

# BEDMINSTER TMO



## Consultation & Communications Strategy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This Consultation & Communications Strategy is set against the backdrop of Bedminster TMO having carried out a successful Right To Manage Pre-feasibility Study.

Bedminster TMO came from Bedminster Area Housing Committee, which was the recognised tenant structure at the time that decided by simple majority, to investigate tenant management across Bedminster.

The Pre-feasibility Study was completed in July 2008 with a Right To Manage notice served on and accepted by, Bristol City Council.

This Strategy is intended to guide the work of Bedminster TMO throughout the next stage in TMO development – a Right To Manage Feasibility-Development Study.

Our intention is simple, to ensure that the housing management service offered to Bedminster tenants and leaseholders is the best that can be provided within the budget available, and that the service is managed effectively and efficiently, and locally.

### 2. BACKGROUND

As outlined above, Bedminster TMO came from Bedminster Area Housing Committee.

In order to investigate tenant management, a tenant structure recognised by the landlord needs to apply for TSA funding. Bedminster Area Housing Committee was the appropriate structure at the time to do this.

The Area Housing Committee network was disbanded by Bristol City Council in the summer of 2008. Bedminster TMO framed its own Terms of Reference so therefore stands alone as an independent structure.

Bedminster TMO intends to work with ALL stakeholders across Bedminster, but will give priority to working with any new tenant participation network that the Council creates.

Bristol City Council is obviously the main stakeholder. Bedminster TMO has a strong relationship with the City Council, and both organisations want this to continue.

Bedminster TMO is an active organisation regularly attending a variety of tenant participation structures, holding Open Meetings, distributing publicity material, working with a local Councillor, and working on developing an internet website during 2009.

Bedminster TMO also intends to engage with the Police in the near future, with a view to becoming an important stakeholder in tackling anti-social behaviour across Bedminster.

All Bedminster residents are encouraged to engage with Bedminster TMO via telephone, email and in person at our monthly meetings held at Bedminster Library. As soon as we have an independent budget, we also intend to more actively circulate our monthly meeting minutes via all notice boards and places of community interest. Our newsletter is currently quarterly given the logistics of communicating with our 3021 tenants & leaseholders.

### **3. GUIDEING PRINCIPLES**

Bedminster TMO will consult and communicate:

- Honestly
- Clearly and simply
- Inclusively
- Regularly
- Consistently
- In Plain English
- Without Abbreviation
- Factually and accurately
- Professionally

#### **4. OBJECTIVES FOR THE FEASIBILITY-DEVELOPMENT STUDY**

Bedminster TMO sees the following key components to a successful Feasibility-Development Study:

1. Effectively planning the Feasibility-Development Study
2. Working with the Council at all times
3. Assessing the support for tenant management
4. Assessing tenants & leaseholders issues and priorities to inform the evolution of Bedminster TMO
5. Exploring different management options
6. Carrying out detailed training
7. Expanding Bedminster TMO Board and being representative
8. Learning from up & running Tenant Management Organisations throughout the country
9. Ensuring Equalities & Diversity informs everything we do
10. Understanding housing management and finance
11. Becoming 'Competent'
12. Developing a robust Business Plan
13. Preparing for management
14. Evaluating and re-evaluating identifiable risks
15. Reporting progress to all stakeholders
16. Conducting a 'Test of Opinion'

Throughout the Feasibility-Development Study, Bedminster TMO will ensure that:

- The rights of tenants & leaseholders are maintained
- Opportunities for increased tenant involvement are encouraged
- Tenants & leaseholders interests are paramount

#### **5. AIMS FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

- To raise awareness of Bedminster TMO and the Feasibility-Development Study process with all stakeholders
- To inform all Bedminster tenants & leaseholders of the Right to Manage and the different types of Tenant Management Organisations
- To provide opportunities for all tenants & leaseholders to become involved in the Study

- To ensure that all stakeholders know what is going on and have access to all information produced by the TMO
- To ensure that all tenants & leaseholders have the opportunity to make their views known regarding tenant management
- To listen to, and take account of, the views of all residents
- To ensure complete transparency and to ensure that misinformation is challenged and corrected
- To provide regular honest feedback
- To try to gain support from all stakeholders across Bedminster, and to try to achieve a 50% membership base
- To shape an 'Offer' to tenants & leaseholders that puts their priorities first, ruling nothing in or out

## **7. KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- Bedminster TMO Board
- Bedminster tenants & leaseholders
- Bristol City Council
- Our Lead Advisor
- Bedminster residents
- Recognised tenant structures
- Local voluntary organisations and Churches
- The Police
- Local businesses
- TSA
- Councillors
- Redcliffe Tenants

### **7.1 Bedminster TMO Board**

Bedminster TMO Board will need to fully understand what a Tenant Management Organisation is, can do, and can't do.

The Boards primary objective at all times will be to work hard to develop a housing management solution that puts the interests of tenants & leaseholders first, and effectively communicates this with tenants & leaseholders.

## **7.2 Bedminster tenants & leaseholders**

The most important party to Bedminster TMO is the body of Bedminster tenants & leaseholders.

We recognise that only a very small proportion of our 3021 tenants & leaseholders are involved in at Board level, as with all formal tenant participation structures.

We would like our Board to comprise 10-12 Bedminster tenants & leaseholders that are as representative as possible of our entire 3021, and also have the skills to explore housing management in detail.

## **7.3 Bristol City Council**

The role of the Council will be to:

- Support the development of Bedminster TMO
- Work in genuine partnership with us
- Provide accurate and timely information and advice
- Guidance on completing the CAM

## **7.6 Our Lead Advisor**

The role of our Lead Advisor will be to:

- Provide accurate and timely information and advice
- Ensure the Right To Manage Regulations are adhered to
- Assist in ensuring effective partnership working
- Specifically assisting and advising on issues relating to effectively consulting with our tenants & leaseholders
- Specifically advising on how to involve “difficult to reach” groups
- Providing effective training
- Assisting with Approved Assessment
- Leading on membership related activities
- Reporting to the Council and to the TSA
- General Administration

## **8. CONSULTATION & COMMUNICATION METHODS**

We propose to use the following methods to inform and consult with the various stakeholders.

## **8.1 Newsletters and Information Leaflets**

Quarterly newsletters will be used to provide general and specific information about the Feasibility-Development Study process. These will be formulated by the Board, the Lead Advisor and the City Council, with the Board having overall editorial control.

The newsletters will be made available to a wide variety of stakeholders including local Councillors, Bristol City Council housing staff, trade union representatives and local voluntary sector organisations.

Newsletter translation will be offered in a variety of other languages, in larger print and on audio tape on request.

Information-specific leaflets and flyers (e.g. about Open Meetings) will also be formulated and distributed on an ad-hoc basis.

## **8.2 Website**

The development of a simple website will be a key priority for Bedminster TMO during the Feasibility-Development Study if funding can be obtained.

All information we produce will be available via the website, and opportunities for tenants and others to feedback will also be important.

Update, the website is now up and running including web address. [www.bedminster.co.uk](http://www.bedminster.co.uk)

## **8.3 Local Press**

Local newspapers will be contacted to carry articles concerning the TMO Feasibility-Development Study, and to raise the profile of Bedminster TMO and the Right to Manage.

## **8.4 Local Events**

Every opportunity will be taken to promote Bedminster TMO, to all stakeholders in a variety of ways.

Local event opportunities will include:

- An organised door-knocking campaign
- Attendance at recognised Tenants / Residents Associations meetings and their local events
- Attendance at any occasional local community events throughout Bedminster

- Quarterly TMO network meetings
- Open Surgeries – primarily within tower block foyers
- One-to-one visits as requested

## 8.5 Notice Boards

All Bedminster TMO meetings will be advertised on as many Notice Boards as is practically possible. All newsletter and leaflets/flyers will also be posted as long as the Council is happy for this to happen.

## 8.6 Bedminster TMO Office Accommodation

Obtaining suitable Feasibility-Development Study office accommodation is an immediate priority for Bedminster TMO.

This will not only serve as a physical presence from which consultation and communication can take place, it will also facilitate the work of the TMO Board.

It will also be a 'quick win' for Bedminster TMO and demonstrate that tenant management is not a talking shop.

Office address: Suite 106 ,Citypoint, Temple Gate, Bristol, Bs1 6pl

## 9. FEEDBACK

Ongoing consultation and communication undertaken by Bedminster TMO will inform not just the Feasibility-Development Study itself and the shaping of a TMO for Bedminster, it will also inform the nature of consultation and communication, i.e. we will build on what works locally.

Newsletters and our website will also include feedback on the results of consultation efforts, and invite further feedback from Bedminster tenants and leaseholders.

## 10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

In order to ensure that Bedminster TMO effectively responds to the needs of the whole of the Bedminster community, Equalities & Diversity will be placed at the heart of everything we do.

We have appointed a specific Equalities Officer who is a Bedminster tenant, to lead on this issue.

Most important to Bedminster TMO, is that we consult and communicate with our tenants & leaseholders in different ways and in ways that are appropriate to the individual. As in [APPENDIX 1](#)

## **11. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS STRATEGY**

This Strategy will be kept under constant review in order to assess whether the strategy is effective over time.

Ongoing review will also inform the Strategy itself and will hopefully suggest amendments as required.

We will also monitor other TMO's Consultation & Communications Strategies & again hopefully learn good practice from them.

**GILBERT WEBSTER  
CHAIR BEDMINSTER TMO**

## APPENDIX 1

# BEDMINSTER TMO



## Equal Opportunities Policy

### Our Equal Opportunities Policy Statement:

As an open and democratic organisation, Bedminster TMO is committed to putting tenants and leaseholders needs uppermost.

We strive towards equality in all aspects of Equal Opportunities in practice, and aim to have the highest regard for the equal treatment of all tenants and leaseholders of our estates.

We will not discriminate against any individual because of their race, gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, sexuality, physical disability, political or religious beliefs.

We expect the full co-operation of our entire organisation in meeting our commitment to Equal Opportunities.

It is our role as a TMO to ensure that our commitment to Equal Opportunities is regularly monitored - any complaints/grievances will be thoroughly investigated.

We recognise the importance of diversity within our organisation, and actively promoting Equal Opportunities is fundamental to this.

We also have a designated Equal Opportunities Officer on our Board to offer specialist opinion on relevant issues.

### Our Equal Opportunities Policy:

This Policy outlines our Equal Opportunities considerations and Action Plan.

Equal Opportunities is about:

- ensuring that our TMO fully represents our estates

- attracting and keeping willing and capable people to our TMO
- improving the organisational morale and productivity of our TMO
- avoiding under-using and under-valuing the people that make up our TMO
- developing TMO innovation and good practice.

#### Legal considerations:

It is unlawful to discriminate against people because of their sexual orientation, marital status, gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, age, mental/physical disability, because of pregnancy, childbirth or maternity leave, membership/non-membership of a trade union, or because they are part-time workers or on a fixed term contract.

We have studied the following legislation in drawing up this Policy:

- Race Relations Act 1976, 2000 Amendment and 2003 Amendment Regulations
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975, 1986 Amendment, Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005 and Gender Equality Duty 2007
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations and Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Acts 1995, 2005 & the Disability Equality Duty 2006
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

We are aware that the Government is currently reviewing all anti-discrimination laws with the aim of implementing a single *Equality Act*.

#### Definitions of Discrimination:

We understand the different definitions of discrimination:

**Direct Discrimination** is when you treat someone less favourably than others for unlawful means e.g. not employing someone because of their gender / disability.

**Indirect Discrimination** is when an organisation has a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone but might disadvantage a particular group.

**Harassment** is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.

**Victimisation** is when you treat someone less favourably or discriminate against them because they have pursued or intend to pursue their rights.

### **Our Statement of Intent:**

Bedminster TMO wholeheartedly believes in Equal Opportunities. We aim to encourage and value diversity and alongside the moral and social reasons for promoting equality and diversity, it is in the best interests of our TMO to attract and retain the best people.

We recognise that many people in our society experience discrimination - be it direct or indirect (i.e. where there is a requirement or condition on all, but which has an adverse impact on a particular group). All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention or not.

We aim to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their potential. We aim to remove such barriers, bias or discrimination and to develop a culture that positively values diversity.

We are committed to achieving and maintaining an organisation that reflects our community. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that everyone is treated fairly within our organisation. Our aim is that our staff team will be representative of all sections of society. Selection for employment or promotion or any other benefit will be on the basis of merit and ability only. Intimidation, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and will lead to disciplinary action.

We will challenge discrimination and ensure equality and fairness at all times for our employees whether part-time, full-time, fixed term or temporary, volunteers and Committee Members.

### **Implementation:**

Our TMO Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this Policy. Consultation will take place annually within our organisation on the implementation and development of this policy, and we have drawn up an Action Plan regarding how we will deliver this policy. Our Committee will monitor effectiveness, and review and develop the policy where necessary.

Monitoring and review will take place annually. Our Equal Opportunities Officer will be involved at every level where possible.

Each employee, volunteer, consultant, trainer, facilitator, Committee Member or other stakeholder is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Breaches of this Policy will be regarded as misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action, termination of contracts for services, or withdrawal of volunteer agreements.

Individuals who feel they have been discriminated against should raise the matter with our TMO Manager or Equal Opportunities Officer, at the discretion of the individual. If the individual is dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint is very serious, or our TMO Manager is the cause of the complaint, the matter should be raised at Committee level.

Bedminster TMO will ensure that all new employees, volunteers, and Committee Members receive induction on this policy and action plan and that consultants, trainers and facilitators are fully informed.

Training and guidance will be provided, and resources will be made available to fulfil the aims of this policy. The policy will be widely promoted, and copies will be freely available and displayed in our TMO office.

This Policy also needs to be viewed in conjunction with our (separate) Complaints Policy.

Action Plan:

Whilst Bedminster TMO is not yet an employing organisation, we set out below the actions we will monitor.

	Notes:	Action required:
<p><b>Policy and planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does Bedminster TMO have an Equal Opportunities policy?</li> <li>• Does the policy cover all areas of possible unfair discrimination, under legislation and good practice?</li> </ul>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Monitor over time.</p> <p>Monitor over time.</p>
<p><b>Recruitment and Selection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an agreed</li> </ul>	<p>Not yet in place.</p>	<p>To be developed.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are job applications encouraged from a diverse range of applicants?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Not yet an employing organisation.</b></p>	<p><b>N/A.</b></p>
<p><b>Retaining and Developing Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are development opportunities planned around the individual and their work priorities?</li> <li>• Does all training including induction take account of equality and diversity issues, and that all Committee Members and staff know their rights and responsibilities?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Not yet an employing organisation.</b></p> <p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p><b>N/A.</b></p> <p><b>Monitor over time.</b></p>
<p><b>Retirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the organisation have a normal retirement age below the default retirement age of 65, and if so can it be justified?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Not yet an employing organisation.</b></p>	<p><b>N/A.</b></p>
<p><b>Committee Members, volunteers, consultants and trainers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all members, volunteers, consultants and trainers informed about this Policy?</li> <li>• Does the Committee reflect the diversity of the local community?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>Broadly</b></p>	<p><b>Monitor over time.</b></p> <p><b>Monitor over time.</b></p>

Evaluation of the Action Plan:

Our Action Plan will be reviewed by the Board on an annual basis.

**FEBRUARY 2010.**