

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

Report of the Director of Housing & Customer Service

1. SUMMARY

This report introduces the Resident Involvement strategy. The strategy is to enable the team to deliver on key resident involvement outcomes in line with regulatory requirements and Derby Homes objectives.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The City Board approves the strategy.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The strategy has been introduced to increase awareness of the main objectives and focus of the Resident Involvement Team for at least the next 12 months.
- 3.2 The strategy is being implemented to move away from a reactive service to a more planned, proactive service that has realistic, long term outcomes it wants to achieve to improve the services we provide to tenants.
- 3.3 We have focused on three broad areas:
 - Creating more opportunities to get involved
 - Creating more capacity in existing involvement methods
 - Embedding the concepts and aims across Derby Homes teams
- 3.4 It is intended to establish a fresh look at Resident Involvement and a clearer understanding of what the team can help with internally whilst increasing access to information and opportunities to influence the service for tenants.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

The Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP) & service managers have been involved in creating this strategy

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Does this report affect the delivery of a service No
- Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed Yes
- If no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed please provide a summary of the equalities implications

13. POLICY REVIEW IMPLICATIONS

This is a key policy of Derby Homes and will be included in the Key Policy Review Schedule. In accordance with minute 10/51 this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of this meeting.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Financial and Business Plan
Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Health & Safety
Risk

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org – Phone: 01332 888528

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Background Information: None.

Supporting Information: Strategy attached in Appendix



Derby Homes Resident Involvement Strategy

Introduction

Derby Homes is an Arms Length Management Organization (ALMO), that manages, maintains and improves the housing of Derby City Council. It was set up in 2002 by the City Council as an ALMO and is the largest provider of social housing in Derby with just under 14,000 properties.

The organisation has an excellent national representation. In 2002 Derby Homes was inspected by the audit commission and was awarded the highest rating of three stars for excellent services. Following the re-inspection in February 2006, the organisation retained its three star status.

Derby Homes has also achieved and retained a number of other significant awards, including Customer Service excellence, Investors in People, ISO 9001, Positive about disabled people and ROSPA Gold for commitment to health and safety.

Purpose

Derby Homes is dedicated to providing meaningful opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to become involved in the management of their homes and their local communities. We will develop diverse, innovative structures that take account of individual need, enabling effective participation by all tenants and leaseholders.

The Resident Involvement team key role is to create a clear understanding from both staff and customers of what Resident Involvement is and how Derby Homes delivers this function. This is rooted in the new regulation for social housing, of which the main areas are:

- co-regulation (working openly with our tenants to “self-regulate”)
- being outcome focused (clear end results for tenants. Not just doing stuff!)
- meaningful engagement (involvement should be genuine and have an impact)
- transparency and openness
- reporting meaningful information to tenants (annual report)
- taking account of the diverse needs of tenants
- value for money
- acting on what's important to people locally (local offers)

Proposal

Our main action areas can be described by three intended outcomes for Resident Involvement at Derby Homes. These are **broadening**, **deepening** and **embedding**

Broadening (more opportunities for tenants)

We will create more opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to get involved in a greater variety of ways.

1. Resident involvement will develop and maintain a way of communicating with all stakeholders using social media

Social media is a hugely popular area and an area of communications we have not yet explored. Many other ALMO's and Local Authorities are already using the likes of Facebook, twitter and other key platforms of communication. The [new regulation](#) requires us to "*provide ... information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of our tenants*" and offer a "*wide range of opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing*". Social Media may very well provide a value for money way to do this. Additionally, our [Customer Services Strategy](#) proposes more choice and accessible services that fit around tenants' needs, use of efficient technology to enable excellent customer service and use of more cost effective methods of service access.

Key actions

- 1.1. Work with the customer services manager and the communication and marketing team to develop our social media strategy
- 1.2. Work with ICT to ensure appropriate resources are in place
- 1.3. Market the use of social media.

2. Create a procedure for Consultations with tenants and leaseholders to ensure an effective and consistent approach by all staff.

The Resident Involvement team is aware that Derby Homes already consults with its tenants and leaseholders. There are currently no standards or guidance on how Derby Homes "consults".

Key actions

- 2.1. Link with communication and marketing strategy
- 2.2. Work closely with customer service managers
- 2.3. Create a standard procedure and consultation statement form for Derby Homes
- 2.4. Improve the internal communication to the resident involvement team when any planned or unplanned change to the service has an impact on tenants and leaseholders
- 2.5. Ensure any team who may need to consult in their service area follows this procedure

3. Continue to explore and develop new technology within resident involvement

This is a key action from the [Customer Services Strategy](#) and has clear value for money benefits. For example, there is no standardised way in which Derby Homes uses SMS technology. As key “communicators”, the Resident Involvement Team is in a good position to explore and review many new technologies.

Key actions

- 3.1. Work with the customer services manager to develop a framework to enable effective use of the current SMS messaging for Derby Homes maximising it to its full potential
- 3.2. Explore the use of Webinar to allow another way to reach and engage with all stakeholders

Deepening (more empowered tenants)

We will provide the opportunities, backed by training and information, for tenants and leaseholders to be more informed about the way we work and about available options so they can have a better understanding and influence on our services.

4. Scrutiny - An effective mechanism for tenant and leaseholder scrutiny

Tenant Scrutiny is a key concept in co-regulation, but also a very new one. Working with our customers we will ensure a clear focus to effective scrutiny.

Key actions

- 4.1. Recruit and support an empowered, motivated, self managing scrutiny panel
- 4.2. Ensure scrutiny panel have a direct link with performance team
- 4.3. Ensure all staff are aware of the scrutiny panel, its role and their involvement in scrutiny

5. Ensure that we have accurate website information and better content to allow tenants to be involved in our services at any time online

- 5.1. The [Website Strategy 2009 – 2012](#) highlights that “*The content of the Derby Homes website will be accurate and up to date*” and “*We will be proactive in the evaluation of any new technology that may benefit Derby Homes and its customers*”. Working with the customer services manager and communication and marketing team

Key actions

- 5.2. Take proactive role in producing and reviewing content on www.derbyhomes.org
- 5.3. Use customer enquiry information and feedback to ensure content is open and honest to reduce avoidable contact.

6. Continue to work with the Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP), encouraging, inspiring, supporting and empowering them to continue to develop their role within Derby Homes

The DACP are made up of our most committed, long standing tenant volunteers. We currently have an excellent relationship with them. A key requirement of the new regulation is to provide “support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.

Key actions

- 6.1. We will work with the DACP to ensure they are outcome focused
- 6.2. Assist the DACP in creating their strategy and business plan
- 6.3. Work with the DACP on a service level agreement
- 6.4. Encourage and support the DACP to bid for external funding opportunities
- 6.5. Provide and support an opportunity for staff who have worked with the DACP to give feedback on their involvement
- 6.6. We will assist the DACP in reviewing their role, purpose and effectiveness

Embedding (better staff understanding)

We will ensure staff from all service areas have the skills and understanding of what Resident Involvement is and of the importance of listening to customers points of views and experiences, enabling us to learn from these and improve the services we provide.

7. Give all staff the skills and knowledge to be able to carry out effective resident involvement

Resident involvement has seen a lot of changes, including a major change in how we are regulated. Many staff have an outdated view of exactly what Resident Involvement means. We will work to communicate more closely with staff.

Key actions

- 7.1. We will create a training plan for new starters and existing staff.
- 7.2. Raise the profile of Resident Involvement at staff briefings and team meetings

8. Resident Involvement will work closely with the performance team to ensure local offers are a key priority in the organisation

Local Offers are a key part of the new regulation. Responsibility for meeting them lies with our board. These are essentially what tenants have told us is important to them so it is imperative that all staff are aware of them and what they mean.

Key actions

- 8.1. We will monitor and review our local offers and provide support to the responsible managers
- 8.2. Better communication and working with governance and Board members/City Board representatives

9. Derby Home Resource Centre

We will actively look at different ways of utilising the resource centre, to maximise the facilities available for our tenants.

10. The Resident Involvement Team

We will ensure that all residents and leaseholders are aware of the opportunities available to them to engage with us. We will ensure that these opportunities exist in a variety of ways to suit different needs and lifestyles. We will also ensure that they have sufficient knowledge of our services to enable them to confidently get involved.

We will ensure that we are outcome focussed and transparent in what we do in line with our regulatory requirements.



Equality Impact Assessment form

1) Name the Strategy, Policy, and Procedure or Function being assessed.

Derby Homes Resident Involvement Strategy

2) What are the aims of the strategy, policy, procedure or function being assessed?

Whose need is it designed to meet?

Are there any measurable elements such as time limits or age limits?

The Resident Involvement team's key role is to create a clear understanding from both staff and customers of what Resident Involvement is and how Derby Homes delivers this function. The Resident Involvement Strategy sets out how it will achieve this.

3) Who has been consulted?

DACP

4) Identify potential impact on each of the of the diversity 'groups' by considering the following questions. There may be other questions you need to think about which are specific to the strategy, policy, procedure or function you are assessing.

- Might some groups find it harder to access the service?

- Do some groups have particular needs that are not well met by the current service, policy, procedure or function?
- What evidence do you have for your judgement (e.g. monitoring data, information from consultation / research / feedback)?
- Have staff / residents raised concerns and or complaints?
- Is there any local or national research to suggest there could be a problem?

Please use the table below to record your findings / answers

Strand	No Impact	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Comments / Evidence
Age			X	More chance of reaching younger tenants through use of new technology.
Disability			X	Methods of engaging can be tailored to meet individual need
Gender	X			
Race			X	If language presents a barrier interpreters can be used
Religion & Belief	X			
Sexual Orientation	X			
Transgender	X			
Marital Status	X			

5) Does the strategy, policy, practice or function promote equality of opportunity?

- Does it link to Derby Homes Core objectives

- Can any positive impacts be promoted as best practice

Excellent customer services
Decent Homes and Successful Neighbourhoods

6) If 'adverse Impacts' are identified is it?

- Legal (i.e. not discriminatory)
- What is the level of impact?

No adverse impacts identified, the purpose of the Resident Involvement strategy is to engage customers, by removing barriers and creating new methods of engagement.

7) Are there any changes you could introduce which make this strategy, policy, procedure or function, work better for this group of people? Detail the actions planned and any further research or consultation required and how the actions will be monitored.

Not at this time
The Key action points listed in the strategy provide the action plan

8) If actions / suggestions for improvement have been identified, what should the positive outcome be for Derby Homes customers?

The positive outcome for Derby Homes through implementation of this strategy is to make it easier for all customers to engage

9) Do you consider a full Equality Impact Assessment is required or do the actions identified and planned meet the adverse impacts identified?

No

Monitoring

Review / New EIA (date or Timeframe)	2 Years
Name of person/s completing this form	Jim Joyce
Date assessment completed	12.08.11
Name (and signature) of manager approving EIA	