the preparation of our new TP Strategy.

In particular, the new regulatory framework for Housing Associations in Wales has stipulated the need for associations to deliver annual self assessments in line with the customer centred approach central to national documents: *One Wales* and *Making the Connections*. There is a requirement being placed on housing associations to demonstrate that they are both well managed and tenant focused with a specific delivery outcome concentrating on placing people who want to use our services at the heart of our work.

In response the Association has already doubled its efforts to improve our tenant profiling to ensure we know our current and potential service users and tailor our services and activities accordingly. Under our new TP Strategy we shall continue to encourage and support new ways for tenants and service users to be involved at an early stage in shaping our services, reviewing our performance and developing our plans for the future.

In addition, the Association is committed to meeting the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and the Welsh Government's Regulatory Code to encourage diversity, to eliminate discrimination and to promote equal opportunities for all. Our own Equality Strategy 2011 sets out how we will (1) deliver an equitable approach to the rights and responsibilities of individuals (2) promote good relations between people of different racial groups and (3) provide quality services by being responsive to the individual characteristics and circumstances of residents.

5. Developing our new strategy

Our current TP Action Plan specified that in Year 3 we would commission an independent review of our existing TP strategy and involvement structures based on current best practice and in line with WG requirements. Gayna Jones was appointed to ascertain, through telephone interviews, and focus groups with tenants and staff, what is working well and where improvements could be made. The agreed methodology ensured that both active and non active tenants were consulted with 40 telephone interviews and 5 focus group taking place. A SWOT analysis was also conducted with our TP Working Group. All together a total of 35 tenants were consulted face to face

The consultant's findings and recommendations were reported to the full Board and have provided a useful impetus to the development of our strategy. A working group was convened with the brief of considering the report in greater depth and especially in relation to any proposed changes to the TP structure and decision making processes. This group consists of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board, the Chair of the Housing and Communities Service Committee and a tenant Board member.

The report recommendations were also discussed with a group of 13 active tenants at a meeting in August. Tenants were invited to comment on the findings as well as an early draft of the new strategic aims, objectives and intended outcomes.

Tenants, staff, Board and Committee members have all been involved in the formulation of our new TP Strategy and Action Plan. A robust approach has been taken in developing our strategy to ensure that the process is customer focused and tenants' views are taken on board from an early stage and throughout the process. The draft Strategy was placed on our website and an article was included in Hafod's Own inviting comments. In addition, a second Focus Group took place in September for tenants to agree the TP Strategy and associated action and priorities for our 2012 Action Plan prior to Board approval.

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6. Providing information

We are committed to providing information in a way that suits our tenants which is relevant, up to date, easy to read, and jargon free (see Appendix A). Our tenant profiling has established tenants' preferences in respect of how we contact them and has also identified any communication needs. 'The Big Word' is a full translation service available for tenants whose first language is not English and we are able to provide information in a variety of formats including large print, Braille, and audio tapes. Information is provided in a number of different ways including in person, over the phone, by email, in writing, or via the website. Staff offer appointments to residents, as appropriate, including home visits.

We have a wide range of documents, leaflets, posters, and handbooks as well as an impressive range of information booklets. Tenants have been actively consulted in respect of changes to key publications e.g. Complaints, Managing Your Rent, Need Support, Service Standards and our new Lettings Pack. The Association adheres to its Welsh Language Policy and all key documents are either bi-lingual, or a separate Welsh version is available.

We are exploring new ways of communicating with our tenants using new digital technologies such as texting and are developing social networking sites such as Facebook with our active Tenants' Groups.

Looking at new and better ways for tenants to access and receive information will continue to be a key element of our new TP Strategy. In particular, we are keen to strengthen the involvement of our tenants in the review and development of our website, our quarterly newsletter *Hafod's Own* and key publications.

7. Consulting and providing feedback

We regularly consult with tenants using a range of formal and less formal methods on a variety of issues affecting them, their families, and the communities where they live (see Appendix B). For example, we seek tenants' views on new policies and proposed changes in service delivery; landlord performance and neighbourhood issues. We use Interest Groups, Hafod Connect, Focus Meetings, Surveys, and Surgeries as well as speaking to tenants at Tenants' Group Meetings and Community Events. In addition, we encourage and support our tenants to become involved in partnerships within their own communities so they can voice their opinions and influence local decision making.

We carry out a range of service specific surveys in such areas as Day to Day Repairs; Gas Servicing; Major Works; New Homes; and Handling ASB. We survey tenants who are leaving our properties to find out why and ask tenants who have received benefit or debt advice from our SMART Money Team for their views on this service.

A Tenant Satisfaction Survey is carried out every year sampling a third of our tenants. In all cases the findings of these surveys are analysed and used to improve our performance. Tenants are provided with feedback in respect of this survey work either via interest groups e.g. Maintenance Sub Group, through membership e.g. Hafod Connect or via Hafod's Own e.g. Tenants Survey.

Over the course of the last strategy particular emphasis has been given on providing feedback to tenants. We have worked hard to improve the quality and timeliness of the feedback given so tenants can see that their views have been heard and the difference their involvement has made.

8. Involving tenants

At Hafod we actively encourage tenants to play an active role in shaping our services as well as getting involved in their own communities. Our current TP Involvement Structure provides a wide range of ways to get involved which meets the needs of our tenants (see Appendix C). There are options that require only a small time commitment; different interests are catered for; and tenants are able to comment and influence how we deliver our services at all levels within the Association right up to the Board. Our main methods of involving tenants are given below:

Hafod Connect

Hafod Connect recognises that our tenants lead busy lives and is one of the easiest ways for tenants to get their views heard. Members are asked to answer a short questionnaire every time we carry out a service review. Three service reviews take place each year and are designed to look at:

- What the service aims to deliver?
- Why do we do the things we do?
- What can we change to make things better?

Members can be sent the questionnaire by post or e-mail, or they can be asked the questions over the phone, if they prefer. Afterwards, there is an opportunity to discuss the results of the survey with other tenants and Hafod staff at a focus group. Members are always sent feedback, so they can see that their views have contributed to the service review action plan. Currently Hafod Connect has 69 members and this number is steadily increasing.

Disability Focus Group

Four times a year Hafod hosts a Disability Focus Group for tenants with an interest in physical disability issues. The Disability Focus Group is a less formal get together and is held in different locations to make it easier for people to attend meetings closer to home. The focus groups often feature guest speakers

and helps Hafod to obtain tenants' perspectives on matters that affect people with disabilities. The focus groups meetings are publicised in Hafod's Own, well in advance and topics covered to date include:

- Change in Disability Living Allowance
- Hate crime
- Digital Inclusion
- Debt Management
- Welsh Water Assist
- Gas / Electricity social tariffs
- Hafod Connect

There are 39 members on our Disability Focus Group and the intention is to further develop the role of this group. Under the new strategy members will be better able to comment and advise us on the services we deliver and to take an active role in respect of our ongoing Equalities Impact Assessments

Leaseholder Site Meetings

Currently regular meetings take place with tenants on 3 of our leasehold sites. Under our new strategy we are looking to set up an Annual Leaseholder Forum where all leaseholders can come together and have their voices heard.

Barry Key Tenants

In February 2011, we launched a new Key Tenant scheme in Barry. Key Tenants can provide general advice about Hafod's services to other tenants who would prefer to speak to another tenant before contacting Hafod. They are also a useful local contact for Hafod staff and can help to plan estate walkabouts and monitor local services. Key tenants can undertake some or all of the following:-

- Learn how Hafod is organised and how Key Tenants can help their neighbours and Hafod staff.

- Keep an information pack, including Hafod leaflets, useful telephone numbers and forms, at home to give to neighbours when required.
- Help their neighbours to report problems like nuisance behaviour, repairs, *etc.* by giving them the right phone numbers to call and explaining the procedures Hafod have in place to address those problems.
- Be contactable by their neighbours when they need advice - local tenants will be provided with their contact details.
- Keep in touch with Hafod staff, so that staff are up to date about local issues.
- Help to keep their neighbours up to date about Hafod's work in the area, like estate walkabouts or planned maintenance programmes. This might mean delivering leaflets.
- Keep an eye on local Hafod services like grass cutting or cleaning in communal areas and to let Hafod know how well those services are performing.

The pilot project has been running in the Barry area for over 8 months with the involvement of 8 Key Tenants. Take up of the service has been disappointing and a review is planned to assess the effectiveness of the initiative and its future direction.

Hafod Youth Panel (HYP)

Hafod's Youth Panel consists of fourteen young people of both sexes, aged 15-22 years who help us to get a young person's perspective on housing and neighbourhood issues. The group has been running since 2010 and the young people are drawn from across a number of different communities. The young people have been involved in setting their own aims for the group including:

- Improving local communities through positive action
- Getting young people off the streets and giving them something to do
- Sharing information and signposting young people to useful services
- Consulting with all age groups within a community
- Promoting positive images of young people
- Learning new things

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- Interacting with others and increasing involvement
- Having fun and socialising with other young people
- Learning to do new things

Our HYP members have worked with us on newsletter articles and helped to organise our Volunteers' Event and Youth Awards Ceremony. In the future we hope to increase the inter-generational aspect of this group and to utilise the expertise that young people can offer older tenants, especially around new digital technologies e.g. Facebook

HYP members have also identified a number of topical issues and during 2011 they have participated in facilitated sessions on managing money, substance misuse, sexual awareness, and people's perceptions of young people. Their involvement has been rewarded with a Go-Karting trip and a 3 day residential camp to Newgale.

Tenants' Conference

We hold a very popular tenants' conference every other year. In 2010 89 tenants and staff attended the Heronston Hotel in Bridgend for an informative and fun day out. The day had an emphasis on tackling anti-social behaviour and financial exclusion and was organised by a hard working group of tenants.

Volunteers' Event

We hold our Volunteers' Event on alternative years to the Tenants Conference to recognise, reward and promote volunteering. Again there is a significant involvement of tenants, including young people, in the organisation and delivery of the event. In 2011 our active tenants groups shared good practice in volunteering and we looked at the benefits of using Facebook as an effective tool for communicating with the wider community. 38 people attended this very successful event.

St Mellons Compact

The St Mellons Compact is an agreement signed by staff and tenants of 3 Housing Associations in St Mellons. It consists of a main Steering Group and a number of sub groups dealing with Resident Involvement and Community Life; Homes Services: Environment and Estate Services: Anti-Social Behaviour; and Financial Inclusion.

The aims of the Compact are to:

- Develop and support the community of St Mellons
- Improve housing and estate services in St Mellons
- Ensure residents play a greater part in the management of their homes and estate
- Bring about closer partnership working between landlords for the benefit of residents and the Associations
- Increase resident involvement in the planning, monitoring and reviewing of services
- Increase resident involvement in planned maintenance and cyclical programmes of work

Tenants are actively encouraged to attend Steering Group Meetings and Sub Groups but to date, despite very positive partnership working and demonstrable positive outcomes, the direct involvement of tenants from all 3 landlords remains low.

Local Tenant Groups

Many tenants want to make a difference in their local community by forming tenant groups. Tenant groups are independent of Hafod, but receive advice and practical support from our Community Focus Team. Each tenant group has a constitution and elected committee, holds regular meetings, including an AGM, and can apply for grant funding from Hafod and other organisations. Each group is different - some focus on landlord issues, while others are interested in

community matters such as the local environment, youth activities, and services to families. Hafod currently has eight recognised tenant groups:

- Craig-yr-Hendre Tenants' & Residents' Association (Bedlinog)
- Dynea Neighbourhood Watch (Rhydyfelin)
- Fir Tree Drive Community Association (Quakers Yard)
- Glanogwr House Residents' Association (Bridgend)
- Mynydd Glas Neighbourhood Watch (Nantyffyllon)
- Thornhill Tenants' & Residents' Association (Cwmbran)
- Arcon Tenants and Residents Association (Cardiff)
- Heol Ty Maen & Maes Gwair Tenants' and Residents' Association (Bridgend)

Our tenants' groups are an important part of our TP programme. They are able to articulate concerns and issues in their communities and raise any service failures with the appropriate staff. Members of these groups frequently become involved in our other decision making groups as they gain in confidence and experience.

Maintenance Sub-Group

This is a popular sub-group which currently has 11 tenants in membership. These tenants meet with Maintenance staff four times a year to provide input into the responsive repairs and planned maintenance services. The Maintenance Sub-Group has played an important role in choosing contractors and selecting tenant options for planned maintenance work. In addition, they consider and comment on the feedback received from tenants once a repair has been completed.

Tenants Supporting Tenants

Tenants Supporting Tenants was set up in 2009 with a view to harnessing the personal experiences and knowledge that tenants gain when dealing with ASB incidents. The group meets four times a year with staff from our Anti-Social Behaviour Team to discuss a range of ASB issues and to monitor and evaluate our ASB policies and procedures. Group members also take on mentoring roles speaking to new victims and witnesses of ASB.

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There are currently 7 tenants on the Tenants Supporting Tenants group and everyone has personal experience of Anti-Social Behaviour and the support offered by Hafod to tackle neighbourhood problems.

Tenant Assessment Team

Hafod and three other Housing Associations (Cynon Taf, Rhondda and Merthyr Tydfil) have worked together to train a shared "pool" of Tenant Assessors who can help to review landlord services. Hafod tenants assess the other landlords' services and their tenants assess Hafod, to keep the assessment objective. A pilot assessment included surveying our reactive repairs service, testing our customer services and reviewing our reception area. The findings of this assessment were reported to the appropriate committee and resulted in a number of positive changes.

New assessors have been trained during 2011 and this resource will become fully operational in 2012 with assessors being utilised for service reviews and as an integral part of our continuous improvement programme.

The development of our Tenant Assessment Team has been supported by two Tenant Empowerment Grants totaling £16,678. The project has also received two prizes at the 2011 TPAS Cymru Participation Awards, which recognises examples of good practice in tenant participation across Wales.

Tenant Participation Working Group (TPWG)

Up until April 2011 the TPWG was Hafod's main landlord-wide tenants' forum. The group was meeting every six weeks and was led by an elected Chair and Co-ordinator. With a large membership of 24 tenants, many with extensive knowledge and experience of Hafod's services, the TPWG has undertaken a lead role within the Association.

Over the last 3 years members have commented on our service review action plans, our lettings pack, new policies and procedures and have been instrumental in setting our service standards. The group has been responsible for setting its own agendas and has received regular presentations from guest

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speakers e.g. TPAS Cymru, Welsh Tenants Federation. They have helped identify key priorities for our TP Action Plans and have received presentations on our community development and financial inclusion work programmes as well as the upcoming Welfare Benefit Reforms. They have also been instrumental in the following:-

- Organising the Tenants' Conference and Volunteers' Event
- Setting up an allocations procedure for attendance at conferences and seminars
- Appointing two staff members with involvement in both the shortlisting and interviewing of candidates
- Setting and monitoring the TP budget
- Identifying training needs

The group suspended its activities in April 2011 following the resignation of both the Chair and Coordinator. This left an undeniable gap within our TP involvement structure. A new 'fit for purpose' high level decision making body, which involves and nurtures our most committed and experienced tenants, is clearly a top priority for our new strategy.

TP Delivery Group

The annual TP Action Plans have been monitored by the TP Delivery Group which meets four times a year. The group is a partnership of tenants and staff, consisting of six TPWG members and six key members of staff.

Board and Committee Membership

Tenants are involved at the highest level of decision making within the Association. Currently three tenants are represented on Hafod's Board with a further 2 tenants sitting on each of the following Committees:

- Finance and Performance Committee
- Housing & Community Services Committee
- Technical Services Committee

Our TP Working Group was responsible for the appointment of one the tenant positions for each of the 3 Committees.

The Housing and Community Services Committee receives regular reports from the Community Investment Manager in respect of the Association's Tenant Participation and Community Development Programmes. In addition to receiving the minutes of these meetings, the Board also receives tenant participation reports directly in order to make key decisions regarding the future direct of our TP Strategy.

9. Dealing with complaints

We recognise that on occasions we fall short of the high standards of service that we set ourselves. On these occasions we need to make it easy for our tenants to voice their dissatisfaction so that any complaint can be dealt with fairly and impartially within an agreed length of time.

In January 2010 we thoroughly reviewed our Complaints Policy through consultation with staff, our Tenant Participation Working Group, and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. A system was developed in house to allow members of staff to record and track progress made against any complaints and compliments. After a series of staff training events, the system went live in April 2010.

Quarterly reports are obtained from the system that highlight the number of complaints and compliments received. Staff recorded 63 service complaints and 5 compliments during the first 12 months of the system operating. This information has allowed us to review and improve services provided throughout the Association.

Future plans for our complaints and compliments recording system is to work closely with the Tenant Assessors in order to further test the system, in particular staff adherence with recording complaints received onto the data system in operation.

10. Supporting our TP programme

We recognise that if we are to deliver a TP Programme that is accessible to all that we need to ensure that we have the right support mechanisms in place (Appendix D). We know that tenants lead busy lives and that for some there are specific challenges that make involvement difficult. We are committed to allocating both staff time and financial resources to ensure that everyone that wants get involved with us can do so in a way that suits them.

With this in mind we have put in place a comprehensive package of support which caters for both individual tenants who want to get involved with us as well as our recognised Tenants Groups. This includes the provision of accessible venues; appropriate transport; refreshments; free training; attendance at conferences/seminars; and personal expenses for travel and childcare/dependent costs. Our Tenants Groups also benefit from a comprehensive funding package including an IT allowance, free public liability insurance, auditing of annual accounts and additional staff support from our TP and Community Development Officers.

To encourage the involvement of new tenants in our TP programme the Community Focus Team has a fund for one-off local projects. Active tenants working with any staff member can apply for money from the Special Initiatives Fund or ideas can come from our active Tenants' Groups. Grants are usually limited to a maximum of £500 per project.

Our designated TP budget has been set and agreed in consultation with tenants and over the last 3 years this has ranged from £40,000 - £45,000 per annum. The budget has been open to scrutiny from our tenants and they have been influential in how the budget has been allocated especially in relation to attendance at conferences/seminars, training and refreshments. Our 2012 TP budget for £54,000 has been set in consultation with our tenants and a breakdown is shown in Appendix E.

11. Building on our achievements

Our last TP Strategy ran from April 2008 and was accompanied by a detailed Action Plan. Our TP Delivery Group, which is made up of senior staff and tenants, has been responsible for reviewing progress against our TP Action Plan and for monitoring expenditure. A new Action Plan has been approved each year in consultation with our TPWG and priority actions identified by our tenants have been included as 'Tenants Choice: High Priority'.

The strategic framework, including the primary aim and the 6 underlying objectives, has given both direction and focus to our work and is to be retained. However, the format of our Action Plan is to be revised to ensure that we don't lose sight of the intended outcomes and the central role that tenants hold in shaping our services.

We have achieved a great deal under the current strategy and have extended the range of opportunities for tenants of different ages and interests to get involved as exemplified by our Disability Focus Group, Hafod's Youth Panel, and three newly constituted Tenants Groups.

Over this 3 year period we have also introduced Hafod Connect and closely aligned this with our Internal Service Reviews and ongoing continuous improvement programme. We have been a lead partner in developing a pool of shared Tenant Assessors and have piloted an innovated Key Tenants Scheme to better support tenants living in dispersed housing within Barry.

Our website has been greatly enhanced and is not only hugely informative but is designed with all tenants in mind. We have introduced Browse Aloud for the visually impaired and The Big Word for those tenants whose first language is not English. All our recognised tenants groups have their own allocated web pages and with our support many have set up their own Facebook sites. Hafod's own Intranet has also been comprehensively re-designed and information is made readily available to our tenants working at Committee and Board level including

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reports, consultations, regulatory papers and best practice guidance. The number of hits on our website now average 3000+ per month which shows that it is being used as a valued resource. We have adopted the RNIB standard and the information we now provide to tenants is in line with this scheme.

We have improved our record keeping and have established a database for all tenants that are engaged with us. We are monitoring diversity data to ensure that we hear from all our tenants including minority and hard to reach groups. This continues to be a challenge and one we shall pursue further in our new strategy.

Tenants have influenced decision making at all levels of the Association and their support has helped us in a whole host of ways including allocating conference/seminar places, staff recruitment, and in the organization of our very successful Tenant Conferences and Volunteers Events.

Our Tenants Groups have been especially active over the last 3 years and the provision and uptake of training has increased as has the number of small grants secured by these groups. In the last eighteen months our tenant groups have been successful in drawing down over £33k in external funding enabling them to deliver a comprehensive community programme. We have also supported other groups and organisations of interest to our tenants with securing funding to the value of just under £30k.

In 2010 our active tenants benefited from training in risk assessment, first aid, food hygiene, committee skills and minute taking and accounts. 59 training places were provided with 7 tenants obtaining Level 2 qualifications in Food Hygiene. In addition, via our community development officers 24 different courses were delivered, directly or by other partners, with a take up of 81 training places by tenants. Our grassroots work at a community level is a vital building block for our TP involvement structure. We know many tenants first engaged with us around local issues before gaining the necessary confidence, skills and knowledge to take up other opportunities to get involved.

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12. Learning lessons and moving forward

The comprehensive independent review undertaken by Gayna Jones of our existing TP Strategy and programme provided a useful analysis of where we were at the current time. Whilst the review was broadly positive it did identify some areas for improvement. In particular, the report findings articulated what staff and tenants had sensed for some time which was that our longstanding TPWG was no longer working as intended. The relationship between Hafod and its TPWG members had broken down, and there was a lack of clarity around the group's purpose and its membership. The report also highlighted weak links with other parts of the TP structure and recommended the following:-

- Identifying the preferred route for appointing or electing tenant Board members
- Setting up a new high level group or 'scrutiny panel' to shape our services, review our performance and develop our plans
- Setting up a Community Involvement Partnership for our Tenants Groups & representatives from our other Interest Groups with a Tenant Participation and Community Development remit

The recommendations of the report were presented and discussed with tenants at a meeting held on 24 August and are shown in full in Appendix F.

Our new TP Strategy – a Positive Partnership

Our new TP Strategy recognises that we need a **positive partnership** to deliver our intended outcomes and to meet our primary aim which is:

To continually improve the quality of our housing services and the conditions of our homes, by working in partnership with our tenants to make decisions about those services in an open, honest and accountable way.

Our 6 key objectives remain the same but under the new strategy there is greater clarity in respect of our intended outcomes:

Objective 1: To offer a range of opportunities for tenants to get involved in a way that best suits them and which feeds into service delivery improvements and policy making.

Outcomes

- 1.1 Tenants influence the way services are delivered at the highest level and influence policy decisions
- 1.2 Tenants contribute to setting and driving up service standards

Objective 2: To improve the quality and range of information provided to tenants and leaseholders and to offer opportunities for involvement in reviewing and producing this information

Outcome

- 2.1 Tenants are knowledgeable about the full range of services we offer and know how they can comment on these services

Objective 3: To provide sufficient resources, support and training to ensure that all tenants have the opportunity to become effectively involved.

Outcomes

3.1 Tenants acquire the confidence, skills and knowledge to contribute in decision making from early engagement to the highest level

3.2 Tenants acquire new confidence skills and knowledge in IT, new media and digital technology to enable them to participate effectively at a level of their choice

3.3 Tenants gain new skills and knowledge to enable them to participate effectively in both community development and TP activities.

Objective 4: To actively encourage participation from minority and hard to reach groups, including those with disabilities and from minority ethnic backgrounds, and provide opportunities for participation in ways that best meet their needs and aspirations.

Outcomes

4.1 Tenants from our Disability Focus Group articulate their needs and influence service delivery

4.2 Young people from our Youth Panel articulate their needs and influence service delivery

4.3 Tenants from black minority ethnic backgrounds articulate their needs and influence service delivery

4.4 Staff and tenants gain a greater awareness and understanding of religious and cultural beliefs and tailor their services accordingly

4.5 Tenants from all equality strands are actively involved in our Equalities Impact Assessments and able to shape policy and procedural changes

4.6 Tenants influence and shape the content and format of our Tenants' Conferences to maximise participation and ensure an inclusive approach

Objective 5: To ensure that staff at all levels, Board and Committee members, understand the importance of tenant participation and have the appropriate support and training to deliver it.

Outcomes

5.1 All staff, Board and Committee members are knowledgeable about our new TP Strategy and committed to a customer focused approach to delivering and improving services

Objective 6: To regularly monitor and review our tenant participation programme to ensure that our consultation and involvement practices are relevant, representative, inclusive, and fairly represent the views of our tenants and leaseholders.

Outcomes

6.1 Tenants from under-represented groups are involved in our tenant participation programme and able to have their voices heard

6.2 Tenants' views are regularly sought on how we provide information, consult and involve tenants and their preferences influence the way we provide services

6.3 Tenants are partners in setting, monitoring and evaluating our tenant participation programmes and practices as well as the TP budget and are aware of how their involvement makes a difference

Our Year 1 Action Plan which relates to the period January 2012 – December 2012 is shown in Appendix G and details key actions to deliver our outcomes. It also specifies how we will monitor progress against specified targets/milestones and measure/evidence success.

13. Monitoring and evaluating

An Interim TP Steering Group of staff and tenants is due to be set up to monitor the TP Action Plan and budget for Year 1 only. This Interim Group will also be the main point of contact for detailed consultation in respect of the new TP Involvement Structure. It is anticipated that under the new structure there will be a new group with clear responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the TP Strategy and Action Plans and that the role of tenants in this process will be central. The Board and Housing and Community Services Committee will continue to receive regular reports and will provide strategic guidance.

Good record keeping is of vital importance if we are to demonstrate how tenants have made a difference to the way we deliver our services. We shall be improving our systems to ensure we can evidence the number of tenants that are involved with us, the level of their involvement and the influence their involvement has on decision making and service improvement.

14. In conclusion

Our new strategy for Jan 2012 - Dec 2014 is aptly titled "A Positive Partnership". This reflects the need to take stock of where we are at the current time and to build on the solid foundations that we have already in place. It means reflecting on what has worked well, and what has not, and making changes that will serve us well in the challenging years ahead. It means working with our existing active tenants and using the experience and knowledge that they possess as well as attracting new tenants with different perspectives and motivations.

Finally, it means critically examining our overall TP involvement structure to ensure that tenants are participating effectively, influencing decision making and shaping service delivery at all levels throughout the Association. Our new structure will need to be 'fit for purpose', with greater clarity in respect of roles and responsibilities and the flow of information within the Association. We look forward to having an open and honest dialogue with our tenants and to achieving that Positive Partnership.

A Positive Partnership