

Tenant Empowerment Grant enables an Option Study at VICTORIA CENTRE

With confirmed written support of Nottingham City Council and Nottingham City Homes VICTRA have secured a government funded Option Study.

What does this mean?

The grant, although provided by the government, is administered by the Housing Corporation. Cathie French of COMPAS@TPAS is going to be assisting with this Option Study. COMPAS@TPAS is part of TPAS the national Tenant Participation Advisory Service and is a government Approved Agency for delivery of independent advice to tenants, leaseholders and communities. Further information about the Tenant Empowerment Programme, funding and grant funded options can be obtained from www.housingcorp.gov.uk/tenantempowermentprogramme, www.tpas.org.uk or by calling COMPAS@TPAS on our free phone number XXXXXXXX

What is an Option Study?

The Option Study is an opportunity for everyone to get involved in looking at issues, considering priorities and agreeing together what people living at Victoria Flats see as the best course of action.

The outcome of the Option Study could be a new Service Level Agreement with Nottingham City Homes, an Action Plan to improve services or residents may decide that would like to look further into setting up their own management organisation to run services locally.

The Option Study takes about 4 – 6 months and everyone living at Victoria Flats can be as involved as much or as little as they want. However, everyone will receive newsletters like this one to help keep everyone informed about what is happening regularly.

There are no preconceived ideas - VICTRA simply wants to know what you think.

An Option Study is simply an opportunity to look at opportunities for influence; no firm decisions are made about future management of services at any point in the project. Decisions made by people during the Option Study would be about choosing which of the options to look further into.

To look into this, we'll need your help.....

We need to change our constitution so that it's possible for every tenant and leaseholder in the Victoria Centre to become a member by choice (at the moment everyone is automatically deemed to be a member).

We can't even think about it without you!

VICTRA works on your behalf and has done so since 1972. As a member you can be part of the Option Study and have a direct say and take part in any plans for the future.

Lots of ways to get involved: e-mail, internal post, internal phone or join the committee

If you want to be a member of VICTRA Membership forms are available from the VICTRA office at Room 4-20 any evening or call Internal 7045 and we will drop a membership form into you!

If I am not a signed up member can I still have a say?

Absolutely! VICTRA wants to hear all views of those living at Victoria Centre Flats.

You would need to be a member to vote on what VICTRA do, but the good news is that all tenants and all leaseholders of the Victoria Centre flats can become members. You just need to fill in a membership form. VICTRA has been elected us to work on your behalf and wants to continue doing just that. Sign up today and have your say!

Issues that come up regularly

We know that many of you are concerned about issues such as Security, Cleaning , Parking, Repairs, Roof Garden maintenance, Lettings policy and Lifts to name but a few. You may have other concerns and we would like to make sure all issues are considered as part of the Option Study.

Focus on what you want!

We will be holding 3 open sessions for Residents to come and tell us their views, ask any questions they want to and to find out what the Option Study is all about.

Dates to be added

Do not let others make your decisions for you – come to one of the sessions to make your views known. You will also be able to join VICTRA as a member at these sessions if you want to.

Questions people often have**How much will membership it cost me?**

Not a penny – Membership of VICTRA is free to all tenants and leaseholders living at Victoria Centre Flats.

How will I know what is going on?

You can keep yourself informed about what is going on by reading the newsletters that will go out to all tenants and leaseholders whether you are a member of VICTRA or not.

What will I have to do if I become a member?

You don't have to do anything if you don't want to but you can join one of our Panels so that you can give VICTRA your opinions regularly.

Will my opinion count?

Your opinion is important and we have developed the panels to ensure that you can give your opinion in the way that suits you best.

If I don't sign up will you assume I am a member?

No. It must be your choice to become a member and complete the membership form.

Where can I get more information?

There is plenty of information about Option Studies and the Right to Manage in the VICTRA office which is open every evening from 6 to 9.

If I am not a member can I still have a say?

Yes your views will be listened to and taken into account by the work of the Option Study with VICTRA. However, to have a vote at the AGM you need to be a member. The good news is that all tenants and all leaseholders can become members. You just need to fill in a membership form.

Further information can be accessed at

www.tpas.org.uk;

www.communities.gov.uk

www.housingcorp.gov.uk

Option Study Projects elsewhere.....

Hurst Farm, Matlock Derbyshire

Tenants, residents and leaseholders were feeling that services were organised and contractors paid without any reference to those receiving them. An excellent relationship between the council landlord and the local tenant group decided together to look at options for closer working and a real role for tenants in setting the service standards and monitoring the delivery of the contract. The option chosen by Hurst Farm Tenants and Residents was to agree an Estate Service Level agreement with Hurst Farm Committee as members of all contract monitoring groups. This included the group as part of the future contract selection and appointment process. Once contracts started they continued in a monitoring role and were able to directly work with their landlord and contractors bringing to light any contract failings.

Northfield Tenant Management Organisation, Birmingham

This recently completed Option Study involved over 7,700 council owned homes and the communities living there. Many options were considered and together the Northfield Group sought opinions of all by knocking on doors, holding meetings and offering lots of ways to be heard by the group. The final part of the option study found that most people wanted to find out just what it would mean to be a fully fledged tenant management organisation with direct management responsibilities for some of their own housing services. The group have now applied for a Feasibility Study Grant to explore things further. People are happy with this as they know for sure that nothing could happen without everyone having a vote in an independently verified postal ballot where the majority of households want their homes managed by their own tenant management organisation.

There are many, many more examples and options to look at. The Option Study will provide you with an opportunity to consider the whole range of Options available.

Talking your Language

If you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving this newsletter in larger print, Braille, on tape or in another language please call the VICTRA Office on 7045.

Useful Numbers

Please provide useful numbers such as Victra, Housing Office, Repairs Service etc.