

When the ballot opens vote 'YES' for the transfer to Trust



Your Home, Your Future

Big ambitions, local services

What's in this proposal for you?



Freeze rents for three years



Invest £3 million more in your homes



Build new housing



Keep your local staff delivering excellent local services



Involve more residents in more ways



Protect your rights



Welcome you into a well-managed organisation

Make sure you have your say on the proposal and get in touch by 24 June 2019

All the important information you need about the proposed transfer to Trust Housing Association



Introduction



Wishaw and District Housing Association is proposing a partnership with Trust Housing Association that would deliver a range of benefits for tenants, staff and others including improved rent affordability and more investment in your homes and local environment.

The partnership would involve Wishaw and District becoming part of Trust. This is known as a transfer of engagements. It would mean that Wishaw and District no longer exists as a housing association. Trust would be responsible for the homes and services we provide to you.

Who are Trust?

Following a competitive process, Trust were unanimously selected by Wishaw and District tenants, staff and board members as our 'preferred partner'. Just like Wishaw and District, Trust is a registered social landlord, regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator. They are also a charity and not-for-profit organisation. Trust is a national housing association and provides homes and services to their tenants across 23 local authority areas in Scotland. They already provide homes in the North Lanarkshire area, including in Wishaw, Motherwell and Airdrie. If the proposed transfer goes ahead, over one third of Trust's homes would be in North Lanarkshire. Read page 10 to learn more about Trust.

Why Transfer?

The proposed partnership with Trust provides great benefits for Wishaw and District tenants – the offer from Trust has been shaped by the views of tenants. These benefits include a commitment to:

- **Improve rent affordability** – a three-year rent and service charge freeze, followed by a five year rent and service charge guarantee of increases of inflation only increases.
- **Invest £3 million more** in your homes and the local environment.
- Continue to provide **excellent services, delivered by your local staff from the Wishaw office.**
- Provide access to a **wider range of services.**
- **Build new homes on the Main Street site in Wishaw,** subject to planning and Scottish Government funding.

Read pages 4 and 5 for more details about the benefits to tenants.

After detailed and careful consideration, in consultation with others including tenants, the Wishaw and District Board have established that remaining independent is not a sustainable option and believe that the proposed partnership with Trust will do much more for tenants.

The transfer to Trust and the **benefits will only happen if a majority of Wishaw and District tenants vote for it. If our tenants vote no, the Scottish Housing Regulator will have to decide what actions it takes.** It has the powers to advance a transfer of assets to another housing association which **could mean a less favourable offer for tenants** to the one we have developed with Trust.

So what happens next?

The publication of this Stage 1 Consultation Notice marks the start of two consultation periods prior to the tenant ballot:

- Stage 1 – over the next 28 days we are inviting you to share your views on the detailed proposals by **24th June 2019**. During this time our staff, alongside staff from Trust, will be out and about in your community chatting to tenants about the proposals.
- Stage 2 – following this, we will notify you of any significant changes and allow time for tenants to raise any further objections to our plans.
- Finally, all tenants will be invited to vote in a ballot over August and September – at the appropriate time you will receive your ballot paper in the post and information on the different ways you can cast your vote.

What do you need to do?

Your views are very important so, please, read this document carefully and make sure:

- Your voice is heard by giving us your feedback and views by **24th June 2019**. See page 11 and the enclosed feedback form for more information on how to get in touch and have your say.
- When the ballot opens, we would encourage you to cast your vote and vote for the partnership with Trust. The transfer to Trust and benefits for tenants will only happen if a majority of tenants vote for it. This is your choice and your vote counts.



Brenda Higgins
Chair,
Wishaw and District
Housing Association



Niall Gordon
Chief Executive,
Wishaw and District
Housing Association

Consulting with you and what happens next

Stage 1 – Now

Stage 1 Notice is the start of the formal tenants consultation process to explain the transfer.

You have 28 days to give us your views – fill in the feedback form by 24 June

Your feedback will be considered by the Wishaw and District Board

Stage 2 – Summer 2019

We review the feedback and let you know about any significant changes

You will be given time to consider this and raise any objections

If the Board is satisfied with the outcomes of Stage 2, we will hold the Ballot

Ballot and beyond – Summer 2019

Tenants will vote in the Ballot – conducted by an independent provider of voting services

You can cast your vote in a ballot box, or by post, phone, text or online. Your vote is confidential

Joint tenants will get one vote each

If most tenants vote say “YES” to the transfer it will proceed

Trust's promises to all Wishaw and District tenants

Trust promises to	If tenants vote YES for the transfer to Trust	If tenants vote NO on the transfer to Trust
 <p>1. Freeze rents for three years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your rent and service charges will be frozen and will not change until April 2023 • Then, from April 2023 until March 2028, you will have a guarantee that your rent and service charges will only go up by the cost-of-living (the CPI inflation rate) • Support from a new welfare benefits service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no rent freeze • There will be no rent guarantee – the WDHA Business Plan assumes your rent will go up by the cost-of-living (the CPI inflation rate) every year. This is just an assumption – the actual increase may be higher or lower
 <p>2. Invest £3 million more in your homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extra £3 million will be spent on improving homes by April 2023 – including making homes warmer and reducing heating bills • This includes around £400,000 to be invested in improving local communal areas, like back courts, neighbourhoods and environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no extra investment in homes or neighbourhoods
 <p>3. Build new housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning is underway for around 50 new affordable homes in Main Street Wishaw, providing much-needed housing and enhancing the town centre • New opportunities for new-build housing will be explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Main Street Wishaw development will not take place as planned – Wishaw and District does not have the financial or internal capability to deliver • Wishaw and District would be unlikely to build any new properties in the foreseeable future
 <p>4. Keep your local staff delivering excellent local services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent services will continue to be delivered by your local staff from your local office in Wishaw • You will be able to access a greater range of services, including those for older people and digital services • The Wishaw and District name and brand identity will continue • Wishaw and District staff's rights will be protected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your services will be maintained within the financial limits that Wishaw & District can afford • There will be no additional services

Trust promises to	If tenants vote YES for the transfer to Trust	If tenants vote NO on the transfer to Trust
 <p>5. Involve more residents in more ways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local Wishaw & District Area Committee, made up of Wishaw and District tenants and residents, will be set up to shape local priorities and make sure Trust keeps its promises • Many more opportunities will be developed with Wishaw and District tenants and residents • An enhanced customer involvement structure will be developed with Wishaw and District tenants and residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Wishaw and District have established that Wishaw and District cannot remain independent. If tenants vote no, the Regulator will have to decide what action it then takes. It has powers to advance a transfer of assets to another housing association. This could mean a less favourable package for tenants • There will be no enhancement to current participation structures
 <p>6. Protect your rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your rights as a tenant will stay the same • You will keep all the same rights and responsibilities – your Tenancy Agreement will transfer over to Trust as your new landlord • Like Wishaw and District, Trust is a charitable housing association regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (in Low Engagement), which safeguards tenants’ interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Wishaw and District have established that Wishaw and District cannot remain independent and, if tenants vote no, an alternative partner will be found, with a new proposal, which may be less favourable • The Scottish Housing Regulator is likely to continue to safeguard your interests by keeping Wishaw and District in Statutory Action
 <p>7. Welcome you into a well-managed organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wishaw and District will become part of a strong, well-managed charitable housing association, ready to face the future • Staff and tenants will be able to go on Trust’s digital journey to improved services, freeing up staff to have “more time to care” • Membership unchanged – all Wishaw and District Members will retain their shareholding and Trust will issue new £1 shares. Membership will remain open to anyone for £1 • Two places will be allocated on the Trust Board for Wishaw and District representatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wishaw and District would have to remain in Statutory Action with the Scottish Housing Regulator, with appointees on the Board and a Statutory Manager. An alternative transfer partner would have to be found, with a new proposal, which may be less favourable • Membership unchanged

What tenants think...

Your views have informed this transfer proposal. Tenants, through the Residents Involvement Team, were closely involved with the selection of Trust as the preferred partner. Their decision was based on meeting the priorities that Wishaw and District tenants had identified in the strategic review in 2018:

1

Keeping homes well maintained and warm

4

Keeping estates well maintained

8

Building new homes in the local area

2

Keeping rents and service charges affordable

5

Keeping a local office

9

Providing better access to welfare and housing advice

3

Maintaining high quality customer services

6

Providing access to online services

10

Improving communications and opportunities for engagement

7

More investment in homes

11

Providing wider activities

Your views are still very important.

You should take the chance to have your say by completing the enclosed feedback form by 24 June

Since then, tenants have continued to be very involved in shaping this proposal.

1

Tenants were invited to attend roadshows held in Wishaw, Motherwell & Shotts

2

Tenants were given the opportunity to meet Trust Housing Association staff and tenants at “Getting to Know You” events held in Trust developments

3

There was a Chat and Chips event in April which resulted in a new Residents’ Forum being established

4

Tenants have met with senior Trust managers on a one-to-one basis

Some members of the new Residents’ Forum are pictured below, with the Chief Executives of Wishaw and District, Trust and TIS. The Forum, with support from TIS, has examined this proposal in detail.

You can visit the Wishaw and District office any Tuesday between 2 and 3pm to speak with a senior member of Trust staff, or call the office if you’d like a home visit – contact details are on the back page.

Please see our insert for a list of events we are holding over June, where you can come along and find out more about the transfer.



What staff think...

“We’re all up for the transfer.”

YOUR LOCAL WISHAW & DISTRICT TEAM



Property Size	Average Annual Saving Year 1	Average Annual Saving Year 2	Average Annual Saving Year 3	Total average saving over 3 years
2 Apartment	£73	£148	£225	£446
3 Apartment	£82	£165	£250	£497
4 Apartment	£90	£181	£275	£546
5+ Apartment	£95	£191	£290	£576



An average tenant would be around £5 a week and £260 per year better off by year 3 if the transfer goes ahead. Please contact your staff at the Wishaw and District office if you want to discuss what this means for you.

“The rent freeze and rent guarantee represents the best possible deal for Wishaw and District tenants, resulting in significant real rent savings and more affordable rents over the next 8 years, if the transfer goes ahead. This is excellent news for tenants.”



GREGOR COLVILLE,
HOUSING OPERATIONS MANAGER

“I was involved in selecting Trust as our “preferred partner” and I am convinced that transferring to Trust will mean that we’ll be able to continue providing first-class services from an office here in Wishaw. And we’ll have great support from the team at Trust’s head office in Edinburgh, which will save us from having to rely on consultants and other external support. I’m looking forward to it.”



SHARON HARKIN,
CUSTOMER SERVICES ASSISTANT

“The £3 million on offer will make a big difference to the homes that tenants live in. It will allow us to invest in warmer, more energy efficient homes, provide more modern upgrades and deliver real improvements to our neighbourhoods and back courts that we couldn’t do on our own. We are ready to get started!”



GED MCFARLANE, MAINTENANCE OFFICER

Approximate spend	Improvements to homes and communities
£1.4 million	Warmer, more energy efficient homes created
£1 million	Allocated to the Wishaw & District Area Committee who will be able to shape and influence how it is best used on local investment priorities, which could include internal improvements
£400,000	Back courts, neighbourhoods and external environments improved
£200,000	Internal upgrades and improvements



About Trust Housing Association

Trust is a not-for-profit registered social landlord and charity, regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator and Care Inspectorate. Trust has been delivering quality homes and excellent services for over 45 years. They are committed to continually improving the homes and services they provide and the value for money they offer to tenants.

Since 1973, Trust has grown into one of Scotland's leading housing, care and support providers with over 2600 homes across the length and breadth of Scotland – around 700 of which are in North Lanarkshire and the surrounding areas. Trust has offices in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Arran.

Trust is a large employer with around 600 full-time and part-time staff based across Scotland, with Investor in People 'Gold' and 'Leader in Diversity' awards.

Trust is currently working on ambitious plans to improve customer services and keep rents affordable by making the best of technology. They also have current plans to build 150 new affordable homes across Scotland and have aspirations to build significantly more new affordable homes in the coming years.

If you would like to know more about Trust please visit www.trustha.org.uk

"We put our customers at the heart of everything we do and I'm very proud of our reputation for personal service. We are very keen to hear what Wishaw and District tenants have to say so that we can respond to their priorities and focus on the things that matter most."



RHONA MCLEOD, TRUST'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Independent advice from the Tenants Information Service (TIS)



The Tenants Information Service (TIS) has been appointed as your Independent Tenant Advisor. They have independently assessed the Business Case that underpins this proposal and have worked with tenants to shape this transfer proposal. They are still available to

- provide advice on this proposal to all tenants
- answer any questions you may have

See page 11 for information on how to contact TIS if you want independent advice.

"I would encourage every tenant to carefully read this booklet and take the opportunity to contribute your thoughts and views."



"As well as speaking to team members from Wishaw and District and Trust Housing Association, you can also speak to one of us, for completely impartial advice on this transfer and what it means for you and your home."

ILENE CAMPBELL, TIS CHIEF EXECUTIVE

When the ballot opens vote 'yes' for the transfer to Trust

Get in touch and have your say

Your views are very important to us. Let us know your thoughts on this transfer proposal **by 24 June 2019**:

Wishaw and District contact details



Visit the office at
55 Kirk Road,
Wishaw ML2 7BL



Phone us on
01698 377200



Email us on
transfer@wishawdha.org.uk



Complete and
return the enclosed
feedback form

We will be out and about visiting all tenants to explain the transfer proposal and to get your feedback.

Please see our insert for a list of events we are holding over June, where you can come along and find out more about the transfer.

TIS contact details

If you want independent advice contact TIS on



Freephone:
0800 488 0982



Email: info@tis.org.uk



Phone us on
01698 377200



Email us on
transfer@wishawdha.org.uk

If you would like this publication in a different format or language, please contact us at Wishaw and District Housing Association. Our contact details are on page 11.

Your opinion is important

Please let us know what you think about the transfer proposals by **Monday 24th June 2019.**

Please return in the enclosed freepost envelope or return to the wishaw and district office

1. What do you think about the transfer proposal and what is most important to you?

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2. Based on what you have read and heard, how are you likely to vote in the tenant ballot?

- Yes (in favour of the transfer to Trust)
- No
- Don't know
- Don't plan to vote

3. If you plan to vote yes, can you tell us why?

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4. If you plan to vote no, can you provide more details about your concerns or objections?

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Is there anything we can do, or further information we can provide, to address your concerns or objections to the transfer proposal?

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Do you have any other thoughts or comments on the transfer proposal?

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If you wish to give us your name, please do so below:

Name

Address

.....
.....

Thank you for your feedback.

Your chance to have your say about the proposed transfer

Come along and have all your questions answered

Discuss the proposal with senior staff from Wishaw and District, Trust and TIS, your Independent Tenant Adviser

Thursday 6 June,
6pm - 7pm

Wishaw and District office
55 Kirk Road, Wishaw ML2 7BL

Monday 10 June,
6pm - 7pm

Shotts Community Centre
Kirk Road, Shotts ML2 7ET

Tuesday 18 June,
6pm - 7pm

Isa Money Community Centre
Muirhouse Road, Motherwell ML1 2LT

Tea, coffee and sandwiches

Contact us on **01698 377200** or transfer@wishawdha.org.uk if you need transport arranged or if you have any other queries

All expenses will be covered



www.wishawdha.org.uk/Transfer