

# Resident Involvement Policy

## INTRODUCTION

The Association will put residents at the heart of the organisation providing a range of opportunities for involving residents both formally and informally. This will enable South Northants Homes and residents to work in partnership to make key decisions about how housing and related services will be developed and delivered.

The involvement of residents will be key to the continuous improvement of housing services provided by South Northants Homes which has a positive influence on the quality of life for residents in local neighbourhoods.

## POLICY STATEMENT

South Northants Homes puts residents at the centre of decision making, providing a range of opportunities for residents to be involved at a governance, strategic and local delivery level. Residents input to the development of services is regarded as pivotal to the efficiency and effectiveness of the housing service.

## OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the resident involvement policy are to:

1. Provide and develop with residents a range of ways for residents to be involved in influencing decision making about housing and related services at all levels of the organisation. This will include opportunities to be involved in the following:
  - Tenant Board members
  - Customer Committee
  - Service specific customer forums eg Repairs and Improvements Forum, Older Persons Forum, Housing Management Forum, Communications Forum, Leaseholder Forum and Equality and Accessibility Forum
  - Residents Associations
  - Residents meetings
  - Customer Satisfaction Surveys to monitor the quality of service from a residents perspective
  - Mystery Shopping
2. Explore with residents new ways of involving residents using information and communication technology eg development of an interactive webpage

3. Promote the support available to help residents to be actively involved, eg transport to forums and meetings, information in large print for the visually impaired, reimbursement of expenses for attending meetings
4. Maintain a specific budget for resident involvement which will include support for involved residents expenses, child and dependency care costs, training and development, venue hire and refreshments for residents meetings
5. Actively publicise activities and the ways that residents can be involved in a range of ways including through the website; leaflets at sign up and in the South Northants Homes office reception and sheltered schemes; through the residents newsletter; tenants handbook, annual performance report; service standards, local newsletters for sheltered schemes; residents groups; and through events we participate in out in the community including estate walks and community connections drop ins.
6. Produce information which is easily accessible in a range of formats on request eg other languages, audio tape and large print
7. Develop a training programme for staff to ensure everyone is aware of the resident involvement policy and the range of activities available for residents.
8. Develop a specific training programme for residents to ensure that they have the opportunity to develop any skills and knowledge required to be involved effectively in a range of ways and at different levels of the organisation.
9. Working towards recognition by the Tenants Service Authority and the Audit Commission and sector generally as a high performing organisation and good practice example of involving residents in influencing housing services.
10. Working towards achieving resident satisfaction with the opportunities to participate comparable and higher than the best performers in a similar housing association. This will be tested through the three yearly resident satisfaction survey.
11. Compare resident involvement with other similar housing associations and learn from what they do well in terms of involving residents in decision making

## **REGULATORY CODE AND GUIDANCE**

Housing associations must seek and be responsive to residents' views and priorities: reflecting these interests in their business strategy; giving residents and other stakeholders opportunities to comment on performance; enabling residents to play their part in decision making providing opportunities for residents to explore, and play their part, in how services are managed and provided.

## HOUSING CORPORATION INVOLVEMENT POLICY

**‘Measuring Change’ – Involvement Impact Assessments August 2007** . This provides important guidance to housing associations about impact assessments of resident involvement which has been taken into account for this policy and the supporting strategy

### RELEVANT KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY

- Resident Involvement
- Access and Customer care in housing services
- Diversity
- Value for Money

### OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- Resident Involvement and Community Development Strategy
- Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Access and Customer Care Strategy

### LINKS TO BUSINESS PLAN

South Northants Homes Mission Statement and core values emphasise the importance of resident involvement to the association:

**Mission Statement** . to provide homes and housing services that make a positive difference to the communities in which we work

**Core Values:** The following core values underpin the approach to resident involvement outlined in this policy:

- Provide efficient and accessible services and work continually to improve them to meet customers needs;
- Listen to customers and involve them in the development and management of their homes
- Respect and value the contribution of all people involved in our organization, including customers, staff and stakeholders.

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Everyone at South Northants Homes is responsible for the implementation of the resident involvement policy through the strategy and action plan. The Board of Management is responsible for the strategic direction of resident involvement outlined in this policy.

The Community Development Manager, assisted by the Resident Involvement Officer, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the resident involvement strategy and associated action plan.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that service delivery plans include resident involvement activities linked to this policy.

All staff will have resident involvement activities included in their job descriptions and will develop with their managers personal objectives to achieve the objectives in the service delivery plans and this policy.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

South Northants Homes will work with involved residents to monitor resident involvement activity and to ensure it is value for money

Resident involvement activity will be monitored by both staff and involved tenants. Data will be collected relating to the costs of the residentsqinvolvement activities and the time spent on them in relation to the results gained from the involvement and the difference that these results have had on the residents.

This information will then be used to carry out an impact assessment which needs to be carried out each year. This assessment will identify which resident involvement activity has been the most effective in relation to its cost in money and time. It will specifically focus on the value for money and equality and diversity.

The impact assessment results will be used to plan the resident involvement activities for the next year. The results of the assessment will be reported to residents in the annual Resident Involvement Statement and in the residentsqnewsletter and on the website.

The Impact Assessment will be reported the Customer Committee together with the Resident Involvement Statement once a year.

The strategy and action plan underpinning this policy will be reviewed annually.

This resident involvement policy will be reviewed every three years.

**Equality Impact Assessment Carried Out:** Initial screen

**Person responsible for review:** Community Development Manager

**Date of review:** October 2009

**Next Review:** October 2010