

SOUTHSIDE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Policy on Governance and Accountability

First Approved: August 2001
Last Reviewed: September 2009
Next Review Due: September 2011

- 1.0 Southside Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). This policy sets out the principles and practices relating to the governance of Southside Housing Association and its accountability to its various stakeholders for any decisions that are made.

Governance refers to the activities of the governing body (Management Committee) concerned with the direction of the Association's business, its general conduct, and methods and systems of management.

Accountability refers to the Association's requirement and commitment to be accountable for its actions or decisions.

- 1.1 Southside Housing Association is regulated by The Scottish Housing Regulator who have set down a range of Performance Standards which RSLs are expected to achieve. A list of the Performance Standards most relevant to Governance and Accountability considerations is attached as Appendix 1.

2.0 KEY PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The key principles set down in this policy statement set a standard for the attainment of good practice in governance and accountability. These key principles are that:
- i) All decisions taken by the Association's Management Committee must be in the best interests of Southside Housing Association and its tenants.
 - ii) Southside Housing Association and its Management Committee must observe high standards of conduct and act with honesty and integrity.
 - iii) Southside Housing Association must be open and account for its decisions and actions by making information available unless it is personally, financially or commercially sensitive or confidential.
- 2.2 Set out below is a set of standards for the achievement of good practice in governance and accountability. The Association will strive to go significantly beyond these standards.

Standards of Good Practice

- (a) Southside Housing Association will have a membership policy that encourages a broad, representative membership, in accordance with its rules or constitution.

- (b) Southside Housing Association will provide tenants with opportunities to influence the composition of the Management Committee and the operation of the organisation.
- (c) Southside Housing Association will adopt a Code of Conduct for governing body members.
- (d) Southside Housing Association will promote equal opportunities.
- (e) Southside Housing Association will adopt an Internal Management Plan and will publish regular information on performance in meeting any targets set.
- (f) Southside Housing Association will publish an Annual Report.
- (g) Southside Housing Association will make its applications, allocations, equal opportunities and complaints policies and procedures widely available.
- (h) Southside Housing Association will adopt a policy on payments and granting of benefits to governing body members
- (i) Southside Housing Association will keep registers of:
 - ✓ Members
 - ✓ Use of the Seal
 - ✓ Declared Interests
 - ✓ Section 15 Relaxations (or the contractual equivalent)
 - ✓ Gifts and Hospitality given or received

3.0 A series of appendices are attached which set down the detailed policy or operational guidance for the achievement of the Good Practice Standards identified above. In some cases the Association's commitments and practices go beyond the minimum standards laid down in the Performance Standards framework.

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1** Communities Scotland Performance Standards on Governance & Accountability
- Appendix 2** Policy on Membership of the Association (last Reviewed and Approved September 2009)
- Appendix 3** Policy on Openness and Accountability (Last Reviewed and Approved September 2009)
- Appendix 4** Remit of the Management Committee (Last Reviewed and Approved September 2009)
- Appendix 5** Remit of Audit Sub-Committee, Staffing, Appeals and Health & Safety Committee (Last Reviewed and Approved September 2009)

- Appendix 6** Code of Conduct for Committee Members (Last reviewed and approved September 2009)
- Appendix 7** Policy on Whistleblowing (Last Reviewed and Approved September 2009)
- Appendix 8** Policy on Payments, Benefits and Corporate Accountability (Last Reviewed and Approved 2009)

4.0 RELATED POLICIES

- 4.1 This is not an exhaustive list of the policy statements that influence governance and accountability within the Association. Clearly the commitments to involving tenants in decision making (see Tenant Participation Policy), the commitment to equality of treatment (see Equal Opportunities Policy), the commitment to positively reacting to complaints (see Complaints Policy) and many other activities relating to the recruitment and training of staff impinge upon Governance and Accountability. The policy statement and related appendices relate specifically to the activities of the Governing Body (the Management Committee) but they are only part of the Governance and Accountability Framework.