

NORTH VIEW Housing Association

North View is a recognised Scottish charity – charity registration number SC032963

POLICY

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN 2008-2011

Passed:-

24th September 2008

Review Date:-

August 2013

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 on enquiries@nvha.org.uk

1. Purpose of the Strategy

1.1 This document sets out North View Housing Association's Resident Involvement Strategy. The Strategy has two parts:

- **Policy on resident involvement**

This sets out the principles that underlie resident involvement within North View, and the ways in which we will promote participation.

- **Action Plan**

This describes the actions we will take to promote resident involvement over the next three years. The Action Plan will be reviewed each year, involving residents where possible.

2. What the Strategy Covers

2.1 The Strategy covers all aspects of resident involvement, including:

- Tenant participation
- Involvement by other service users such as sharing owners and owner occupiers who receive services from North View.

3. Background to the Strategy: Legal and Regulatory Requirements

3.1 North View's strategy is based on the following definition, taken from National Strategy for Tenant Participation, 'Partners in Participation'. This refers to tenant participation, but it is equally relevant to working with all residents.

"Tenant Participation is about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies, housing conditions and housing and related services. It is a two way process that

involves the sharing of information, ideas and power. Its aim is to improve the standard of housing conditions and service”.

- 3.2 Section 53 of The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires every Registered Social Landlord to:
- Prepare a tenant participation strategy in consultation with its tenants;
 - Have a registration scheme for tenant organisations to become registered, and keep a publicly available register of these organisations;
 - Consult with individual tenants and registered tenant organisations on housing service issues that will significantly affect them;
 - Ensure that they meet the equal opportunities requirements set out in the Act.
- 3.3 North View’s tenancy agreement requires us to provide a range of information to tenants, upon request, and to consult tenants on a range of matters. These obligations are summarised at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 North View must also work in accordance with the “Performance Standards”. These are regulatory standards that oblige us to:
- Publish and implement a sound strategy for encouraging and supporting tenants, residents and service users to participate actively in all areas of our work;
 - Support tenants who take an active interest in the management of their homes.
- 3.5 North View will meet all of these legal and regulatory obligations. In doing so, we will apply the same principles to our relationships with residents as tenants.

4. Background to the Strategy: Resident Involvement in North View

- 4.1 North View is a community-controlled housing association. All of our housing is in the Windlaw area of Castlemilk.
- 4.2 In practice, the Association’s management committee has tended to absorb those tenants and residents in the area who have the greatest interest in active forms of participation.
- 4.3 Currently, there are no tenants or residents groups active in our area. Tenant feedback has told that a high proportion of tenants are mainly interested in receiving regular information about the Association’s services and performance, rather than more formal types of participation.

5. Objectives

- 5.1 The objectives of our resident involvement strategy are to:
- Provide all residents with opportunities to influence the work and decisions of the Association
 - Provide a range of options for involvement, so that people can participate in different ways, according to their own preferences
 - Be responsive to the issues that matter most to residents
 - Ensure that any barriers that prevent people from participating are identified and removed
 - Achieve continuous improvement in service delivery and resident satisfaction.

6. Involvement in Strategy Development and Review

- 6.1 We developed our Strategy in consultation with North View's residents. This involved:
- Meetings with North View tenants, to discuss what the Strategy should contain
 - Providing all residents with summary information about the key features of the proposed Strategy in a newsletter article, along with the chance to provide feedback.

7. The Reasons for this Strategy and the Benefits of Participation

- 7.1 North View's aim is to provide residents with excellent services that meet their expectations and offer good value for money. We want residents to feel well-informed about all aspects of our work, and to have as much opportunity as they wish to influence decisions that relate to the services we provide.
- 7.2 The active involvement of local residents will help us meet these aims, by making sure that our services meet people's needs. This can help us improve our services and levels of resident satisfaction.

8. Links to other North View Policies and Strategies

- 8.1 This strategy is part of a broader package of measures for involving residents in the Association's work. The other elements are:

- Our regular programme of resident feedback exercises, covering a range of North View services
- Tenant and resident membership of North View's management committee
- Our equal opportunities Policy
- Our Wider Role Policy and programme.

8.2 These are important to our overall approach. For example:

- North View regularly seeks resident feedback about the services we provide. This was highlighted in our 2006 resident satisfaction survey as being of greater interest to most residents than meetings, tenant participation groups etc.
- Wider Role initiatives can help build up the confidence and motivation that people may need to become involved in more organised types of activities, such as resident participation.

9. Providing Information

9.1 North View will provide tenants and residents with information that is clear, accessible and in plain English. We will always try to respond positively to requests for information in a form that meets individuals' different needs.

9.2 We will provide information that reflects the feedback we have received from residents, including:

- A residents' newsletter at least 4 times a year, giving information about our performance in providing services and in promoting resident involvement
- A tenants handbook
- Information leaflets about our main services, how we deal with complaints, and the standards of service people can expect from us.
- Advance notice of the areas where we will be carrying out policy reviews.

9.3 We will provide all information about our financial performance and our performance in service delivery in our resident newsletters. This reflects feedback from tenants, who have told us they do not wish us to produce a separate annual report on these matters.

9.4 We will meet all of our obligations under the tenancy agreement to make information available to tenants (**see Appendix 1**). All such information will be freely available to anyone who asks for it.

- 9.5 We will ensure that all North View tenants receive annual notification about the statutory right to repair scheme.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The Association acknowledges its obligations to consult and take account of residents' views on a range of policy and service delivery matters.

- 10.2 We will target consultation work on the following areas, which tenants identified as the areas of greatest interest to them:

- Our rules for letting houses
- Changes to tenancy agreements
- Increases in rents and service charges
- How repairs are carried out
- How decisions are made about major works
- Estate management and environmental issues
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour and harassment
- Resident participation
- The Association's policies and procedures for service delivery
- Customer service issues
- Communication with residents
- Equal opportunities
- Complaints procedures

- 10.3 We will:

- Publicise planned changes in policy on all of these issues
- Invite residents to join a consultation register, either for all proposed changes to policies and service delivery, or for specific topics
- Use different methods to obtain feedback about major changes (for example, consultation meetings with people from the register; and questionnaires and surveys involving larger groups of residents).

- 10.4 The majority of tenants may not take part in formal types of consultation. Therefore, we will introduce a new programme of one-to-one meetings with tenants in their own homes. We will target tenants who do not take part in other types of consultation activity, and use these meetings to

build up a broader picture of what tenants expect from us, and what they think the Association could do differently or better.

11. Providing Feedback

- 11.1 We will always provide residents with feedback about views they have contributed during consultation exercises.
- 11.2 We will do this using the following methods:
- Newsletter articles
 - The issue of consultation reports or individual letters.

12. Participation Structures: Working with Tenants Organisations

Tenants Groups

- 12.1 There are not currently any organised tenants groups in North View's area. However, almost 30 tenants took part in meetings to discuss this Strategy, and a number of them expressed an interest in meeting more regularly in future to share experiences and concerns.
- 12.2 We recognise that decisions about how this should be followed up are for tenants themselves to take. For example, the options might include providing a chance for tenants to meet regularly by themselves to talk about issues of common interest; or there may be an interest in forming an estate management working group in which tenants and the Association would work together to discuss issues of common interest.
- 12.3 The Association will offer support to help tenants consider these issues further. This may take the form of help with letters, leaflets and meeting arrangements or advice about how to access independent support, if tenants wish this.

Registered Tenants Organisations

- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 North View will provide assistance to any tenants group which emerges in future and 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 to this Policy.

- 12.6 North View shall maintain a Register of any Registered Tenants Organisations, and this will be available for inspection by members of the public.

13. Equality and Inclusion

- 13.1 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 involvement strategy and practices meet the requirements of equal opportunities legislation. We will ensure that all members of the community have equal access to participation opportunities.
- 13.2 We will make sure that all written communication with residents meets the following criteria:
- All written information will use plain English.
 - It will be presented in a manner that is easy to read.
 - It will be informative and will encourage feedback.
 - Where English is not the first language of the household, the Association will provide on request written information in the first language, or access to interpreting services.
 - We will provide information in other formats upon request, for example to meet the needs of people who have a visual impairment or people who have literacy difficulties.
- 13.3 In engaging with tenants and residents, whether in writing or in organising meetings or other events, we will be accessible to all sections of the community and will be sensitive to:
- 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.

14. Monitoring and Review

- 14.1 North View will review its overall policy and strategy every 3 years.
- 14.2 The Action Plan will be reviewed annually. The review process will include:
- A report to the Management Committee on implementation of the strategy.
 - Discussion with tenants and residents who contributed to the development of the resident involvement strategy and action plan.
 - Feedback on resident involvement work carried out during the previous year, in the Association's annual report.

15. Resources

- 15.1 North View will approve an annual budget to support the implementation of its resident involvement strategy.
- 15.2 We will make financial and staff resources available to:
- Communicate with residents and provide information

For example, publication and postage of newsletters and the proposed annual calendar
 - Meet the costs of consulting tenants and residents

We expect that the main resource input will be staff time spent on consultation activities. Where we hold meetings, the Association will meet the costs involved (e.g. room hire, refreshments, providing assistance with the cost of caring for dependents)
 - Supporting the development of any tenants or residents groups that may form in the area. The level of any financial assistance or support in kind will be decided by the Management Committee, based on whether a group is registered or informal and also its size and how representative it is. Any financial assistance will be administered by the Association, if a group is not constituted and does not have financial procedures or produce accounts.

16. Time to Communicate

- 16.1 The Association acknowledges that sufficient time must be built into consultation processes to allow tenants and residents to consider the information and issues properly before being asked to comment.
- 16.2 For proposals where consultation is required by section 54 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Association will seek to allow a period of 6-8 weeks for tenants to provide comments. The matters covered by section 54 of the Act are our policies and standards of service in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance; the Association's tenant participation strategy; and any proposals that would involve a change of landlord.

17. Training and Support

- 17.1 We will ensure that our staff and Management Committee members have the knowledge and resources needed to implement the resident involvement strategy.
- 17.2 We will seek to respond positively to training and support needs that tenants may have, if they are to build up the confidence and knowledge necessary to achieve genuine participation.

<i>End of narrative</i>

Review and amendments

28/1/98	-	Policy reviewed as "Tenant Participation and Consultation"
22/8/01	-	Policy and Strategy reviewed.
26/3/03	-	Strategy amended.
23/3/05	-	Policy amended.
24/9/08	-	Policy passed (after consultation period)

Appendix 1
Summary of North View's tenancy agreement obligations

Information we must provide to tenants upon request	Issues about which we must consult tenants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The terms of tenancy agreements; • Our policy about setting rent and service charges; • Our policy and rules about; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – applying for housing – allocations and transfer of tenancies, – exchanges of houses between tenants – repairs and maintenance, – whether tenants have the right to buy their house, and if so, on what terms; – our tenant participation strategy; – our arrangements for taking decisions about housing management and services. 	<p>Making or changing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies regarding housing management, repairs and maintenance if the proposal is likely to significantly affect tenants; • Proposals for changes in rent and service charges; • Proposals for the sale or transfer of houses to another landlord; • Decisions about what information tenants should receive about our standards of housing management and our performance; • Performance standards or targets in relation to housing management repairs and maintenance; • Our tenant participation strategy. <p>On these matters, the tenancy agreement obliges us to take into account any views tenants express, before making a final decision, to make information available in an accessible form, and to give tenants reasonable time to express their views.</p>

NORTH VIEW HOUSING ASSOCIATION: RESIDENT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN 2008-2011

1. INFORMATION FOR TENANTS AND RESIDENTS

<p>Desired outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Association uses a range of methods to keep tenants and residents informed • The methods used meet tenants' and residents' preferred methods for receiving information • Tenants and residents have a positive view of the quality and value of the information they receive from North View
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Proposed Priority Actions	Lead Officer(s)	Targets/performance measures	Timescales
Provide residents with regular, high quality information about NVHA services and related issues.	Director	Issue NVHA Newsletter at least four times per year to tenants and service users.	Ongoing
	Development Officer	Maintain positive resident views that newsletters are easy to read and informative (baseline from 2006 residents survey is >95%). (This will be measured as part of the 2009 Comprehensive Tenants Participation Survey).	By 31 st August 2009
Provide all residents with regular information on NVHA's service delivery and financial performance and resident involvement activities carried out.	Director	Information published in NVHA's Summer/Autumn Newsletter.	By 30 th September 2009
		Annual report to Management Committee on implementation of Resident Involvement Strategy.	By 31 st January 2010
Raise tenant awareness of current issues relating to housing and community services.	Director	Newsletter articles.	Ongoing
		Investigate new methods of information provision in reception area (e.g. via TV screen).	By 30 th September 2009
		Establish sets of information leaflets, posters etc. for Reception.	By 30 th September 2009
		Introduce comments/suggestion box in reception area.	By 30 th September 2009

2. CONSULTATION WITH TENANTS AND RESIDENTS

Desired outcomes

- NVHA will meet its legal obligations to consult tenants on a range of housing services and related issues
- 2006 resident satisfaction survey followed up, to investigate reasons for limited interest in participation activities and confirm what issues are of greatest interest to tenants and residents for consultation purposes
- Consultation activity targeted at the issues where tenants and residents have expressed the greatest interest in being consulted

Proposed Priority Actions	Lead Officer(s)	Targets/performance measures	Timescales
Publish information about proposals for major changes to service delivery and standards, and invite resident feedback.	Director / Development Officer	Proposals discussed with residents on NVHA consultation register	Ongoing
		Feedback provided in response to comments received (via newsletters, or following each consultation exercise where residents have taken part in specific consultation activities)	Ongoing
	Director	Summary information about proposed major changes provided in newsletters and letters.	As necessary.
Further develop NVHA consultation register, as a way of obtaining resident feedback.	Director	Re-launch Consultation Register in Spring Newsletter.	By mid April 2009
	Development Officer / Director	Increase number of tenants on Consultation Register to 25.	By 31 st December 2009
		Improve spread of locations from which members of the Consultation Register are drawn (currently concentrated in Area "O". Target – 70% from other areas.)	By 31 st December 2009
Hold regular programme of tenant/resident focus groups, to obtain feedback and discuss service improvements (topics may be identified by NVHA and/or tenants and residents)	Development Officer / Director	Continue to hold meetings with the group of residents that were consulted as part of review of Resident Participation Strategy.	Ongoing
		Identify topics/programme for action.	Ongoing

3. CONSULTATION WITH TENANTS AND RESIDENTS

Proposed Priority Actions	Lead Officer(s)	Targets/performance measures	Timescales
Promote participation opportunities to all new tenants.	Development Officer / Housing Manager	Review and update participation information included in sign-up packs.	By 30 th September 2009
Introduce new rolling programme of one to one meetings between NVHA senior managers and residents in residents' homes.	Director / Senior Staff	Target of 50 meetings in 2009.	Commence in February 2009
		Issues raised aggregated and discussed by management team at senior team meetings.	Commence in February 2009
	Director	Individual feedback provided to residents, as required, on the issues they have raised.	Commence in February 2009
		Review overall effectiveness of this method of promoting greater resident involvement	31 st January 2010
Promote participation option for all tenants.	Director	Through Newsletters give tenants the opportunity to be involved in the review/development of key policies.	Ongoing
	Development Officer	Hold regular Resident Group meetings.	Ongoing
	Maintenance Manager	Hold open days and liaise with tenants regarding major repair works.	As required

4. PROMOTE EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IN RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY

Proposed Priority Actions	Lead Officer(s)	Targets/performance measures	Timescales
Publicise the availability of information in other formats and languages, and respond positively to all requests received.	Director	Monitor time taken to respond to requests, and whether requests were fully met.	As required
Ensure that meetings and tenant participation events are accessible to all sections of the community.	Senior Staff Member	Measures to be developed in consultation with tenants (e.g. to accommodate working tenants or those with child care responsibilities)	Ongoing.
Subject to tenant interest, make resources available for training and support that will increase tenants' skills and confidence.	Development Officer	Measures to be developed in consultation with tenants.	As required

End