

## STRATEGY

### RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

Passed:-

30<sup>th</sup> August 2017

Review Date:-

July 2022

All North View policies and publications can be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages.

For further details please contact us on 0141 634 0555 or email us at [enquiries@nvha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nvha.org.uk)

#### Achievements

##### 1.0 Purpose of the Strategy

- 1.1 North View has continually strived to be an inclusive organisation. We work hard to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of our residents and service users, and we try to give opportunities for residents to be involved in our work up to a level that they are comfortable with.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to set out North View Housing Association's Resident Participation Strategy. The Strategy is in two parts, the first being our policy on resident participation, and the second our Implementation Plan, in which we set out the actions we will take in order to discharge our policy.
- 1.3 The Strategy covers all aspects of service user participation with the Association, including:-
  - Resident participation.
  - The involvement by other service users such as sharing owners, owner occupiers, and others, who receive services from North View.
  - The involvement of residents in scrutinising our performance.
- 1.4 The main objectives of the Strategy are:-
  - To establish an operational framework through which we can discharge processes to ensure compliance with our statutory and regulatory obligations in respect of resident and service user involvement and participation.
  - To promote resident and service user involvement in the Association.
  - To establish participation processes that are proportionate and relevant to the needs and aspirations of our residents and service users.

##### 2.0 Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

- 2.1 The statutory requirements in respect of service user involvement that affect North View are set out within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. Regulatory requirements for service user involvement are set by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Section 3 of the Regulator's document 'Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland; Our Framework' covers how the Regulator will monitor RSLs performance in



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relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

The Regulator is not prescriptive about how RSLs meet their requirements; it is for each RSL to establish their own processes.

2.2 Below, we consolidate the list of statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to tenant and service user involvement:-

In respect of the 2001 Act, we have to:-

- 1 Prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy.
- 2 Have a registration scheme for tenant organisations (RTOs – Registered Tenants Organisations) to become registered, and keep a publicly available register of these organisations.
- 3 Consult with individual tenants and RTOs on housing issues that will significantly affect them.
- 4 Inform tenants of right to repair arrangements, at least once per year.
- 5 Provide free to tenants (on request) information relating to the terms of his/her\their tenancy, and the Association's policy and rules about:- applying for a property, allocations, transfer of tenancies, mutual exchanges, repairs and maintenance, right to buy entitlement, the Tenant Participation Strategy, and arrangements for taking decisions about housing management and services.

Consult tenants when we make, or change:-

- 6 Policies regarding housing management, repairs and maintenance if the proposal is likely to significantly affect tenants.
- 7 Proposals for changes in rent and service charges.
- 8 Proposals for the sale or transfer of houses to another landlord.
- 9 Decisions about what information tenants should receive about our standards of housing management and our performance.
- 10 Performance standards or targets in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance.
- 11 Our tenant participation strategy.

In respect of the Scottish Housing Regulator, we have to:-

- 12 Demonstrate that we understand our tenants' priorities and needs, and that we are responsive to these.
- 13 Involve tenants in scrutinising our performance.
- 14 Involve tenants in setting policies, objectives and standards.
- 15 Make available, to our tenants, the Regulator's Annual Report on key information within our ARC submission.
- 16 Liaise with tenants to set the format and content of the annual report that we will publish to our tenants on our performance in relation to the Charter outcomes and standards.
- 17 Establish a practical, workable, and meaningful way of involving residents in assessing our performance. Agree that approach with tenants, publicise it,



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and record it.

18 Regularly report performance outturns on our website, as well as using other appropriate ways of getting the information to tenants and service users.

2.3 Our approach to addressing each of these issues is detailed in our Implementation Plan, in Appendix A, however aspects of our approach will also be discussed in the remainder of the narrative section of this document.

#### 3.0 Resident involvement

3.1 Information, consultation, and participation, are the mainstays of our Strategy and underpin our resident involvement activities.

3.2 We aim to maximise opportunities for residents to become involved with our work, but recognise that not all want to engage with us. While that is their choice, we need to ensure that they can still have his/her 'say' on our activities and service provision when he/she wishes (or needs) to do so.

As with any tenant, they can:-

- contact us directly if he/she has issues/concerns that they wish to discuss.
- make suggestions/comments about our activities or service delivery via a suggestion box (sited in the reception area of the Office) or by our digital suggestion box (e-mail to [suggestion@nvha.org.uk](mailto:suggestion@nvha.org.uk)).
- take part in our Satisfaction Surveys (if invited to do so).
- use our complaints procedure if they are dissatisfied with any aspect of our services.

3.3 It is also important that residents and service users can become involved with us up to a level that they are comfortable with. The array of our involvement activities should help facilitate that. These activities are discussed in the following sections, under the 'theme' headings of information, consultation, and participation.

#### 4.0 Information

4.1 We disseminate information to our tenants, owners and service users through a variety of formats – newsletter, Annual Performance Report, Tenant's Handbook, website, facebook, letter, information leaflet, interview, meetings etc. The format is dependent upon the nature of the information.

4.2 We aim to provide information in as clear and concise a manner as possible.

4.3 We provide information about topics that are relevant to our service users, including:



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Information/news about:- our services, service delivery, service standards, our performance, housing management issues, tenancy issues, maintenance issues, programmed maintenance works, community issues, benefit entitlement, mutual exchanges, community events, Right to Repair, health and safety issues, forthcoming legislative changes, new/revised policies, what we have been doing, what we will be doing, wider role activities, community events, local issues, etc.

Invitations to:- become members of the Association, attend meetings (like Annual General Meeting, Special General Meetings, area meetings, residents' meetings etc.), take part in consultations, join Focus Groups etc.

#### 4.4 **Annual Performance Report**

- 4.4.1 We regularly report on our performance in our quarterly newsletter, but we also issue an Annual Performance Report, through which we provide tenants with a detailed performance report for the previous financial year.
- 4.4.2 The Scottish Housing Regulator requires each RSL to issue an annual report to its tenants. The Regulator has set requirements for inclusion in the Report; these – and more – are covered in our Annual Performance Report.
- 4.4.3 The following are included in our Annual Performance Report:-
1. A copy of the Scottish Housing Regulator's 'Landlord report' for the Association.
  2. An assessment our performance in meeting the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and,
  3. An outturn report on how we performed against our annual Objectives and targets.
- 4.4.4 Our Annual Performance Report is issued by the end of October.

#### 5.0 **Consultation**

- 5.1 The Association will consult tenants and/or service users on the issues that are pertinent to that group and the Association.
- 5.2 Who we consult, how we consult, and the timescale for consultation will be dependent upon the nature of the topic under consultation, and the approach approved by our Management Committee.
- 5.3 The consultation process we generally follow is i) we consult as widely as necessary, ii) we give service users a reasonable period of time in which to respond, iii) responses are considered by the Management Committee, iv) the



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Management Committee consider the feedback and make a decision, and v) we then inform service users of the outcome (via our newsletter).

5.4 The primary mode for consultation is our quarterly newsletter, or by letter/flier should the consultation only affect a small number of residents, or should the consultation be held outwith the newsletter cycle. We may also publicise the consultation on our facebook page, and/or website.

5.5 Where appropriate, we will carry out targeted consultations, focussed on specific groups – be that a user group, a localised group of residents, or service users affected by a specific topic or event.

5.6 Some of the issues we consult on, and the methods we use to consult, are discussed below.

#### 5.7 **Rent review**

5.7.1 We are statutorily obliged to consult tenants about changes in rent and service charges, and consider tenant's views when arriving at a decision.

5.7.2 We normally consult through a Rent Consultation Newsletter. In that we detail our projected expenditure and expenditure items, and explain our reasons for proposing the changes.

5.7.3 Tenants are given a reasonable period of time to comment on the proposals. At the end of the consultation period, responses are correlated and reported to the Management Committee, who then considers the views in arriving at their decision.

#### 5.8 **Objectives, Standards and Policies**

5.8.1 We will consult tenants when we are considering setting objectives which would radically change what we do and/or how we do it. It is impractical for us to consult our tenants each year about our annual objectives – *there is also no appetite amongst our tenants for such* – so we will not do so. Instead we will involve tenants in the review of our Service Standards, which we will review at least every five years.

5.8.2 We consult our tenants when we undertake major reviews of the following:- our Complaints Policy, our Resident Involvement Strategy, our Allocations Policy, our Anti-social Behaviour Policy, our Estate Management Policy, and our Repairs and Maintenance Policy. We will also consult on other policies/strategies where that policy/strategy will have a significant impact on our tenants.

5.8.3 We inform tenants of consultations via our quarterly newsletter.



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In the newsletter, we summarise the proposed changes and discuss its potential impact. Residents are given the opportunity to comment on this, or join a Focus Group to consider the topic in greater detail.

#### 5.9 Surveys

5.9.1 Where appropriate, we use surveys to gauge tenant opinion on issues. These surveys may be via our newsletter, face to face, or telephone.

5.9.2 Every two years we appoint a competent external party to undertake a comprehensive survey of our tenants. Levels of satisfaction (with our services) feature strongly in the survey, but we also include 'consultation' questions designed to help us ascertain tenant opinion about what we are currently doing and/or about things that we are considering doing.

#### 6.0 Participation

6.1 There are a variety of ways that tenants, residents, and other service users can become involved with the Association, from the benign activities described in item 3.2, to becoming a member of our Management Committee. The main ways in which people can become involved are discussed below:-

##### 6.2 Surveys

6.2.1 Tenants and service users can influence our services by taking part in surveys. These range from the comprehensive survey (covered in 5.9.2), to surveys about our medical adaptation processes.

6.2.2 Surveys help us identify tenant priorities. The comprehensive survey includes questions designed to tease out what is most important to tenants. We then use that information to inform service delivery.

The findings of our latest comprehensive survey are contained within Appendix B.

##### 6.3 Meetings

6.3.1 North View will meet with residents as and when required or requested.

6.3.2 These meetings may be public meetings, or meetings restricted to people residing in a certain area, house type, close etc.; inclusion will be determined by the nature of the matter to be discussed.

6.3.3 Every two years we run a series of small scale 'local open meetings', which give



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residents the opportunity to discuss (with neighbours and senior staff) issues that they are experiencing in their 'neighbourhood'.

These 'area meetings' are held in alternative years to our comprehensive survey.

#### 6.4 **Focus Groups**

6.4.1 Residents can take part in Focus Groups.

6.4.2 Membership of the Focus Group will be determined by the nature of the topic being considered. Most of our Focus Groups are open to any resident who wishes to attend, but membership will be restricted where the considered topic only affects a specific group of tenants and not the tenant body as a whole.

#### 6.5 **Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs)**

6.5.1 Registered Tenants Organisations were introduced under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

A Registered Tenants Organisation is an organisation that is independent of the landlord, set up to represent tenants' interests on housing and related issues. At present, there are no Registered Tenants Organisations in the Association's area of operation.

6.5.2 North View will provide assistance to any tenants group that wishes to become a Registered Tenants Organisation. We will positively encourage the establishment of Registered Tenants Organisations where this is requested by tenants, and the group meets the criteria for registration set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and subsequent statutory instrument on the registration of tenant organisations. In accordance with the legislation, we have developed a registration scheme for Registered Tenants Organisations, reproduced as an Appendix C to this Policy.

6.5.3 North View shall maintain a Register of any Registered Tenants Organisations, which will be available for inspection by members of the public.

6.5.4 Registered Tenants Organisations do not have authority to take operational or strategic decisions about what North View will do; that lies solely with the Association's Management Committee. The Committee will consider the viewpoint expressed by RTOs before arriving at decisions, and delegate limited authority to RTOs. If that was to happen, the remit of authority would be recorded in the minutes of the Committee Meeting at which the decision was taken.

#### 6.6 **Membership of the Association**



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- 6.6.1 North View is a community controlled housing association. As such we have an established membership structure (of shareholders) which gives people who have an interest in the work of the Association the opportunity to stand for election to the body responsible for running our organisation, our Management Committee.
- 6.6.2 We regularly encourage residents to become members (or shareholder) of the Association, and also encourage members to consider becoming a Committee Member.
- 6.6.3 The process for becoming a member is set out in our 'Membership Policy', but to summarise, tenants, or people aged 18 or over with an interest in the work of the Association, pay £1 and complete an application form to become a member. The Management Committee will consider the application and, upon approval, the Association will issue the applicant with a membership share.

#### 6.7 **Management Committee**

- 6.7.1 The Management Committee has overall responsibility for the running of the Association. It sets the Association's strategic direction, operational activities, and is responsible for ensuring that the Association discharges its statutory and regulatory responsibilities within a framework of good governance and strong financial management and control.
- 6.7.2 It is the most formal of our 'involvement' groups, and is bound by the Association's Rules. Each member of the Committee must also adhere to a Code of Conduct, undertake training as required, and undergo an annual assessment of their performance as a Committee Member.
- 6.7.4 Full membership of the Committee is open to Shareholders; they can become members by standing for election at the Association's Annual General Meeting. Committee Members must stand down at least every three years, but they can immediately stand for re-election to the Committee. Persons who are not members of the Association can become co-opted members of the Management Committee and serve on the Committee until the next Annual General Meeting.

#### 7.0 **Tenant Scrutiny**

- 7.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator requires us to involve tenants in scrutinising our performance.
- 7.2 Over the years we have tried various methods of involving tenants in scrutinising our performance; all have been unsuccessful, with tenants showing very little willingness to get involved. What we have found works best for us and our tenants is using tenants' Focus Groups to scrutinise our performance.



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- 7.3 The main way we select topics for scrutiny is from analysis of the results from tenants' surveys; the principle being that tenant opinion informs the topic selection. Tenants are then invited to attend a Focus Group to scrutinise the issues in greater detail.
- 7.4 The Focus Group is usually convened and chaired by a neutral outside party. That party then prepares a report on the findings for our Management Committee to consider.
- 7.5 We hold at least one scrutiny Focus Group per annum.

Our scrutiny format will continue to develop; we expect it to change, but it is our most successful scrutiny format so far.

#### 8.0 Resources

- 8.1 North View will approve an annual budget to support the implementation of its resident involvement strategy.
- 8.2 The Association will make available staff resources as necessary to support its strategy.

#### 9.0 Equalities and inclusion

- 9.1 North View is committed to promoting equality and preventing discrimination in all of its activities. This includes our approach to resident involvement. The Association will ensure that its resident participation strategy and practices meet the requirements of equalities legislation. We will ensure that all members of the community have equal access to participation opportunities.
- 9.2 We aim to ensure that all written information will be concise, informative and as easy to read as possible.
- 9.3 Where English is not the first language of the household, the Association will, on request, provide written information in the first language, or access to interpreting services. Similarly, upon request, we will provide information in other formats e.g. to meet the needs of people who have a visual impairment or people who have literacy difficulties etc.
- 9.4 In engaging with service users, whether in writing or by organising meetings or other events, we will be accessible to all sections of the community and will be sensitive to:-



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- The needs of people with young children
- The needs of people with disabilities
- The needs of people who care for a dependent relative
- The needs of people with communication difficulties, literacy problems, or whose first language is not English
- Religious and cultural requirements
- The need to provide safe, comfortable environments that are free from intimidation.

#### 10.0 Links to other Policies

- 10.1 The implementation of this Strategy is interrelated to many other policies, procedures, strategies etc., the most pertinent of which are our:- Equalities Policy, Wider Role Strategy, Performance Management Calendar, and Service Standards.

#### 11.0 Review

- 11.1 This Strategy will be reviewed at least every five years, but component parts of the Strategy may change in the interim.

### *End of Strategy*

#### **reviews and amendments**

22/8/01	- Policy and Strategy reviewed.
26/3/03	- Strategy amended.
23/3/05	- Policy amended.
24/9/08	- Policy reviewed.
19/3/14	- Strategy reviewed.
28/5/15	- Strategy amended.
30/8/17	- Strategy amended.



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