



Helping build communities



Resident Involvement Impact Report 2012/13

Co-regulation – Tenants in the Driving Seat

The role of tenants in co-regulation is crucial, as they now provide the robust ‘consumer protection’ side of regulation, along with the Board’s own checks on service delivery.

In the first few (red) pages, you’ll see how the Tenants’ Scrutiny Group, the Tenant Inspectors, the Tenants’ Forum and Mystery Shoppers have contributed to this.

Co-regulators are not just looking at improving Soha, but also at helping others, elsewhere in the country, engage with their landlords and communities. Soha’s co-regulators are drivers in the Co-regulation Champions group of 10 other housing organisations throughout England. A highlight of 2012/13 for them was joining another housing association on a trip to London to visit a Select Committee in Parliament. Residents saw how Select Committee Chairs run the sessions and then shared best practice amongst themselves.

The Champions are supporting Tenant Central, a TPAS initiative to deliver a national programme of free training and support for social housing tenants. Soha is involved both as a ‘deliverer’ - it is our tenants who will be encouraging others about co-regulation and scrutiny; and a recipient. The first free training for our residents takes place in Summer 2013.

A group of four Co-regulation tenants attended ‘The Wider World’ training, a session at Trafford Hall on the impact of tenants on changes in Benefits. The four thought that their learning should be disseminated to more tenants and one of them completed a successful bid to Trafford Hall for £500 towards running the course here at Soha. The course was attended by 29 tenants. The same trainer came back to deliver the training to Soha staff to make them aware of the coming changes.





This symbol is scattered around the Impact Report. It denotes that a particular activity has involved a significant element of Customer Care.



You’ll see this telescope symbol where the Communications and Resident Involvement Manager, Chris Irons, is sharing his plans for the future of the activity in question.



Tenants' Scrutiny Group

Type of involvement	What has happened? (outputs)	So what? (outcomes and impact)	Value for Money (resources and costs)												
<p>What is it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tenant Scrutiny Group (TSG) acts as a critical friend and presents a constructive challenge to Soha's Board and management. <p>Purpose and aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tenant Scrutiny Group is a key part of Soha's Co-Regulation model, holding the Board and managers to account. <div data-bbox="185 1182 882 1362" style="border: 1px solid cyan; background-color: #e0f7fa; padding: 5px; margin-top: 20px;">  This is a very important group to Soha, holding us to account for our services. To help them to carry on pushing us, we need to support them with the relevant training where appropriate. </div>	<p>The TSG met 16 times in 2012/13.</p> <p>They carried out two full Reviews, Complaints and Voids. 10 residents are involved. TSG used internal and external sources to check and challenge Soha on the above services and also when starting to look at the review into Benefits and Welfare Reform.</p> <p>Training, mentoring and specific skills sessions as well as updates are held around the meetings required to progress the Reviews.</p>	<p>Accountability ✓✓✓</p> <p>Findings from the Complaints review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review found that Soha's complaints procedure is broadly fit for purpose. However, some major changes are needed going forward to: meet the requirements of the Localism Act, in particular forming a Tenants' Panel by April 2013 and keep up with current best practice in complaints, keeping bureaucracy to a minimum, concentrating on quicker resolution and efficient administration and ownership by all staff. <p>Service improvement ✓✓✓</p> <p>As a result of the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Group the Complaints process has been reviewed and re-communicated to residents.</p> <p>TSG's Voids report had all recommendations accepted by the Board.</p> <p>Social Capital ✓✓✓</p> <p>A comprehensive, tailored package of training. TSG has its own training budget of £2000 and decides on its allocation in discussion with Soha.</p>	<p>Total cost to Soha £6860.31 made up of</p> <p>Meeting costs, including training, incentive vouchers and travel £3990.98</p> <p>Staff time £2869.23</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>CEX:</td><td>2.5 hrs</td></tr> <tr><td>Director:</td><td>4.5 hrs</td></tr> <tr><td>Manager:</td><td>0.5 hrs</td></tr> <tr><td>S/Managers</td><td>13 hrs</td></tr> <tr><td>Officers:</td><td>3.25 hrs</td></tr> <tr><td>Administrator:</td><td>47.5 hrs</td></tr> </table> <p>Residents' time: 259 hours</p> <div data-bbox="1823 1203 2130 1528" style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>Residents reckon the value for money of this</p>  + </div>	CEX:	2.5 hrs	Director:	4.5 hrs	Manager:	0.5 hrs	S/Managers	13 hrs	Officers:	3.25 hrs	Administrator:	47.5 hrs
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Co-regulation – Tenant Inspectors



Type of involvement

What are they?

- Tenant Inspectors are an independent group of tenants supported by Soha.
- They choose which of our services to inspect.
- They check Soha is meeting its service standards.

Purpose and aims

- To improve the services Soha delivers by providing useful feedback and suggestions to Senior Managers.
- To increase Soha's accountability to residents by providing a check on our services and monitoring the outcomes of each recommendation they make.
- To increase social capital through high quality training and support.

What has happened? (outputs)

3 Inspections took place in 2012-13. They were on empty properties (voids, in July), grounds maintenance (October) and Resident Involvement (February).

Voids

The team conducted several staff interviews and undertook an extensive desktop review, of an update on the recommendations from Assistant Director of Customer Services; New Homes leaflet; Tenant voids checklist; Moving in survey results; Lettings customer journey mapping report; Voids cleaning connect club results; Minutes of voids standard consultation meeting; Examples of pre termination visit tick sheets for the last 6 months.

Grounds

Since 2010 new contracts for grounds maintenance have seen major changes which brought much extra work to staff. There were many more complaints and Inspectors analysed all the surveys and reports which staff use as well as visiting locations of routine grounds maintenance just after it was completed.



They need to make sure they are still up-to-speed on wider good housing practice. As part of this they should not be afraid to learn from good work by other housing associations.

RI

This was an update to an inspection of 2007 in which staff across Soha departments were interviewed to establish if their recommendations then had been implemented.



Co-regulation – Tenant Inspectors

So what? (outcomes and impact)

Value for Money (all inspections)

Service Improvement

- Technical Officers were issued with the electronic equipment required which will save time and offer better VFM.
- Standards regarding cleaning were clarified with the contractors (particularly important for properties that are in areas where Soha is not responsible for the communal cleaning and maintenance).
- A more detailed list of what can and can't be purchased with decorating vouchers.
- The capacity of the cleaning staff was increased as inspectors felt this may be a contributing factor to low satisfaction on moving in.

Service Improvement

- The compilation of an effective informal complaints spread sheet to be made easily available both to customer services and other relevant members of staff, which cannot be signed off until the complainant is satisfied. Any informal complaints should be notified on the communal notice boards where appropriate.
- If an informal complaint is not satisfied within mutually agreeable time, it is now escalated to a formal complaint.
- To standardise specification, surveys and estate inspections so that they have a common language and all Officers would then know the standards they are required to uphold. The estate inspection forms to be amended to include the missing standards.
- To review the questions posed on satisfaction surveys to make them more relevant to the conduct of the grounds maintenance contractors and separate them from other estate management operations.
- In all future contracts there should be penalty clauses that are enforceable from commencement.

Service Improvement

- RI to be given a higher profile within inductions to balance out inconsistencies between regard for and time given to RI across departments.

Total cost to **Soha** £6224.39
made up of

meetings, including
transport and training
£919.44

Staff £5304.95



Chief Exec:	1 hr
Directors:	3 days
Assistant Director:	1.5 hrs
Directors:	4 hrs
Senior Mgr:	3 hrs
Manager:	5 hrs
Technical Officers:	4 hrs
RI Officer:	6.5 days

Residents' time: 72 hrs

**Residents reckon
the value for
money of this
activity is**



Tenants' Forum and portfolio holders

Type of involvement	What has happened? (outputs)	So what? (outcomes and impact)	Value for Money (resources and costs)
<p>What is it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tenants' Forum is the formal representative body for residents which helps make decisions. It has a formal role in Soha's Standing Orders to monitor performance. There are up to 21 members plus co-opted members. <p>Covering 5 key services, the Portfolio holders act as a sounding board for service managers and may take smaller decisions on behalf of the Forum.</p> <p>Purpose and aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tenants' Forum aims to represent residents' views to Soha It does not replace other involvement, but seeks to enable informed discussion and decision making <p>Portfolio holders</p>	<p>Full Forum met 6 times in 2012/13 and Portfolio Holders were called in to assist their service areas as required. This is usually arranged so that the individual PHs are at HQ anyway, either prior to a full Forum meeting or as a result of some other involvement activity</p> <div data-bbox="562 1010 1025 1257" style="background-color: #e0f7fa; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid #00796b; border-radius: 5px;">  <p>There is a significant staffing cost but the Tenants' Forum and portfolio holders are integral to assessing departments and their actions.</p> </div>	<p>Accountability ✓✓✓</p> <p>The Forum looked at and approved a number of policies and strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Forum agreed to a major change in the Lettings Policy to change our room size criteria in line with the Bedroom Tax rules The Forum agreed to a different approach in the Rental Income policy for those tenants affected by the changes in benefits The Forum rejected the Removal of items from Communal Areas Procedure as they felt it was not fair and equal. It was later approved after changes had been made. The Forum disagreed with the Board on succession rights for affordable tenancies <p>Social capital ✓✓✓</p> <p>Training undertaken by Forum members included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiation Skills Training at Ruskin College (5 Day residential Course) Portfolio Holders Training Too Good to Waste Training at Trafford Hall – Forum Environment Champion Training Effective Leadership Training Development Training Residents' Network Conference <p>Service improvement ✓✓✓</p> <p>Service Managers receive the endorsement of the whole Tenants' Forum before they implement proposals for service improvement on which they have consulted. The Forum also discusses Soha's response to national consultations.</p>	<p>Total cost to Soha £14739.40 made up of</p> <p>meeting costs, including travel and incentives £3757.82</p> <p>Staff £10981.58</p> <p>Directors 54 hrs S/Manager 45 hrs Manager 9 hrs Officer Time 9 hrs Administrator 64.5 hrs</p> <p>Residents' time:</p> <p>Total 102 hrs (including occasional observers)</p> <div data-bbox="1823 1203 2125 1528" style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is</p>  </div>



Mystery shopping

Type of involvement

What is it?

- Mystery shoppers help us measure our performance against the customer service standards we promise to deliver in our Customer Charter
- All Soha's mystery shoppers are given full training to help them mystery shop our services
- Mystery shopping attracted 8 new younger residents to get involved

Purpose and aims

- To monitor and assist with customer service improvements by providing information from residents on the quality of service we deliver
- To give a true picture of the service Soha provides to customers from a customers point of view
- Our reports are a snapshot of the customer experience rather than a statistically valid survey

What has happened? (outputs)

3 Mystery shops took place

- In partnership with Paradigm testing their Customer Service (and vice versa)
- Welfare Sounding Bound outcome MS
- The annual repeat Customer Service MS



This gives Soha valuable insight into how it feels to be the customer. The questions are important: RI input is essential to make sure right questions are asked of each department.

So what? (outcomes and impact)

Accountability ✓✓

Customers recognised that their views were valid, whether positive or negative.

Paradigm Housing customers were able to use some of Soha's techniques.

Service Improvement

Banks: see page 15—this information has already been widely disseminated as useful across many departments

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Cost to Soha
£458

Our residents' travel:
£120.00

Staff time
RI officer: 15 hours £338

£350 in incentive vouchers—cost borne by Paradigm

Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is





This yearly tenant-led report directly involves tenants, using building up their skills to report on Soha's performance. Due to the high-ish cost/issue, this year's budget aims to be 20-25% cheaper.

Celebrating 15 years of Soha

Residents visiting the Soha website or calling in on 6 July 2022 would have been told that the office we closed for a day for staff to go out and do community volunteering. I wanted to find out more about this, so who better for me to ask than the Chief Executive herself, Alison Peacock.

"Soha makes a difference to customers' lives by investing in the fabric of their homes."

"Soha", he said, "we also seek to make a difference in how we make these investments: we deliver service in an ethical and sustainable way, we involve tenants and other stakeholders where we can to make sure we provide what people want. We also build capacity of people to be active citizens who increasingly use their skills to engage with both us and the wider society."

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"Staff make a impact just by doing their day-to-day jobs and helping Soha to be one of the best socially housing organisations in the country."

1 Small groups have been tidy up some of our local estates to make the area a nicer place to live for our residents.

2 Young people benefited from Soha staff visiting a pantomime on a new accessible local block in Goring Heath and doing some volunteering in Chisley.

3

4

5 Based at Wotton Bassett, the Earth Trust provides practical land management for open water bodies. Staff helped out with clearance work.

6

7

8

9 The British Heart Foundation is a charity that aims to prevent people dying from heart diseases by raising awareness, funding research and providing professional support to patients and their families. Staff helped in the charity's shop on Deodar Broadway.

10 Oxfordshire Animal Sanctuary Based in Studhampton, the sanctuary cares for dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and other animals which have found themselves without a home. Who took whom for a walk when Soha staff offered their services for the morning?

11 Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary Based at Brightwell, the sanctuary cares for abused and abandoned donkeys and other animals. Staff helped up their stables to do yard duties.

12


13

14 The Foodbank is an initiative of Deodar Baptist Church and is a practical, community-based project aimed at providing groceries in relief of giving food to local people in crisis. Four staff took Soha's regular monthly donation to the Foodbank, bought supplies of items where the shelves were bare and helped sort and pack parcels ready for distribution.

15 Soha staff also volunteered at:
 CMS Church Mission Society
 7 schools
 1 nursery
 1 Children's Centre
 1 Village Hall
 1 wood clearance scheme and
 1 volunteer centre

Sue Ryder provides compassionate care to people with end of life and long term needs through national residential and day services. Soha staff are pictured in Oxford Orchard Centre handing out publicity for a fundraising event.

Annual report

Type of involvement	What has happened? (outputs)	So what? (outcomes and impact)	Value for Money (resources and costs)
<p>What is it?</p> <p>Residents write and produce Soha's annual report.</p> <p>Purpose and aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce an annual report that informs our stakeholders of our achievements and performance over the past year To produce an annual report that tenants find interesting and useful To produce a report which accurately represents their experiences of being a Soha tenant For tenants to acquire the skills to produce an innovative, cost-effective report 	<p>Soha's 2012 report was South regional winner of the Excellence in Annual Reports category of the awards made by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).</p> <p>25 residents wrote and decided the layout of the annual report and read it 'for understanding' - that is, to check that the services detailed in the articles chimed with other tenants' experiences.</p> <p>221 feedback forms, enclosed within the report, were received.</p> <p>98% respondents said they found it easy to read and understand. 90% said they thought it was good value for money.</p> <p>32% (71) of residents took the opportunity to 'ask the Chief Exec a question' (or sometimes just comment) which they did on the feedback form. All who gave contact details received personal answers.</p> <p>Video films were embedded in the online version .</p>	<p>Accountability ✓✓✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All tenants who wrote articles interviewed senior staff for their material. Some opted to visit Soha developments as well. Tenants appeared on video with staff talking about the process of the annual report and about Soha services. Direct access to the Chief Executive was encouraged through the 'Ask the Chief Exec a question' vehicle on the feedback form. One Report project resident moving to Mystery Shopping Two uninvolved resident applications for general RI activities <p>Social capital ✓✓✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents were given certificated training in social media, photography and copywriting and received a visit from a printer to explain how their words would be translated into the hard copy <p>Service improvement ✓</p> <p>Dialogue with residents was improved, as measured by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favourable response to adding a new channel (videos) Largely new group of tenants wanting to participate in the 2013 report 	<p>Total cost to Soha £35,817 included production, mailing, three training days and incentives at £31,100</p> <p>Staff time £4717.50</p> <p>RI/Marketing Assistant: 2.5 weeks over 7 months</p> <p>RI Manager: 4 days</p> <p>Senior Managers: 20 hours</p> <p>(£35817/5726 households = £6.26 per copy, including staff time)</p> <p>Residents' time: a resident taking part in every activity associated with this report would have spent around 16 hours on it</p> <div data-bbox="1809 1198 2112 1528" style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is</p>  + </div>

Type of involvement

Hometaalk is a magazine through which Soha communicates to tenants about our services, key messages and how to get involved.

Hometaalk is produced in A4, A3, CD, tape and USB stick versions and also appears online.

What has happened? (outputs)

Hometaalk appeared 4 times in 2012/13.



Hometaalk provides value for money and is an effective communication tool. It takes a lot of staff time but delivers in terms of the end-product. It has helped with specific messaging (eg Welfare Reform).

So what? (outcomes and impact)

Accountability

Is passive.

The magazine regularly invites residents to write/phone in with views in order to have their name put in a prize draw.

Service standards and performance statistics are clearly presented in each edition, so tenants can hold us to account.

Hometaalk promotes how to complain and ways to challenge us. It charts co-regulation activities and the development of our Customer Charter.

Social capital

Hometaalk is the main way we communicate offers of training/skills improvement.

Community events (both organised by Soha and publicising regional and national events) and ways to get involved are both promoted through Hometaalk.

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to **Soha** £39602 made up of

Design, print and mailing
£29332

Staff £10270

CEX:	4 days
Manager:	3 days
Marketing Assistant:	20 days

Residents' time

Reading

(£39602/5726 households =
£1.72 per copy, including staff
time)

**Residents reckon
the value for
money of this
activity is**



Type of involvement

Tenants' Times is a 3 x per annum newsletter written by tenants for tenants which accompanies the rent statement.

The editorial panel consists of 12 tenants, of which around 7 work on every edition.

They choose the subject matter and write the articles, facilitated by a RI Officer.



We realise Tenants' Times needs developing and fresh ideas/input from the editorial team and are working on that now.

Show me the sums!

£5569.20/5504 households = 50p per copy, including staff time

What has happened? (outputs)

Tenants' times appeared online for the first time in 2012/13—just one of the 3 editions.

A saving has been made by having one version online: only 2 requests were received for hard copies instead, although the publication on the website received only 148 hits to date.



So what? (outcomes and impact)

Accountability

Is passive. Every edition encourages residents to take part in the production of the next one, but the composition of the team has been largely static for a further year, so a 're-visioning' with new tenants (some taken from the Annual Report project) is planned for July 2013.

Social capital

Residents asked for first impressions of working on the magazine said:

- Social – enjoy the company of others
- Giving something back to the community
- Something to do!
- Friendly!
- Open frank discussions
- Laugh
- Open
- Nice to be involved in contributing
- Can pursue particular interests (such as repairs)
- Jovial

Some residents are engaging with other involvement activities. An LGBT resident has joined the team.

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to **Soha** £5569.20 (32p per edition per person) made up of

design and print, production of electronic version and mail promotion of electronic version and residents' travel £5265

Staff £304.20

RI Officer: 1hr x 3 meetings/year; 2 hrs x each edition proofing

Residents' time

2hrs x 3 times a year including travel time, otherwise reading/responding to quizzes.

Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is



Estate satisfaction surveys



Type of involvement

Frontline staff visits our 13 priority estates over the course of the year to conduct estate satisfaction surveys on the doorstep. We carry out postal surveys of our other 100 estates. These surveys complements estate inspections which take place either monthly, bi-monthly or annually and at which residents can join staff for a walkabout.



Estate satisfaction is crucial for Soha. We need to make sure we carry on acting on the results and developing action plans where/when they may be needed.

What has happened? (outputs)

Year-end results from annual estate surveys are as follows:

- 74% of tenants are either very or fairly satisfied with the grounds maintenance and think it gives good VFM.
- 91% are satisfied that Soha estate services provides good VFM.
- 97% feel quite or very safe in their neighbourhood during the day and 84% at night.
- 82% were either very or fairly satisfied with ASB.
- 91% were either very or fairly satisfied with how Soha consults and involves residents
- 92% were either very or fairly satisfied with the quality of their home.
- 78% of tenants said there was a good or very good sense of community where they lived.

So what? (outcomes and impact)

We use the results to understand comparative satisfaction. Where satisfaction is low we produce an action plan with residents and use this in contractor monitoring. We add the tenant satisfaction score to the Estate Sustainability Matrix and will check satisfaction by telephone on a rolling basis.

Estate action plan introduced to recorded issues identified from estate surveys. Actions in 2012/13 have included:

- Addressing Contractor non-performance issues.
- Re-tendering of our grounds maintenance contract following negative feedback from tenants.
- Providing tenants with advice on how they can report ASB.
- Installing an access control system on vehicular gates in Henley as a traffic calming measure.
- Installing new street lighting at an estate in Crowmarsh.

The preferred feedback method to residents is an estate leaflet through the door. Each newsletter is written specifically for an estate and includes results of estate inspections, surveys and other estate based and RI info.

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to **Soha** £637.35 made up of 1 x ESS/month requiring

3 x Housing Officers (3 hrs)

1 x Senior Manager (3 hrs)

1 x Manager (3 hrs)

Residents' time

Say, 5 minutes on the doorstep to respond, 5 minutes to read

Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is





Community Action Plans

Type of involvement

What are they?

CAPs are neighbourhood improvement plans led by all residents within a community, not just Soha tenants. They include physical, social and other improvements, establishing a Safer, Greener, Cleaner approach to improve estates and neighbourhoods

Purpose and aims

- To find solutions to issues that matter to residents.
- To have a community led approach to achieve a cleaner, safer, greener neighbourhood where people are proud to live.
- To encourage residents, Soha and other partnering agencies to work together to achieve:
 - ⇒ A good living environment
 - ⇒ Residents living in a sustainable way
 - ⇒ Increased educational opportunities
 - ⇒ Pride in the local area
 - ⇒ A safe place to live
 - ⇒ Better community cohesion
 - ⇒ Increased accountability to residents by agencies

What has happened? (outputs)

The 2012-13 CAP focussed on the Medill Close Estate in Woodcote.

Its target areas were environmental concerns, tackling damp and condensation, community cohesion and security and safety.



CAPS really work. Partnerships help local people develop and implement substantial change in their communities.

So what? (outcomes and impact)

Accountability

- Regular door knocks.
- Feed back to residents on improvements in person and via newsletters.
- Conducting in depth surveys to compare KPI's and identifies outstanding issues.

Service improvements

- Introduction of traffic calming measures.
- Insulated porches to prevent damp and condensation.
- Installation of CCTV and improvements to lighting on the estate.
- Intensive housing management to tackle ASB.

Social capital

- Increased cohesion.
- Awareness of personal responsibility for cleanliness = attractiveness of estate.

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to Soha £123472.90 made up of

work at Medill Close in 2012-13 - £120,000.
Environmental work: 25%;
Improving energy efficiency of homes: 70%; safety: 5%

Staff £3472.90

Chief Executive	4 hrs
Senior Mgrs	34 hrs
Neighbourhoods Offrs	8 hrs
RI Officers	14 hrs

Residents' time

Ad hoc: survey responses, work shadowing, litter picking, focus groups

Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is



Choice consultation



Type of involvement

This was similar to a meeting held in March 2012, but this time exploring where we have made progress in the priority areas only. These were identified as RI, insurance and planned maintenance.

The original tenants from March were asked back, along with some new additions whose interest was whetted by the afternoon session on welfare reform.

This allowed for greater depth of discussion and for scoping what impact the changes will have for wider tenants.

What has happened? (outputs)

A morning's meeting was held for 22 residents. Senior Managers led a table discussion on their topic which

- Explained progress on suggestions for choice made at the last event.
- Introduced examples of best practice from other organisations or new ideas.
- Identified the benefits for tenants and for Soha.



So what? (outcomes and impact)

Accountability ✓✓✓

This consultation goes to the heart of strategic decisions and acts as a weather vane of our communications with residents (for example, the fact that so few knew we offered an economical insurance scheme when the group first met in March led to this being a priority issue in November.)

The work done at this consultation laid the foundations for the Sounding Board (next page) which took the information/addressing concerns dialogue to the highest level yet.

Social capital ✓

The event highlighted resident's needs, to support service improvements for the future.

Service improvement (evaluation of this is for the FY 2013/14)



These are effective and use/involve staff from across the business, but high impact. We need to make sure we act on findings and then report back on these actions.

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Costs

Didcot Civic Hall hire and refreshments plus travel for residents: £562

Staff time

Director	6 hrs
Senior Manager	6 hrs
Manager	2 x 6 hrs

Residents' time: 22 x 3hrs (average for travel and lunch).

Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is



+



Benefits Changes Sounding Board

Type of involvement

This arose from the Welfare Reform workshop held in conjunction with the Choice consultation. It took place in January 2013 with the purpose of checking Soha reacted to address residents' needs around information about the impending reforms.



This proved to be effective, especially having a Welfare Reform Champion. The Word of Mouth project which evolved from this got residents talking, encouraging an active dialogue between Soha and tenants affected by welfare reform.

What has happened? (outputs)

So what? (outcomes and impact)

- The service provider mystery shop shown at page 7 arose from this. Residents wanted to see for themselves what High Street banks and the CAB were offering by way of products and advice around benefits changes.
- A Benefits Changes Facebook page was set up by the RI team (complemented by Pinterest, another social media tool which enables users to 'pin up' items which may be of interest to others).
- A Welfare Reform resident champion was appointed, who regularly posted on this.
- A Word of Mouth project was started which has continued into the FY 2013/14.
- The suite of benefit changes leaflets which were in planning were fine-tuned by members of the group interested in publications.

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to **Soha** £871.35 made up of

£130 in incentive vouchers for attendance

Staff time £741.35

Director	3hrs
Senior Managers	4 hrs
Managers	2 x 2hrs

Residents' time

26 x 2 hrs

Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is



Complaints and feedback



Type of involvement

Soha welcomes complaints in any form: they don't have to be in writing or on a special form.

Purposes and aims

- To encourage complaints as a way of learning and improving services.
- To deal with individual complaints efficiently and to address all issues raised.
- To listen to residents and use their feedback to improve services.

A complaint starts with an acknowledgement and a response by a Senior Manager (known as **Stage 1**). A Director investigates (**Stage 2**) if the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily at Stage 1. **Stage 3** consists of a panel of three Board members and Stage 4 is (currently) referral to the Independent Housing Ombudsman.

What has happened? (outputs)

Soha knows there's a lot to learn from customer complaints, we will help complainants, if needed, to progress through each stage to obtain satisfaction.

In 2012/13, Soha received 107 complaints, up 18% on the previous year.

- 97 of these were resolved at Stage 1.
- 5 were resolved at Stage 2.
- 1 was resolved at Stage 3.
- 3 were withdrawn and 1 was still being investigated at the end of the financial year.

Customers had complaints about 7 departments; the majority were about Responsive Repairs (46 of the 107 complaints), Housing Management (26) and Planned Maintenance (22).

- In 49 out of the 107 complaints, Soha accepted responsibility for the cause of the complaint, either on behalf of one of its contractors, or jointly with one of them, or because of something Soha itself had done.
- On 32 of the complaints, Soha found that it hadn't acted incorrectly, but acted to resolve the cause of the complaint anyway.

We carried out a major survey (STAR) of our residents during October 2012. We asked for their views on what makes an excellent complaints service. Most people said that it was more important to have the problem resolved rather than having a good administrative process. We have therefore, taken these views into account when re-designing our complaints procedure.

As part of the complaints review, we have also taken account of the Localism Act 2011. We have decided how we will set up our 'designated person' who may be called upon to help tenants when Soha's formal complaints process has been exhausted.

The new complaints procedure will be launched in the spring of 2013.



Complaints and feedback

So what? (outcomes and impact)

We have looked at the trend in complaints over a number of years to get a better understanding of tenant satisfaction.

The biggest impact of complaints and informal feedback is on improvements to services.

Some outcomes of the complaints procedure have predominated in 2012/13. We now:

- Ensure contractors communicate better with our residents and with Soha.
- Ensure contractors carry out more thorough checks and follow the correct procedures agreed with Soha.
- Provide further training to staff on our computerised repairs system.
- Review the procedure when dealing with out of hours gas safety checks.
- Review the procedure and information provided by our Out of Hours service.



Soha takes complaints seriously. We need to make sure the right managers are involved at the start to sort complaints early, effectively and in a value for money way.

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to **Soha** £47,100
(excluding contractors' time to rectify mistakes)

Informal feedback can be as informal as a comment dropped into a conversation and, because it comes from a variety of sources such as this, there is no specific budget.

Staff £47,100

Complaints Co-ordinator part-time = £10,000

Dealing with each complaint takes on average 1 day of a Manager's time 106 days

Residents' time varies: eg informal feedback: 5 minutes

Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is



Type of involvement

What are they?

A survey is a way of getting residents' views on our services.

Purpose and aims

For Soha to recognise residents' views and to help us monitor our performance.

- To tell us how to improve our services.
- To collect statistics on our performance and compare these with other housing providers.
- To take a 'snap shot' look at a particular area to monitor standards such as void cleaning.

What has happened? (outputs)

Staff carried out 16 surveys this year, either by post or telephone or both. We concentrated on services such as

- Lettings.
- Anti Social Behaviour.
- Repairs contractors.
- Gas servicing and repair contractors.
- Void cleaners.
- Welfare Reform—tenants affected by the government changes to benefits.
- Customer Services team.
- Soha's rental income service.
- Planned maintenance projects such as new kitchens and bathrooms.



Soha needs to 'dig deeper' and ask searching questions. This will allow Soha to really work out what we are doing well and where we need to improve our services.



Surveys

So what? (outcomes and impact)

Accountability ✓✓

Service improvement ✓✓✓

- In the ASB survey where satisfaction is low the tenants focus upon communication as well as outcome. As a result the Neighbourhoods team aim to improve correspondence and are trailing weekly calls to tenants to give progress updates.
- Voids cleaning snap shot survey—we retrained the cleaner to show what standards we expected in our properties and enforced the cleaning standard. There has been a marked improvement in the cleanliness of our voids.
- We have improved communication around repairs due at a property after it is let. Tenants now have a list of repairs due that they take away at sign up. This statistic has improved.
-
- In partnership with SODC/VOWH we arranged to 'verify applications for Discretionary Housing Payment to quality assure applications and best outcomes for our customers.
-
- 'Act Now Ask Soha How' branded factsheets have been created and issued to those considering taking a lodger or downsizing.
-
- We launched a broader campaign to update Soha's website with the latest info/factsheets and the spring edition of Hometalk was dedicated to welfare reform.
- We trained front line staff at sessions, team briefings and on the Royal Scot House plasma screens to empower frontline staff to promote welfare reform.
- We invited 19 households without a bank account to attend the 1st surgery to be held by the Oxford Credit Union at the Soha offices.

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to Soha
£17,212.40

Staff time £11,513.20

Officer 16 surveys, 34 hrs
Senior Mgr 2 weeks
Customer Service Advisers,
proactive surveying and
logging results 428 hours


Residents' time

Form-filling 5-10 minutes

**Residents reckon
the value for
money of this
activity is**

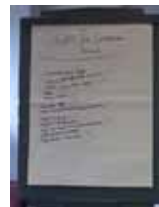




Type of involvement	What has happened? (outputs)	So what? (outcomes and impact)	Value for Money (resources and costs)
<p>A snap survey by phone or email from a database of residents who have said they prefer this ad hoc means of involvement. The incentive is the possibility of receiving a £25 shopping voucher, the winner being drawn from those surveyed.</p>	<p>All residents on the list to receive large print publications were canvassed for their views on it and its usefulness.</p> <p>Some of the interviews were carried out by P15 staff (see later in this Report)</p>	<p>Accountability</p> <p>P15 residents understood at first hand the diverse needs of the Soha customer base and how it aims to address them.</p> <p>Service Improvement</p> <p>We discovered that we were needlessly sending out large print to £483.60 worth of individuals. The mismatch in data has been put down to hasty form-filling and data entry during the 2009/10 data capture campaign which surveyed every resident.</p>	<p>Total cost to Soha was in staff time:£202.80</p> <p>Officer 6 hours (supervising or conducting survey)</p> <p>Residents' time</p> <p>5 minutes</p> <div data-bbox="1765 1206 2080 1522" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is</p>  </div>



This allows swift analysis of a specific business area and is a good first-time activity to involve residents in. It's also good value for money.

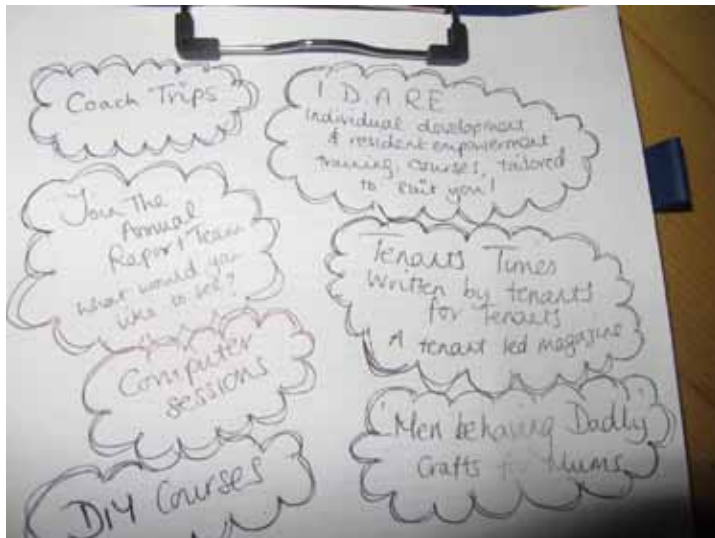


Families and children

Type of involvement

Soha aims that its resident involvement is inclusive. We recognise that not everyone wants to come to our offices for consultations.

As a result we go out of our way to work with residents in the evenings, at weekends and offsite. This includes wrapping consultations in amongst fun events which those who hold the tenancy don't have to find childcare to attend.



What has happened? (outputs)

A **coach trip** to Bournemouth was organised in the Summer holidays. Consultation was carried out before, during and after the trip.

A coach trip to bowling took place in February. This was due to be to a soft-play destination but the company went out of business. Building on the positive feedback from 2012/13, bowling was substituted.

On both occasions, the 52-seater coach was full. 2 staff attended to facilitate or conduct consultations.



The emphasis here is on allowing tenants to learn more about RI, potentially getting more people involved, low level consultation and also tenants having a fun day out.

It was a great day out, our family wouldn't have been able to get to the beach this year if it wasn't for Soha'

'It was fantastic and brilliant' aged 9



Families and children

So what? (outcomes and impact)

Accountability ✓

The split demographics, ages and profiles allowed us to consult on service areas. We gained a cross section of views

Social Capital ✓

We highlighted the changes to Welfare Benefits ensuring that residents have the confidence to speak to Soha if they have any concerns—ideally before problems hit. Some families had an outing intheschool holidays which, had it not been for Soha, they would not have been able to afford.



Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to Soha £2665
made up of

coaches £950

Staff £1715

Officers: 1 x 5 days
1 x 2 days

Residents' time

102 x all day event (2
seats on 52 seater taken
by accompanying staff)

Residents reckon
the value for
money of this
activity is





Access for All/Disability Conference







Access for All/Disability Conference

Type of involvement	What has happened? (outputs)	So what? (outcomes and impact)	Value for Money (resources and costs)
<p>A day-long conference for 50 Soha residents who regard themselves as disabled to encourage them to share their experiences and get first-hand, relevant information from guest speakers.</p> <p> Through liaising with AfA, it was agreed better promotional material was needed to highlight its role. Both RI/communications have helped to make this happen.</p>	<p>A programme of inspirational speakers, information and advice (eg on grants, fire and safety, back to work and benefits advice) was supported by stands from care organisations, agencies, charities, social clubs disability adaptation contractors, and so on.</p> <p>Information stalls were provided by Wiltshire Farm Foods, the police, Jeakins Weir/Soha, South and Vale Carers, Oxfordshire MIND, AgeUK, Oxon Fire and Rescue; Wheels for All; Job Centre Plus and Headway.</p>	<p>Service improvement</p> <p>Raised awareness of a vast range of services and support we can offer our more vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Social capital ✓✓✓</p> <p>Many of the residents commented that the event was organised to suit their individual needs. By carefully planning the conference we were able to accommodate residents that may not otherwise have been able to get involved.</p> <div data-bbox="1151 1043 1666 1417" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>“Excellent day – I now know who to call re my benefits – thank you.”</p> <p>“I loved meeting new people , thanks for a great day.”</p> <p>“Really interesting speakers, thanks.”</p> <p>“I loved it!”</p> </div>	<p>Total cost to Soha £3485.22</p> <p>£1540.22 (hall, travel, lunch, conference bags)</p> <p>Staff £1945</p> <p>Resident Involvement Officer Estates Manager Assistant Director of Customer Services 2 x Technical Officers Policy Officer RI Administraor</p> <p>Residents</p> <p>50 x 5 hours</p> <div data-bbox="1816 1193 2119 1522" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is</p> <p> +</p> </div>


Senior's Group



Type of involvement	What has happened? (outputs)	So what? (outcomes and impact)	Value for Money (resources and costs)
<p>A special interest group for older residents, whether living in sheltered or general needs accommodation.</p> <p>Purpose and aims</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a forum for consultation on topics affecting primarily older residents. To provide a sounding-board for future provision (for example on development proposals). To encourage community (both externally through links to agencies) and internally as residents gain insight into the sheltered schemes and/or neighbourhoods of those in similar circumstances. 	<p>Meetings were held two-monthly to discuss such topics as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older Person's Housing Strategy. Lettings Policy. Development. Good Neighbour scheme. <p>The topics were introduced by Soha staff and/or guest speakers.</p> <div data-bbox="618 1337 1458 1441" style="background-color: #e0f7fa; padding: 5px; margin-top: 20px;">  We need to make sure a range of subjects are discussed and the views of the group are fed back to the business. </div>	<p>Accountability ✓✓✓</p> <p>The Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adapted proposed questions for the Sheltered Housing Questionnaire. read and comment on early versions of the sheltered newsletter, the complaints-concerns-comments literature specifically for sheltered scheme residents and other published materials. <p>Service improvement</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Social capital ✓✓</p> <p>The Group meets at a different sheltered scheme every time or at Soha HQ. There is opportunity for residents who are not involved in the Seniors Group to meet those who are representing them.</p>	<p>Total cost to Soha £1543.20 made up of</p> <p>Vouchers, taxis, refreshments and</p> <p>Staff £1318.20</p> <p>Residents' time up to 2 hours per session, with some attending one every 2-3 months.</p> <div data-bbox="1809 1177 2112 1520" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is</p>  + </div>



Sheltered meetings

Type of involvement	What has happened? (outputs)	So what? (outcomes and impact)	Value for Money (resources and costs)
<p>A series of occasional meetings with the Director of Customer Service and Operations, Maureen Adams. Residents have taken the opportunity to discuss in an informal setting anything which is on their mind with one of the most senior figures in the company.</p>	<p>Discussions in the meeting alone ranged from the impact of welfare reform to the need for more cushions in the communal lounge!</p>	<p>This format was very successful in that residents declared themselves very comfortable with this informal face-to-face feedback style. Monthly scheme meetings have been instituted following this format. Anecdotal evidence thus far in 2013/14 (Summer) suggests that many issues which might otherwise result in complaints are being resolved with at an earlier stage.</p> <p>Accountability ✓✓✓</p>	<p>Total cost to Soha</p> <p>Staff £399.30</p> <p>Residents' time</p> <p>Drop-in</p> <div data-bbox="1818 1193 2123 1522" style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"><p>Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is</p></div>



These informal meetings proved successful and simple yet effective, allowing a range of issues to be discussed and quickly resolved.

Older people's activities



Type of involvement

A range of activities around health, wellbeing and hobbies, including singing and crafts., for residents of our housing for older people.

What has happened? (outputs)

This year, we initiated

- Creative writing.
- Card making.
- Silk painting.
- Mug painting.
- Reading (Book Club).
- Food for thought (nutrition).



The partnership working and range of activities are both essential to make sure Soha can offer different choices in accessible locations.

As well as holding the ever-popular chair-based exercises, Memories in Mind, boules and tai=chi.

working in partnership with agencies such as

Oxon Association for the Blind
Golden Age (Age UK)
Local singing groups
Oxfordshire MIND

As such, this way of working was a flagship project for 'hub and spoke' working.

Activities lasted for a short run of six weeks or weekly throughout the year.

119 residents attended across all Soha's schemes.





Older people's activities

So what? (outcomes and impact)

Social capital

- Tenants learnt new, high-nutrition, value for money recipes and drinks.
- They met new people in their own schemes and, in the case of some courses, from the wider community.
- The chair based exercise attendees reported improved mood, self-esteem and range of motion and reduced anxiety and depression.
- They worked together to create events, such as the tea party to close the Memories in Mind course.
- Golden Age introduces residents to speakers on a range of topics pursuing hobbies and current affairs.



Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to **Soha** £2445.70 made up of

Courses, including venue booking £950

Minibus hire £75 (for inter-scheme boules)



Sundries, such as biscuits, stationery: £20

Staff time £1400.70

Manager: 29 hrs organisation plus attendance
(some longer-running courses did not require
Manager input or attendance)

Residents reckon
the value for
money of this
activity is



Type of involvement	What has happened? (outputs)	So what? (outcomes and impact)	Value for Money (resources and costs)						
<p>Soha offers its residents training for reasons of improving accountability; the likelihood of receiving more specific service improvement suggestions; and social capital in the form of new horizons, often work related, being opened to residents.</p> <p>“This course will enable me to recognise signs of different levels of Mental Health problems and to be able to signpost tenants/ colleagues to the appropriate services that can help them.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report Copy Writing April 2012 . • Customer Services Training (Project 15) July 2012 . • The Wider World September 2012 • The Wider World January 2013. • Effective Leadership. • Mental Health First Aid. <p>“A great insight to mental health and the real impact it has on peoples lives”</p> <p> It is important for Soha to carry on supporting tenants with the right kind of training. This helps develop their skills, become more engaged tenants, and can also help create additional employment opportunities.</p>	<p>120 residents took part in these courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership training has helped prepare skills of involved groups but also newly involved tenants. • Health and well being, tenants have networked with each other and have become more involved with Soha as a result of attending courses. • Since taking part in Project 15 and the Customer Services training running alongside it, two of the younger participants have both got jobs. • Mental Health training utilised by Involved residents, newly involved residents and also staff have provided signposting skills for helping people with mental health problems. <p>“Effective leadership course has given me information on the logistics or running a large organisation such as Soha.”</p>	<p>Total cost to Soha £13,739.19 made up of</p> <p>Courses £2187.99 (including grant from Trafford Hall towards The Wider World)</p> <p>Residents’ travel £589.20</p> <p>Staff cost £11960</p> <table> <tr> <td>Senior Manager</td> <td>8 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manager</td> <td>12 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Admin Asst</td> <td>15 days</td> </tr> </table> <p>Residents reckon the value for money of this activity is</p> <p> +</p>	Senior Manager	8 days	Manager	12 days	Admin Asst	15 days
Senior Manager	8 days								
Manager	12 days								
Admin Asst	15 days								



- ▶ Project 15
- ▼ Community development



- ▲ Newspaper editor with Annual Reporters



- ▲ Tenant Inspectors
- ▼ Welfare reform

Co-regulation
Away Day



- ▼ The Wider World



- ▲ Staff and residents working together at the training to launch the Single Equality Strand, "So what's it got to do with you?"



Project 15

Type of involvement

P15 was a one-off project created to mark Soha's 15th anniversary.

- To provide real training and employment opportunities by offering up to 16 free training places and 6 paid positions as Tenant Market Researchers (TMRs).
- To listen to tenants views to improve, identify and develop Soha's services by asking over 1,500 tenants their experiences and future aspirations to help develop Soha's corporate plan.
- To be held accountable for the services we are delivering by monitoring our service standards.

What has happened? (outputs)

The first stage of the project was to provide free training places to tenants and others from our operating territory to gain a City and Guilds qualification in Customer Services. This group were then offered the opportunity to take part in P15 as telephone researchers, to gain valuable work experience and put some of their learning into practice.

6 were tenants, 3 were school leavers and 1 was a graduate seeking his first shot at work experience.

In total, 6 (4 residents, 2 non-residents) were recruited from the initial group of tenants. The group received bespoke training on Telephone Interviewing by M·E·L Research to give them the skills needed to undertake P15 interviews. The 6 TMRs made phone calls to 500 residents with MEL undertook 1000. The resident call-list was created to be statistically representative across locations, age groups and type of housing.



This one-off project provided tenants with new skills and valuable work experience. This helped one tenant progress and also go to Ruskin College, Oxford.

So what? (outcomes and impact)

Accountability

TMRs were integral to the process of the landlord inviting comment from residents and addressing the needs which were highlighted.

Social capital

Three of the researchers were immediately successful with further education and permanent jobs (one f/t, one p/t) respectively.

Service improvement

Residents contacted by P15 TMRs and MEL researchers responded to the opportunity to improve services by highlighting their own experiences. Even allowing for some of these residents having been poised to call in with their issues just as they were called by a P15 team member, the spread of queries is notable for its comprehensive nature.

The issues which the calls of the TMRs drew attention to were: New reports of responsive repairs—41; Chase up or ongoing repairs—3; Post-inspection repairs—1; Planned Maintenance—24; Estates—6; Lettings—6; Miscellaneous—6; Requests for disability adaptations—6; Anti-social behaviour—5; Handyman service—4; Tenancy support—3
RI—1; Development—1; Service charges—1

Value for Money (resources and costs)

Total cost to **Soha** £19346 made up of

Training £3181

Residents' pay£3180

Staff £12985

Senior Manager

Manager

Officers

2 days

17 days

25 days (incl. data prep, interviewing and follow-up of enquiries)

Residents reckon
the value for
money of this
activity is



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Polish

Jeśli chcesz uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, dużą czcionką lub na płycie CD, skontaktuj się z nami pod numerem 01235 515900.

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Se desejar receber esta informação em outro idioma, num tamanho de letra maior ou em CD, queira contactar-nos através do número 01235 515900.

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Ak požadujete túto informáciu v inom jazyku, vytlačenu s veľkými písmenami alebo na disku CD, kontaktujte nás na čísle 01235 515900.

Thanks to the Tenants' Forum Portfolio Holders for Resident Involvement, Edwina Lamond and Richard Mandunya, who made the assessments of Accountability, Service Improvement, Social Capital and Value for Money for this year's Impact Report



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The Government Standard