



RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2018/19 – 2020/21

Easthall Park Housing Co-operative

“Making a difference to **our** Community”



Organisational Values:

- People focussed
- Excellent customer services
- Equality and fairness
- Community focussed

Key Strategic Objectives:

- Delivering excellent housing services
- Providing quality homes and attractive environment
- Strong financial management
- People development and strong governance
- More than a landlord - maintaining a strong and vibrant community

Easthall Park Committee Approval 7th March 2018

Residents Panel Approval 29th March 2018

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Resident Engagement Strategy

Equal Opportunities Statement

Easthall Park Housing Co-operative is committed to equal opportunities for all sections of the community. Accordingly, no person will be discriminated against during the implementation of this policy on the grounds of sex, marital status, family circumstances, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, religion, political or sexual orientation.

This strategy can be made available in a variety of different formats including large print, alternative languages and audiotape.

Introduction

This is the revised version of Easthall Park Housing Co-operative's resident engagement strategy.

The purpose of Easthall Park is "*making a difference to our community*". The Co-operative recognises feedback on how users experience our services is critical to achieving this organisational purpose.

The aim of the engagement strategy is to provide information that service user's value and opportunities for users to scrutinise and influence performance and service standards.

It is anticipated that this policy will provide the framework that can ensure engagement is a key organisational priority vital to delivering the services that our residents want and value and drive continuous service improvement.

Background

Easthall Park Housing Co-operative is a community controlled organisation established as a landlord in 1992.

Over the years however, the Co-operative has come to define itself as being more than a housing provider, managing and delivering a wide range of community activities, as well as the traditional landlord housing management and maintenance functions.

A comprehensive resident satisfaction in November 2016 indicated satisfaction with our services was high. A 40% survey sample concluded 95.3% of residents were either very (45.1%) or fairly (50.2%) satisfied with services with only one person (0.4%) expressing that they were fairly dissatisfied with services .

Although the results are encouraging we recognise that to continue to meet our users demands and expectations, we need to continue to understand how people

experience our services and provide opportunities for local residents to influence services we provide and standards set.

Legal and Regulatory Requirements

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 requires all Registered Social Landlords, which includes Easthall Park Housing Co-operative, consult tenants and registered tenant groups on proposals that affect them and to take account of their views. This includes:

- Policies in relation to housing management, repairs or maintenance, where the proposal is likely to affect the tenants;
- The standard of service in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance

Easthall Park also has a responsibility to comply with the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter consists of 16 separate outcomes and standards that Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities have to meet.

The Charter includes specific outcomes key to the customer/landlord relationship. These focus on equalities, communication and participation.

Scottish Housing Regulator has published Regulatory Standards and the standard that applies to this strategy is Regulatory Standard Number 2 which states:

The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

Underpinning each standard is a series of guidance and the relevant guidance is as follows:

- 2.1 *The RSL gives tenants, service users and other stakeholders information that meets their needs about the RSL, its services, its performance and its future plans.*
- 2.2 *The governing body recognises it is accountable to its tenants, and has a wider public accountability to the taxpayer as a recipient of public funds, and actively manages its accountabilities. It is open about what it does, publishes information about its activities and, wherever possible, agrees to requests for information about the work of the governing body and the RSL.*
- 2.3 *The RSL seeks out the needs, priorities, views and aspirations of tenants, service users and stakeholders. The governing body takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions.*

A particular focus of this engagement strategy will be how we communicate and provide opportunities to participate.

Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan contains a number of objectives necessary to achieve our organisational purpose of “*making a difference to our community*”.

A key strategic objective in our 2018/19 - 2021/22 strategic plan is “*delivering excellent housing services*”.

A priority that supports the realisation of this objective is maintaining a well-developed resident engagement strategy.

This recognises that communication and understanding the users experience is vital to service excellence.

Residents Satisfaction Survey

In November 2016, we commissioned an external consultant to carry out face-to-face surveys with 40% of our residents. This sample size was large enough to provide informed and representative findings.

The data collected from this exercise has informed the development of the strategy.

Relevant findings included:

- 99.3% satisfaction with how Easthall Park kept tenants informed
- Letters (92.8%) and Newsletters (87.7%) were the most popular communication method amongst tenants
- 60.3% of tenants use the internet
- 74.4% of tenants were aware Easthall Park had a website
- 56.7% of tenants used facebook
- 97% of tenants were satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision making processes
- Planning for longer term upgrading of homes (investment 19.1%) and day-to-day repairs (14.8%) were the most popular topics to be consulted about with tenants
- 96.4% 76% of tenants wanted to be consulted on topics that directly affected them
- Only 1.8% of tenants were not interested in being consulted
- Speaking informally to staff (45.5%) were the preferred method of giving views amongst tenants

- 76.2% of owners were satisfied with how Easthall Park kept them informed about its services and decisions
- 85.8% of owners were satisfied with the opportunity given by Easthall Park to participate in decision making process
- 90.5% of owners were not interested in being consulted

Definition of Engagement

We are defining engagement as involving residents in the management and development of our business.

We believe that satisfaction with our services and performance is a critical measure of our success.

A key underpinning principle of this strategy is to involve residents at the outset, providing the opportunity to have a significant and meaningful contribution to the development of the engagement strategy and then subsequently its effective implementation.

Outcomes of the Strategy

The engagement strategy has three distinct outcomes:

The first outcome is to provide the information users require to understand what we do and how we perform.

The second outcome is to provide opportunities for users to comment on performance and participate in the development of services and setting of service standards.

The final outcome is to ensure people can be involved and influence services at a level they are comfortable with.

Key Aims of the Strategy

We have identified a number of aims that relate to successfully achieving the three key outcomes.

These include:

- Ensuring residents are provided with the right information in the appropriate format to understand what we do and how we perform.
- Understand how residents want to participate in developing and improving services.
- Ensure we have practices to engage effectively with groups that are traditionally “hard to reach”.

- Ensuring accountability.
- Improving services for all service users.
- Develop further our residents panel.

All of these should allow residents and other service users to scrutinise and hold us to account.

Resources

We identify each year a specific budget for (tenant participation) resident engagement.

Accordingly in 2018/19, this budget will be £13,870 with a further £5,120 set aside for another satisfaction survey. We own and manage 750 homes. Accordingly, this equates to £18.49 per property (or £25.32 inclusive of survey) for resident engagement activities in the financial year.

Action Plan

The final strategy will be supported by an action plan and will be agreed by the Committee and the Residents Panel.

The plan will highlight how the aims of the strategy will be managed and monitored to achieve the outcomes.

We have attached an action plan that includes measures to achieve the suggested aims of the strategy.

Registered Tenant Organisations

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on Easthall Park Housing Co-operative to keep a register of tenants groups. We do not however have any registered organisations.

If demand exists to establish a registered tenant organisation we would support its development.

Monitoring and Review

It is anticipated that the final strategy will be for a three year period and supported by an action plan reviewed on an annual basis.

Reports will be made to the Management Committee on at least an annual basis to scrutinise and monitor performance.