



SEVERNSIDE HOUSING

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

STATEMENT

2009/10

SEVERNSIDE HOUSING RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STATEMENT

1. VISION

Sevenside's vision is "Vibrant Communities In Shropshire".

2. MISSION

Sevenside's mission is "to provide a choice of quality, affordable homes and services in communities where people want to be".

3. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

Sevenside's objectives are:

- Putting customers first through our commitment to communities and neighbourhoods
- To have a strong and growing business, providing value for money services through quality and committed staff
- Driving up standards and delivering performance through innovation and partnership

4. LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

The following documents relate to this Statement:

- Customer Involvement and Empowerment Strategy
- Customer Care and Access Strategy and Policy
- Residents Compact
- Equality and Diversity Strategy and Policy
- Corporate Plan
- Neighbourhood Strategy

5. INTRODUCTION

This statement has been developed together with Board Members, Officers of Sevenside Housing, residents and stakeholders to:

- Communicate our continued past and future commitment to resident involvement.
- Highlight to residents the Customer Involvement and Empowerment Strategy, Customer Care and Access Strategy and related action plans and Resident's Compact. These documents provide information on how

customers can access services and become involved and influence collectively and individually decisions that affect them.

- Ensure that there is an annual review of resident involvement and customer care in conjunction with residents to ensure Severnside's overall effectiveness in these areas.
- To reflect the Customer strategies and the action plan contained within them and bring together all resident and leaseholder documents.
- Change the way we run the business (our Governance arrangements) to allow residents influence at the highest level of decision making to include the setting up of a Resident Senate.

Resident involvement in managing our homes is fundamental to Severnside. It cuts across all areas of our work in providing and improving homes, in agreeing the way that we should deliver services, and in helping communities to develop their neighbourhoods the way they want them to be.

Underpinning resident involvement is our aim to ensure that all residents are dealt with fairly and equitably. Severnside is committed to ensuring its residents are aware of its Equality and Diversity Strategy and Policy and is also committed to a review of the action plan, with residents, on a yearly basis, with residents monitoring delivery quarterly. A full strategy review is carried out on a bi-annual basis. This year we have revised the Resident Involvement structure in full consultation with residents and our Board to allow for involvement at all levels from Estate groups and One to One meetings, to STAR Committee and Resident Senate.

6. AIMS

The overall aim of resident involvement within Severnside is to enable customers to get involved at a level which is comfortable to them. Influencing all activities, including the planning, delivery, and monitoring of services in addition to setting and achieving the priorities of the organisation.

Severnside wants to achieve realistic, influential and meaningful resident involvement across all services. Resident Involvement is an integral part of our operation and culture, keeping the residents at the heart of all we do, and we are keen to extend involvement and empowerment as far as possible. We aim to achieve this by working in the true spirit of partnership with our residents through:

- Having residents influence decisions at the highest level through our revised structure for involvement and our new Residents Senate.
- Having a menu of realistic methods to get more people involved so they can articulate their views and needs in a way that is meaningful to them and to Severnside

- Extending involvement to be more representative of our known and diverse customer base
- Our joint work with the residents to produce aims, objectives and action plan in our Customer Involvement and Empowerment Strategy and Customer Care and Access Strategy
- The commitments in our Residents' Compact
- Involvement of difficult to reach groups who might otherwise not have a voice through targeted contact
- Providing linkages to our Corporate Plan and delivering our resident related objectives
- Providing choice for our residents in how they become involved with and access our services
- Highlight the support and resources available for residents wanting to be involved outlined within our strategies and the Resident's Compact.
- Ensure that residents wishing to be involved are aware that appropriate training, mentoring and support will be provided to help them participate fully at whatever level of involvement they choose.
- Raise residents' awareness in relation to their opportunities for involvement as set out in the Customer Involvement and Empowerment Strategy.
- Promote ways in which Severnside communicates, informs, consults and involves residents as set out in the Resident's Compact and the above strategies and action plans.

7. INVOLVEMENT DURING 2009 - 2010

7.1 GOVERNANCE

Since Severnside Housing was established in October 2001, resident involvement has been a fundamental and integral part of our culture. Together with their colleagues on the Board, the three existing Tenant Board directors have played an important role in overseeing the strategic direction of Severnside monitoring the delivery of our strategies, policies and company objectives.

Our Governance arrangements are, however, about to change with proposals to our AGM in September 2010. This would introduce a Resident Senate which would be constituted as a Board Committee with a direct line to our Board. The Senate will influence strategic decisions, monitor performance and challenge the organisation around customer facing issues and services.

7.2 SERVICE PROVISION

Customers have been fundamental to:

- Preparation of Severnside Housing's Resident Involvement Statement 2009/10
- Servicing a Customer Services Panel (CSP) which meets monthly who agree their own Agenda items, look at all customer facing services, Value for Money and financial matters and host various guest speakers on subjects of interest or concern to them.
- Servicing a Grounds Maintenance Contract Focus Group which agrees the specification, contractor appointment and monitors the contract through monthly meetings.
- Servicing a Leaseholders Group which meets on a quarterly basis.
- Leading Key Performance Indicators Quarterly Review Meetings which are now "performance monitoring (PM) meetings" and will look at KPI's and Customer Service standards.
- Consultation and focus groups for the development and review of Severnside Housing's Policies and Procedures (primarily through STAR, Access to Services and Customer Service Panel) including:
 - Customer Care and Access Strategy
 - Customer Involvement and Empowerment Strategy
 - Neighbourhood Strategy
 - Complaints Policy and Procedures
 - Severnside Leaflets
 - Resident Involvement Statement

We have specific interest Forums such as:

- Disability Forum

- Fairness, Equality & Respect Group – Single Equality Scheme agreement and monitoring
- Rent Statement Review Group
- Grounds Maintenance Contract Panel

We have also held a number of events which have directly influenced key policies and approaches including the:

- Challenge Event for our Customer service standards

We have recruited Resident Inspectors who carry out mystery shopping and input to Customer Service Reviews.

Focused involvement activities with residents and our partners, signing up to local area improvements aimed at reducing vandalism and nuisance and enhancing the environment including:

- Moston Road Development
- Meole - Neighbourhood Standards Agreement (NiSA) (Local Offer pilots)*
- Armdale - Neighbourhood Standards Agreement (NiSA) (Local Offer pilots)*
- Broseley - Neighbourhood Standards Agreement (NiSA) (Local Offer pilots)*
- Castlefields – Sensitive Lettings Policy tackling anti social behaviour
- Community Chest Group
- Local Joint Committees

*Full consultation and involvement with residents signing up to the NiSA's along with other RSL's and partners. These are for an agreed period, and are monitored and reviewed in partnership which includes residents.

7.3 COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION AND INTERACTION

Sevenside Housing maintains confidential information on our customer client data base for example: age, gender, ethnicity, vulnerabilities and disabilities which enable us to consult with specific resident groups and tailor services to residents needs.

We have the following arrangements in place:

- When interviewing candidates for job vacancies, residents have been involved on interview panels and in appointing the successful applicant. Recent involvement has included recruitment for Community Development Officers

- Severnside produces a quarterly magazine “Pillar” which is sent to every resident. This magazine contains a varied range of interesting and informative articles and is another opportunity for residents to engage with the company. The magazine is available in audio, large print, braille and if requested can be provided in other languages. We automatically do this where, through our customer profile, a need has been identified. It has pages within it for STAR who edit their pages themselves.

A surgery is held on a weekly basis at Meole Brace Community Centre by a Generic Housing Officer, taking the service to our customers. Residents then have the opportunity to raise or discuss any issues that affect their home and quality of life.

We did hold other surgeries but they were not well attended by residents even though they were publicised and so were found to be not cost effective.

- The Company, with the assistance from residents, continue to evaluate and update the official website relaying important information to tenants and leaseholders of Severnside Housing. A Resident Involvement section is an integral part of the website to inform residents of the options available to them on how to become involved in the delivery of services and monitoring.
- Telly-Talk is available for residents in the rural area surrounding Pontesbury Library and at the Cyber Café, Castlefields. This is a valuable facility to assist residents to access services from rural areas instead of visiting the offices. The Company is working closely with Shropshire Council in looking to implement Telly-Talk in additional locations.
- Severnside continues to carry out estate walkabouts which are publicised to residents in advance. A Group comprising of a Generic Housing Officer who covers the estate/village and fellow Severnside Officers, Local Councillors for the ward, a Community Regeneration Officer from Shropshire Council, a representative of the Police and residents of the estate are invited. The walkabouts identify issues that affect the community and enable Officers to address any matters that arise bringing about collective improvement in neighbourhoods. These have, to a large extent, replaced the surgeries.
- Severnside Housing continues to carry out Grounds Maintenance quality checks with residents who are part of the Grounds Maintenance group and Vale, our grounds maintenance contractors.
- Severnside Housing is involved in consulting and working together with religious groups to obtain a wider range of opinions and viewpoints which informed the Company of the diversity of cultures and faith groups within

their client group. To celebrate Shrewsbury's diverse communities we hold an annual Cultural Festival for our customers and communities.

- Severnside will continue to fund, support and work very closely with Severnside Residents' Groups.
- Severnside residents work regularly with the Company on developing and reviewing policies and procedures. Members have made a significant contribution to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of services we provide.
- Severnside Housing actively encourages involvement with the Consortium of Shropshire Tenants. This is a group that has been set up to provide a collective voice for social housing residents across Shropshire and to encourage all residents to play an active part in decisions affecting their home. The group meet on a regular basis, holding 4 meetings during 2009/2010 plus their Annual General Meeting was held in November 2009 hosted by Severnside Housing.
- In response to the TSA standards, Severnside has been working on a number of local offer pilots based in neighbourhoods called NiSAs with our residents and partners sign up. We have also recently completed a gap analysis against the new standards at an Open Day which all residents were invited to attend during which we also consulted on the proposed new governance arrangements.

7.4 LOCAL GROUPS AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Severnside Housing and residents will continually evaluate the effectiveness, quality and resident satisfaction with the standards set out in Customer Involvement and Empowerment Strategy and the Residents' Compact. In addition we have the following local groups, meetings etc.

- **Groups**

Presently we have local tenants groups, urban safety and specific interest residents groups as set out below:

- Armdale Local Tenants Group
- Heaths Houses Local Tenants Group
- The SY (Severn Youth) Group
- Monkmoor Residents Group
- Meole Estate Community Action (MECA)
- Ditherington and Castlefields Neighbourhood Forum
- Castlefields Action Team

- Monkmoor and Underdale Forum
- Abbots Wood Caring For People Group
- Grange Urban Safety Group
- Broseley residents group

- **Involvement – Walkabouts, meetings and exhibitions:**

Local Joint Committees (Initiative led by Shropshire Council) supported by partner agencies):

- Harlescott and Bagley
- Monkmoor, Underdale and Abbey
- Reabrook, Bowbrook and Copthorne
- Sundorne, Battlefield, Castlefields and Ditherington
- Belle Vue, Quarry, Porthill and Coton Hill
- Meole, Sutton, Reabrook and Column
- Minsterley, Pontesbury, Hanwood and Longden
- Bayston Hill, Column and Sutton
- Condoover, Berrington and Atcham
- Bicton, Pimhill, Astley, Uffington and Upton Magna

Service Users Focus Groups

- Homeless Support
- Housing Support
- Sheltered Housing

Clean Sweeps:

- Kynaston Road “Clean Sweep” at Harlescott Grange
- Armdale “Clean Sweep” at Monkmoor
- Meole Brace “Clean Sweep”
- Upton Lane “Clean Sweep”

Estate Walkabouts are held monthly at:

- Harlescott Grange
- Ford
- Ditherington
- Meole
- Springfield
- Minsterley
- Cross Houses

Community Events we have led on:

- Severnside Housing’s Community Fayre (over 500 attended)
- Castlefields and Ditherington Fun Day at Shrewsbury Fire Station
- Meole Estate Community Centre opening
- Cultural Fest Event

- Sheltered Schemes Christmas Parties

Community events we have supported:

- Love Music, Hate Racism
- Teenage Kicks Event
- Cultural Day in Shrewsbury Square
- Minsterley Show
- North Shrewsbury Friendly Neighbours Fayre

Exhibitions with our partners:

- Benefits Awareness Days
- Re-settlement Road Show.
- White Ribbon Day (Domestic Abuse)
- Abbots Wood Hate Crime Reporting Station Launch.

Awareness Days with our partners:

- Beat the Credit Crunch Fayre.

- **Resources To Support Resident Involvement**

We will provide both practical and financial resources to support resident involvement through:

- Dedicated budget to support resident involvement
- Offer training to build skills and knowledge
- Provision of childcare costs, travel costs, translation, signers to ensure that all residents can be involved if they wish to.
- Meetings/events are held in venues which are accessible to all. A portable loop system is available.

- **Community Chest**

Community Chest is an initiative by Severnside to enable local groups within our communities to access funding for projects to improve our communities. To assist with the decision making on applications received the panel comprises of two Severnside residents and four relevant members of staff. Since the implementation of Community Chest several applications have been approved and funding has been awarded for some of the following;

- Acorn Group which supports local people with mental health problems received £1182.00 towards improving the efficiency of their building.

- Cross Hill Court Sheltered Scheme requested I.T. software to assist residents with visual impairments to access the internet, e mail etc. amount received £345.00.

8. WHAT SEVERNSIDE AND RESIDENTS INTEND TO DO TOGETHER IN 2010 / 2011

All our services including Resident Involvement have Service Improvement action plans. These are SMART and clearly set out our main objectives and actions that we will take to improve service provision. We will work with residents to set targets and milestones to bring about continuous improvements to the service. The targets and monitoring processes link into our corporate plan and other related strategies and plans. (See Customer Care and Access and Customer Involvement and Empowerment action plan)

9. MEASURING THE IMPACT ON INVOLVEMENT

We have questionnaires/feedback forms and analysis is continually monitored. This will enable us to carry out evaluation and impact assessments of all customer involvement events, panels, workshops etc and measure the outcomes and value for money. In this way Severnside together with residents can use this information as a learning tool which will leave us well placed to make joint decisions about what is working well, what may need to change or to identify areas of involvement where we may want to take a different approach.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Severnside Housing has a dedicated Community Development team to deliver resident involvement and to be the customer champions. Most of the cost is in staff time so is therefore taken into account in these posts. However, there is also a dedicated budget for resident involvement which funds the Community Fayre and other involvement activities.

11. REVIEW

Our resident related strategies will be reviewed annually with customers and Board to ensure they remain representative of their priorities and also of Severnside's overall corporate plan objectives. Our progress against the annual objectives, detailed in this Statement, will be regularly monitored and the statement itself will be reviewed annually in conjunction with residents to determine our shared priorities for future years.

12. SUMMARY AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Resident Involvement is an integral part of our operation and culture and we are committed to extending it as far as possible. Since Severnside Housing was founded in 2001, our resident involvement processes have evolved year-on-year ensuring that they are an integral part of our business. Whilst we have made significant progress in resident involvement, we recognise that there is still work to be done particularly in relation to:-

- Getting our Resident Senate established with a new structure that is representative and has succession planning built in.
- Maximising resident involvement with regular reviews of our services to ensure continuous improvement.
- Targeting our “Hard to Reach” residents and minority groups and finding new ways to involve them and to shape communication and service delivery.
- Continue to extend opportunities for involvement to ensure that the feedback we receive is representative of the demographic make up of our customers and that everyone has a chance to make their view known.
- Ensuring we continue to meet TSA National Standards and develop local offers that meet residents needs.
- Building capacity to enable residents to be effectively involved.
- Demonstrating to residents that our services deliver value for money

We look forward to working with residents to achieve these objectives, as their input is essential to the continuous improvement and development of our services.

THIS STATEMENT IS FREELY AVAILABLE

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