



COSMOPOLITAN'S FORUM CONSTITUTION

1. Name:

- 1.1 The name of the group will be the 'Forum' .

2. Background:

- 2.1 The Forum is a group of Cosmopolitan residents who meet on a regular basis for consultation and decision - making on matters, which affect residents and the communities in which they live. The Forum will meet with the Association's staff to discuss matters of common interest or concern.

3. Introduction:

- 3.1 Cosmopolitan Housing Association Limited, as a responsible registered social landlord and Cosmopolitan's Forum has adopted this Constitution in respect of the core values of the Association. 'The core values identify the principles of a widely respected, customer-focused organisation, recognised by partners, stakeholders and residents.'
- 3.2 The Constitution considers and is intended to reflect the guidance of the Housing Corporation, the recommendations of the National Housing Federation and all relevant legislation.

4. Core Values:

- 4.1 The Association and the Forum operate under 10 core values, which both the Forum and the Association recognise and understand:
- 4.2 Common purpose and effort directed towards the mission to serve those in housing need and social exclusion.
- 4.3 Commitment to communicate effectively with our resident customer, employees and external stakeholders in a timely, accurate, understandable and respectful manner.
- 4.4 To listen to concerns and views of the resident, customer, employees and external stakeholders to bring about improvements in our service.
- 4.5 To value effective and efficient business processes, which consistently produce positive results.

- 4.6 To foster an environment that promotes personal and corporate innovation, sharing and maximisation of resources and team work.
- 4.7 An organisation, which is open to change, and flexible in our attitudes.
- 4.8 To seek meaningful strategic alliances and partnerships.
- 4.9 A belief that respect; integrity, trust and fairness are fundamental to personal and inter-agency actions.
- 4.10 To value a culture where everyone is involved, accountable, respected and appreciated.
- 4.11 To aim to perform at the highest level of competence and take pride in accomplishment.

5. Aims of the Forum:

- 5.1 To promote the interests of the fullest possible cross section of residents throughout the Association's stock.
- 5.2 To work with the Association to ensure that the quality of the service and the homes in which people live reflect both the needs and aspirations of current and future residents.
- 5.3 To represent the views of residents and to supply information and feedback as appropriate.
- 5.4 To exchange information, offer support and guidance to members of the Forum and Cosmopolitan staff.
- 5.5 To obtain views and information before making a decision or recommendation on major issues.
- 5.6 To seek and supply information to Officers of the Association.
- 5.7 Liaise with Cosmopolitan Housing Association staff to influence decision-making and introduce new ideas.
- 5.8 To encourage and promote Resident Involvement & Participation.
- 5.9 To develop, implement and assist in monitoring the performance of the Association and make recommendations for improving performance.
- 5.10 To be consulted on the reviews and preparation of policies. To make recommendations on such policies.

- 5.11 To submit recommendations to the Association's Board of Management, when necessary
- 5.12 To receive and respond to matters referred to the Forum by the Board of Management or resident groups
- 5.13 To ensure that residents of the Association are aware of their rights and responsibilities
- 5.14 To represent the interests of present and future residents in the design of schemes
- 5.15 Cosmopolitan staff will allow private discussion by Forum members, when requested.

6. Membership:

- 6.1 Application for membership of the Forum will be open to all of the Association's residents. However, full membership will not exceed 15 in number and only one person from each household may be considered.
- 6.2 All applicants must be over 18 years of age.
- 6.3 Where an area of Cosmopolitan housing stock is under-represented, every effort will be made by Association Officers' and / or Forum members to recruit residents from that area to the group.
- 6.4 Applications for membership of the Forum shall be made in writing to Cosmopolitan's Resident Involvement Officer at any time of the year.
- 6.5 The Resident Involvement Officer and Forum members will seek and ensure representation and support from Cosmopolitan communities toward new recruits onto the Forum.
- 6.6 If new applications for the Forum exceed the maximum membership number of 15, one third of long standing Forum Members will be asked to stand down during the nomination process in January of each year. This process will help to ensure some continuity in the experience and work of the Forum and give new applications the opportunity to get involved. If no new applications for membership are received, existing members will continue in their roles - if they so desire.
- 6.7 A Forum member may resign and terminate membership of the Forum at any time.

- 6.8** Membership is open, irrespective of nationality, race, and ethnic or national origin, gender, colour, disability, age, sexuality and political or religious belief.
- 6.9** The Forum will promote a commitment to equal opportunities when promoting membership, taking account the diversity of different racial groups. Members must work towards the elimination of discrimination and demonstrate a fair and unprejudiced approach to the rights and responsibilities of all individuals.

7. Cosmopolitan's Service Standards to The Forum:

- 7.1** Cosmopolitan agrees to support and service the Forum.
- 7.2** Provision of materials and staff to produce minutes, agendas and reports for meetings.
- 7.3** The distribution of items produced under 8.1.
- 7.4** The provision of venue for the meetings and refreshments.
- 7.5** The cost of subscriptions to groups, organisations or societies, which Cosmopolitan and the Forum members consider would be beneficial to join.
- 7.6** To pay each attendee a standard £10 allowance per meeting to assist with out of pocket expenses incurred from attending meetings, or to provide the necessary transport, when requested.
- 7.7** An annual budget which Forum members control with the assistance and guidance of staff.
- 7.8** Regular reports of budget spending, as requested.

8 Meetings:

- 8.1** Meetings will be held on a regular basis with a minimum of 6 meetings per year.
- 8.2** When appropriate members of other community groups may be invited to attend meetings.
- 8.3** Meetings will be open to all Cosmopolitan residents to attend as observers only, with no voting rights .
- 8.4** The agenda for meetings will be set by the Forum Chair with assistance from the Resident Involvement Officer.

8.5 The agenda for meetings together with minutes from the previous meeting will be posted to all Forum members and the relevant officers of the Association, in reasonable time before meetings.

9 Quorum:

9.1 Meetings will not take place unless a minimum of 4 members and one CHA officer is present.

10 Voting:

10.1 Voting will be by simple majority of those present at the meeting by a show of hands, unless the members choose to hold a ballot.

10.2 Members can make proposals to vote on any issue during meetings. In order for an issue to be voted on by other members, the proposal must be seconded or supported by another member. Proposed amendments must also be seconded.

10.3 In the event of an equal vote, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

10.4 Cosmopolitan staff have no vote.

11 Review of Constitution:

11.1 The Forum will review the Constitution every 12 months to ensure they reflect the duties and responsibilities of the Forum.

12 Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

12.1 The process of nominating, voting and election of the Forum Chair and Vice Chair will be held every 12 months.

12.2 This process will occur every January or as soon as possible afterwards.

12.3 Any Forum member interested in standing for the role of Chair or Vice Chair must notify the Resident Involvement Officer during the first week of January.

12.4 Forum members will be balloted on the election of Chair and Vice Chair.

12.5 Ballots will be counted by an 'independent person.' For example the Resident Involvement Officer.

13 Code of Conduct:

- 13.1** The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to set standards to which Forum members must adhere to and how they are expected to carry out their duties.
- 13.2** Staff of the Association have legislation and regulation which must be adhered to when performing their duties. For reasons of good practice, the same principles apply to Forum members.
- 13.3** The principle behind the legislation is that Association staff, Forum members and close relatives of both should not personally benefit in any way from their involvement with the Association. With specific regard to Forum members (and any associated businesses) the legislation is to prevent any employment, contracts, payments or benefits, which can improve or assist personal gain of any sort.
- 13.4** It is the duty of all Forum members to ensure compliance with the Code and Forum members are provided with sufficient training and information to enable them to discharge their responsibilities.
- 13.5** Forum members are expected to abide and observe this Code. The Forum in conjunction with the Association may exclude any Forum member for deliberate or frequent breaches of the Code.

14 Conflicts of interest:

- 14.1** Forum members must not expect favourable treatment by the Association staff or the Forum itself, nor should they be treated any less favourably eg. completion of a repair or allocation of a property.
- 14.2** Forum members must notify the group if they have any exclusive, financial or material interest in any matter being considered (for example if Cosmopolitan are considering a change in policy, a member must inform the panel if she/he has a close relative who might gain advantage from the change; or if she/he has an interest in a contractor whose work is being discussed). Individual members may be asked to abstain from discussion and decisions about an item in which they have an exclusive, financial or material interest.

15 General Conduct of Forum Members:

- 15.1** It is the role and responsibility of Forum members to promote and encourage good practise in resident involvement amongst all Cosmopolitan residents and staff. Forum members have a remit to represent the views and interests of residents. Consequently, Forum views will be sought by the Association on a consultative and advisory basis.

- 15.2** The Association and the Forum acknowledges that members of the Forum have a position of respect and responsibility with the Association. Forum members should observe accepted practice while taking part in meetings and recognise their status of accountability and trust.
- 15.3** Members will be courteous to each other and support and assist other members in seeking the best possible solutions to problems being discussed.
- 15.4** To allow each other the opportunity to speak and comment.
- 15.5** To follow guidance of the chair in the conduct of the meeting.
- 15.6** To remember that the purpose of the meeting is to benefit residents generally and not specific individuals.
- 15.7** To bear in mind the rights of individual residents and the duties of Association employees when proposing solutions to problems.
- 15.8** Not to speak or write on behalf of the Forum without the prior agreement of Forum members.
- 15.9** Punctuality at meetings is expected and the Forum will pursue regular non-attendance.
- 15.10** Reasons for non-attendance at meetings will be disclosed at Forum meetings unless the individual concerned expresses a reason for confidentiality, which will be observed.
- 15.11** Forum members, whilst on Forum business, should not be under the influence of alcohol, or drugs, i.e. Forum meetings, Working party meetings, Training or Conferences, etc.
- 15.12** Forum members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner. Racist, sexist, abusive or other offensive remarks or behavior will not be tolerated.
- 15.13** A commitment to communicate effectively with other residents, Cosmopolitan employees and external stake holders in a timely, accurate, understandable and respectful manner.
- 15.14** Members must strive for good relationships between staff and other members of the Forum and must be supportive and non – critical of each other.
- 15.15** Members must not use their position to discredit or damage the name or reputation of the Forum or Cosmopolitan Housing Association
- 15.16** Forum members must not accept gifts or gratuities. Forum members must declare any gifts or gratuity that are offered.

16. Partnership:

16.1 Forum members, observers, guests and staff should at all times show respect and courtesy in their dealing with each other, and seek to work in equal partnership to find ways of improving Cosmopolitan's services.

17. Discrimination:

17.1 No Forum member will discriminate on any ground against other members of the Forum. Discriminatory language will not be used in discussions. All those who attend meetings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, politics, nationality, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, religion, or any other matter, which causes people to be treated with injustice.

18. Agreement:

18.1 All members should agree to abide by the Code of Conduct and failure to do so will result in the member being asked to resign.

18.2 Cosmopolitan has an obligation as a social landlord to investigate any breach of tenancy agreement or the Code of Conduct by a Forum member. Should any member's position on the Forum be compromised because of an investigation by Cosmopolitan or any other public agency, they will be expected to stand down pending the outcome of the investigation.

18.3 The Forum will ask any member to suspend their activities in the work and interests of the Forum while the Association investigates such matters.

I recognise and understand all the values in this document. I agree to agree to and uphold all the principles in the Forum's Constitution.

As Chair of the Forum I accept the responsibility to sign the Constitution on behalf of Forum members on the understanding that all members are accountable to the philosophy contained in this document.

Signed: Date:
(Forum Chair)

Signed..... Date:
(Cosmopolitan Housing Association)

Signed..... Date:
(Witnessed)

