

Resident Involvement Strategy

1. Introduction

Chevin's vision is to 'build a better future for people and communities'. Our resident involvement strategy 2009 – 2012 is our commitment to involving tenants and residents in developing the services they receive.

Our aim is to ensure that there are maximum opportunities for tenants and residents to get involved in our involvement work so they can influence the decisions we make and can determine the services we provide. We will provide a menu of opportunities¹ providing a choice of methods for tenants and residents to participate. We will endeavour to make our opportunities accessible, flexible and that engage tenants in ways in which they feel most comfortable. We are committed to providing value for money and ensuring that our involvement activities are as effective as possible.

Our strategy has been developed with our tenants and residents starting with a consultation day in December 2008 where we evaluated our current activity, looked at peer group performance and residents put forward suggestions for improvement. The draft strategy was presented to our resident panels in April 2009.

The key aims of this strategy are:

- to ensure tenant consultation and involvement is embedded in all areas of our work by providing a variety of ways for tenants and residents to get involved
- to improve our involvement structures to enable tenants and residents to get involved in scrutinising our performance by introducing a performance panel
- to ensure that what we do is effective and makes a difference by monitoring how services change as a result of involvement and by monitoring satisfaction rates
- to benchmark our activities against peer group and national performance on resident involvement

2. Wider context

The current Labour Government is showing a strong commitment to empowering tenants and ensuring that they are able to influence the services they receive from public bodies including social housing landlords. A number of influential reports have placed considerable importance upon enhancing the position of tenants, the most notable being the Hills report² and the Cave Review³ both commissioned by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The 2008 Housing and Regeneration Act led to the

¹ Your Voice leaflet – reviewed summer 2007

² Ends and Means: The future roles of social housing in England – John Hills February 2007

³ The Cave Review of Social Housing Regulation – Professor Martin Cave June 2007

creation of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).

The TSA's role is to champion the needs of tenants and residents, to promote choice for tenants and residents and to challenge providers of affordable housing to meet or exceed the highest standards of organisational effectiveness and service delivery⁴.

A National Tenants' Voice put forward as an idea in the Cave Review is due to be established by 2010 and will further enhance the position of tenants. It will give them a structure through which they can challenge the way landlords deliver services both individually and collectively.

The Audit Commission is responsible for inspecting standards of services provided by social housing landlords. They have produced Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE's) to assist landlords with their own self assessment toolkit. There is a resident involvement KLOE that we have and will continue to assess ourselves against to ensure that we are meeting the level of excellence expected of us.

Our resident involvement work was last audited in 2006.

3. Chevin's context

We have a corporate vision, mission and values that provide a platform for our commitments in this strategy. Our commitment to resident involvement is supported in our business plan that sets out engagement with our residents as a corporate priority.

Our corporate values

These values reflect our role as a landlord, investor in the community and as an employer

We believe:

- Tenants want to live in an environment that is safe and secure
- All our customers deserve the highest quality of service
- In listening to and understanding the communities in which we work
- Our aims are better realised through partnership working
- In a working environment which supports and develops staff
- In being open, fair and honest

Our corporate key aims and objectives

We aim:

⁴ Tenant Services Authority's Interim Corporate Plan December 2008 – March 2010

- To provide and develop good quality homes in sustainable communities
- To develop a greater customer focus, enabling choice and involvement across all our services
- To work efficiently with a focus on creating improved front line services
- To operate in a fair, open and accountable manner
- To be a well governed, well managed organisation and an employer of choice

Our definition of resident involvement

We define resident involvement as:

‘The participation of residents, prior to, during and after any activity that affects them, their household or the community in which they live, and by working together for mutual benefit and to improve the services that all our customers receive’.

Our ‘Get Involved’ leaflet publicises the many ways that tenants and residents can become involved in our work and are summarized in table 1.

Table 1 – A summary of our involvement methods

This table sets out the ways that residents can currently get involved and the level of influence for each activity.

Information	Consultation	Involvement	Community activity
Newsletters	Newsletter	Board members	TARAs
Website	Website	Resident panels	Driving schools
Housemark membership	STATUS survey	Disability group	Youth Build
Resident conferences	Resident conferences	Equality & Diversity steering group	Youth football
Training days	Armchair panel	Editorial panel	Scheme fun day events
Access to minutes of panel meetings	Satisfaction surveys	Consumer panel	Tenant training programme

		Shareholding membership	Resident panel budget
		Re-investment group	
		Component clinics	
		Estate walkabouts	
		Mystery shopping	
		Resident conferences	
		Strategy days	

Board members We have places on our Board for tenants. The role of the Board is to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the organisation, to manage the risks and to oversee our growth and development.

TARA's and community projects

We will support the development of TARA's on our schemes or in partnership with other organizations and other non Chevin residents.

We will support community development initiatives with guidance or advice, with staff or financial resources. We will expect the initiative to be of benefit to the communities and neighbourhoods within which we work.

Our involvement statement

We review the impact of our involvement activities annually with tenants and residents and produce an Involvement Statement each year to set out our commitments for the following year.

Policy work

Residents will continue to be invited to get involved in the development and review of policies. We are committed to involving residents in the most effective way and in events where they feel comfortable to make their opinions known and make a meaningful contribution to policy work.

What we know about our tenants

Census profiling: Information that we have extracted from the census profiling work that we've been doing since 2006 helps us understand the diverse make-up of the tenants and their household members living in our homes. This area of work is reported to and monitored by, our Equality and Diversity Steering Group. With regard to this strategy, this demographic information enables us to tailor our involvement activities to the most relevant audience and monitor the effectiveness of involvement methods by specific groups. (NB: We will produce an appendix outlining the demographic profile of our tenants and household occupants where known using data produced by our 2009 census project)

STATUS: We carried out a STATUS tenant satisfaction survey in December 2007 and this told us that:

85% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service they receive from us
82% of tenants are satisfied with the information that we provide but that 10% are dissatisfied
71% of tenants feel that we take account of their views but that 9% don't

These headline statistics give us an internal benchmark from which to monitor whether we are improving services to tenants' satisfaction. We have a rolling programme of satisfaction surveys covering many services and we monitor the direction of satisfaction levels against those reported in our last STATUS report.

Training, support and resources

We will:

- support tenant and residents to get involved in any of our activities or events by paying for their travel costs, reasonable childcare costs and other related expenses. We will arrange transport to and from events where required.
- rotate the location of events to give as many tenants as possible an opportunity to participate in events.
- ensure that our venues and events are accessible and that we are mindful of cultural or religious requirements.
- provide interpreters, mobility assistance and hearing loops where required.
- continue to fund the resident panel budgets to give members an opportunity to fund individual and collective requests from tenants to support local scheme and community activities.

- support the development of new tenants and residents' associations and we will attend meetings of TARA and other local community groups where they want us to.
- continue to provide funding for a tenants' training programme to support academic or vocational training to enable them to take up educational or employment opportunities.
- provide an annual training programme for resident panel members to give them information about our business so that they can contribute more effectively to discussions at panel meetings and make decisions.
- continue to circulate good practice briefings, external publications on resident involvement and make available Inside Housing magazines.
- encourage panel members to register with Housemark so they can access the wealth of good practice and benchmarking information on there.

Equality and Diversity commitments

We have a separate framework⁵ for Equality and Diversity that sets out our corporate commitment to diversity matters. The Framework should be read alongside this strategy in terms of ensuring that there is fair access to our involvement activities and that people's individual needs are taken account of when we plan and offer involvement activities.

Our website provides on-line information and access to our resident involvement opportunities.

Our Equality and Diversity Steering group as well as our disability group assists us in ensuring that we take diversity matters into consideration in our involvement work and helps us to monitor our effectiveness and drive forward service improvements.

Our resident panel members abide by a Code of Conduct that sets out the equality and diversity expectations of them and we monitor adherence to these principles.

Monitoring and benchmarking

To ensure that our involvement activities are making a difference to our services, we will evaluate the outcomes and the benefits of each activity to both tenants as well as the benefits for Chevin.

We will ask attendees to complete satisfaction surveys at each event and these will be analysed so we can learn what went well and whether there are areas we need to improve upon.

⁵ Chevin's Equality and Diversity Framework July 2007

When we carry out satisfaction surveys, we will analyse the results and write a report to present the findings and outline areas for improvement. Feedback will be sent back to respondents to report on the findings and to let them know how their feedback has been used.

We will attend a regional good practice sharing group to discuss the effectiveness of our involvement and to learn from others.

Our action plan will be monitored and we will present a progress report to our panels every year so that they can see what has been achieved and what has made a difference to the services they receive. This document will be formally reviewed in March 2012 although with the establishment of the Tenant Services Authority, it is anticipated that our approach may have to change to meet (currently unknown) regulatory requirements.

Value for money

Chevin is committed to providing services which represent the best possible value for money (VFM) for its customers.

Our commitment to financial efficiency is reflected in one of our key corporate aims, "to work efficiently with a focus on creating improved front line services".

We have a Value for Money Strategy that sets out some commitments that this strategy also considers.

We will carry out benchmarking with others of our costs and the outcomes from our involvement work. We will use Housemark's resident involvement framework to record and to analyse our activities, costs and benefits.

We will consider value for money when arranging events and activities, thinking of the location and cost of venues, residents traveling expenses and refreshment costs. We will employ cost effective methods when providing information and feedback to residents.

We will look to work with other social landlord partners to provide involvement opportunities and share the costs of this.

We will endeavour to get residents involved in key areas of our service delivery so that this contributes to the improvement in our key performance indicators and the achievement of our business targets and objectives.

KA1: To provide and develop good quality homes in sustainable communities

KA2: To develop a greater customer focus, enabling choice and involvement across all of our services

KA3: To work efficiently with a focus on creating improved front-line services

KA4: To operate in a fair, open and accountable manner

KA5: To be a well governed, well managed organisation and an employer of choice

Objective	Key aims	This will be achieved by	Desired outcome	Measurement/target	Timescale
<p>Ensure resident consultation and involvement is embedded in all areas of our work by providing a variety of ways for tenants and residents to get involved</p> <p>Improve feedback to residents on how services have changed as a result of their involvement</p>	KA2	Developing a forward programme of involvement activities and events	<p>Better publicity of involvement opportunities and therefore more take up</p> <p>Improved publicity by staff to residents of forthcoming activities and events</p> <p>Increased attendance at events</p>	Production of annual programme	Annually each May
	KA2	Monitor resident attendance at each involvement activity / event and via each method of engagement	Resources targeted effectively and appropriately to ensure maximum benefit	<p>An increase in attendance at all events</p> <p>Increase in response to surveys</p>	2010
	KA2	Examine the way that resident panel members	Increased satisfaction with involvement in policy work	> 82% panel member satisfaction with consultation on	2010

Objective	Key aims	This will be achieved by	Desired outcome	Measurement/target	Timescale
		get involved in the development and review of policies		policies	
	KA3	Developing estate action plans following estate walkabouts with residents to record action required and action taken	Increased satisfaction with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ cleaning services ➤ gardening services 	Production of an estate action plan per scheme / local area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 65% satisfaction with cleaning ➤ 60% satisfaction with gardening services 	2009
	KA2 KA3	Involve tenants and residents in the review of cleaning and gardening contracts and employment of local contractors	Better quality of contractors and improved performance as well as resident involvement in the review	Number of tenants involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 65% satisfaction with cleaning ➤ 60% satisfaction with gardening services 	April 2010
	KA2 KA3	Establish a disability focus group	Improved services to disabled customers Improved satisfaction by service area of	Implementation of all actions in annual disability plan	June 2009

Objective	Key aims	This will be achieved by	Desired outcome	Measurement/target	Timescale
			disabled tenants	86% satisfaction with overall services (STATUS 2007)	
	KA1	Involve tenants in the design of new homes and new schemes	Increased satisfaction in the design of new homes and new schemes	> 82% satisfaction with new homes	2009
	KA2 KA5	Progress tenant involvement in the recruitment of new staff	Improvement in resident satisfaction with staff attitude	>84% satisfaction with staff helpfulness (STATUS 2007)	2011
	KA2	Develop activities to encourage younger tenants to get involved	Establishment of a sounding board of younger tenants to comment on our work Younger people influencing the services that we provide	Number of services changed as a result of input from younger tenant groups Younger people satisfied with opportunities to get involved	2010
	KA4	Evaluating the success of using new technology as a method of involving residents	Involvement from under-represented groups like younger residents, working residents and B&ME residents	Increase in numbers of residents involved, namely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under 35's • working tenants 	2010

Objective	Key aims	This will be achieved by	Desired outcome	Measurement/target	Timescale
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&ME tenants Improvement in satisfaction of these groups: >77% satisfaction of 18 to 34 year olds >83% satisfaction of working tenants >78% satisfaction of B&ME tenants	
Improve our involvement structures to enable tenants and residents to get involved in scrutinising our performance	KA3	Establishing a residents' performance panel	Effective resident scrutiny of our performance	Panel established – 4 tenant members	January 2010
	KA3	Embedding a performance culture into the work of the resident panels	Local performance indicators agreed with resident panels. Local performance indicators that can be reported to and monitored by resident panels Improvement in local KPI's	Production of local KPI's	April 2010

Objective	Key aims	This will be achieved by	Desired outcome	Measurement/target	Timescale
<p>Ensure that what we do is effective and makes a difference by monitoring how services change as a result of involvement and by monitoring satisfaction rates</p> <p>Benchmark our activities against peer group and national performance on resident involvement</p>	KA2	Setting up a monitoring framework for each involvement activity and event	Better monitoring of the effectiveness and value of resident involvement	Framework established, results reported quarterly	Embedded by 2011
	KA2	Carrying out satisfaction surveys after each involvement event	An understanding of resident opinion with individual events and better planned events drawing on opinions given	Increase in satisfaction with activities / events	2010
	KA2 KA4	<p>Using Housemark resident involvement benchmarking to measure our performance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ service changes ➤ satisfaction levels ➤ satisfaction with account taken of views 	<p>To be in the upper quartile for performance</p> <p>An understanding of poor performance</p> <p>Application of good practice and innovation</p>	Upper quartile performance	2011
	KA3	Carrying out a 100% STATUS	Improved satisfaction	Survey completed	Survey due by autumn 2010

Objective	Key aims	This will be achieved by	Desired outcome	Measurement/target	Timescale
		tenant satisfaction survey to give us a snapshot of satisfaction to identify and address areas of lower satisfaction and to compare this with previous results and with our peer groups	A focus on our areas of lowest satisfaction	Action plan completed Upper quartile satisfaction	
	KA2	Carrying out a peer group review of our resident involvement	Validation of our involvement work by involved residents from other social housing landlords Improvement in our involvement activity by learning from other organisation's practices	Establishment of peer group Review undertaken	2012
	KA4	Monitor the success and cost effectiveness of our present involvement methods	Resources targeted appropriately to achieve value for money	Record costs of involvement, number of participants and the impact that has been made on improving services	2010

