

PRESS RELEASE

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A big plus for tenants

New Charter is pleased to announce its support for a new organisation working to make local neighbourhoods a better place to live.

The new body, New Charter + Tenants Federation, received Board support and will now be the main tenant body influencing the direction of New Charter.

Belinda Jeffery, a member of the steering group of New Charter + Tenants Federation said “We welcome the full support of New Charter to our new Federation whose aim is to truly represent the views of tenants on all New Charter estates. In our Federation it will be tenants and not owner-occupiers who will be at the forefront of decision-making in regards to rent, repairs, improvement works and all other services that are paid for solely by tenants’ rents. We think it’s right that it is for tenants to have a say as to how New Charter spends its money on tenant issues.



We do feel representation from owner-occupiers on our estates is essential in relation to wider environmental and community issues and our new proposals also ensure that there is a role as equal partners for owner-occupiers on these important neighbourhood issues. We realise that a lot of groups are run by owner-occupiers who do a marvellous job on behalf of their communities and we wouldn't want to change this. All these groups are welcome to have an input into New Charter +”.

The new organisation was formed soon after the Tameside Tenants' & Residents' Federation met for its Annual General Meeting on 28th April. At that meeting, changes to the constitution which would have strengthened the position of tenants rather than owner-occupiers were not carried and, as a result, a number of tenants groups affiliated to the Federation broke away to consider their options. The constitutional changes were proposed following an independent report which recommended more say for tenants in the affairs of the Federation.

New Charter + Tenants Federation has been established with the help of a national body, the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). Meanwhile, the Tameside Tenants' & Residents' Federation elected officers to continue their role, all of whom are owner-occupiers. Both organisations have held talks with New Charter to obtain the landlord's recognition.

Director of Tenancy Services at New Charter, Tony Powell said: “The new organisation aims to represent all tenants of the Group, both now and in the future. This is especially

important as the Group expands outside Tameside. New Charter + will have no political affiliation, and will champion the views of tenants as service users.

“Both organisations sought to be the recognised umbrella body, but it is unrealistic to support two when the aims of both are similar. Board Members gave their full backing to New Charter + which is tenant based, but we will continue to work with and recognise local residents’ groups.”

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter took the whole council housing stock of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester on 27th March 2000. With a turnover of almost £60million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the country’s largest Registered Social Landlords. It now owns 14,600 homes.
2. Tameside Tenants’ & Residents Federation was formed in 1998 as an umbrella organisation to represent all (then) Council tenants’ associations. With the transfer in 2000, New Charter continued to recognise, consult and support the Federation on all matters relating to tenancies. We have increased financial support to the Federation since 2000 with both donations and enhanced annual grants. The Federation has remained independent of, but working in partnership with New Charter for the benefit of all tenants. The Federation is run by volunteers who are not remunerated for their involvement. Since the AGM, it has voted in its own officers, all of whom are owner-occupiers.
3. **iN business for neighbourhoods** is a long-term project to improve housing associations’ performance, and challenge negative perceptions of the sector and its customers. The project was launched at the National Housing Federation’s annual conference in 2003. To date, 80 per cent of the sector’s stock – over 1.5 million homes – is managed by associations who have joined the initiative and made fresh commitments to neighbourhoods, customers and excellence.

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