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## Impact Assessment 2009 - Resident Involvement

Report by the Operations Manager

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In accordance with the regulatory requirements of the Tenant Services Authority, English Rural continues to promote residents involvement across its business to ensure that the services it provides are responsive to the needs of its residents.
- 1.2 This is the second annual impact assessment into resident involvement opportunities offered by English Rural and looks to evaluate progress made over the past year; assessing achievements against targets whilst identifying further improvements for the future. The results will also help to enable a review of the Association's Resident Involvement Policy and Procedure to ensure it continues to meet the practical needs of both the Association and residents.
- 1.3 English Rural remains committed to involving residents at all levels of the organisation, encouraging and promoting an involvement culture. The past year has seen further progress as resident involvement becomes embedded in the ethos and values of the Association.
- 1.4 During the course of this year's assessment particular attention has been given to the National Housing Federation's Code for Members entitled *Service delivery and accountability*. The Association is committed to achieving any aspects of this code that are not already encompassed within its current service arrangements and where these are relevant to resident involvement will look to introduce them over the course of the next 12 months.

### 2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 To ensure the impact assessment remains compatible with previous years a comparable approach has been taken. This has involved a comprehensive assessment of all areas where resident involvement opportunities exist with a review against targets previously set. In order to minimise repetition of the work carried out last year some elements within the assessment will remain the same moving forward and where this is the case the assessment will simply state *no change*.

- 2.2 The format of the assessment has been changed to indicate progress against previous targets, any new learning outcomes and to set some new targets moving forward.
- 2.3 The impact assessment was carried out by a working group of 5 representatives from across the organisation and included the Association's two resident Board Members.
- 2.4 Feedback and experiences from staff and residents collected over the past 12 months has also been considered within the assessment.
- 2.5 Details on the impact assessment will be published in the forthcoming residents' newsletter and made available on the Association's website.

### **3. SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FINDINGS**

- 3.1 The Association continues to expand and improve the way it communicates with and involves residents within the organisation. Because of its specialist nature the Association continues to take a pragmatic approach to involving residents, using a bespoke network of involvement and consultation opportunities. This network has been established to meet the varying aspirations of residents and also accommodate the practical barriers of geography and resources.
- 3.2 This year's impact assessment identified a number of lessons to consider moving forward and established some targets for the future. These are all detailed within the table below; but four key items to be considered over the course of the coming year are as follows:
  - 1) piloting a Residents Panel to assist with performance monitoring across the organisation. Such a panel could act as a sounding board championing the needs and views of residents at a senior level within the organisation and feeding views into the Board of Management via the existing Resident Board Members.
  - 2) establishing a mutual Service Quality Promise between residents and the Association ensuring clarity of service delivery expectations.
  - 3) re-format the current regional forum structure to ensure they serve the purposes of both the Association and maximise on the investment of resources.

4) ensure compliance with the involvement and consultation elements included in the National Housing Federations latest Code for Members, *Service delivery and accountability*.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Association continues to comply with regulatory requirements and is committed to expanding involvement opportunities further to provide a resident focused service which is responsive to the needs and views of residents. The Association will continue to identify ways in which it will be accountable to residents for the service that it offers and ensure residents have the opportunity to play a full role in its governance structure.
- 4.2 The findings of the latest assessment have been used as a basis to refresh the Association's Resident Involvement Policy and Procedure document.

Originator: Martin Collett  
April 2009

<b>Type</b>	<b>Activities 07/08</b>	<b>Targets 08/09</b>	<b>Progress with 08/09 Target</b>	<b>Outcomes and lessons</b>	<b>Targets for 09/10</b>
Development Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Rural continued to hold consultation events for all new developments prior to a planning application and promote dialogue with the local community via the parish council and local media/marketing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to consult community on all future developments.</li> <li>Look to update quality/suitability of handouts/literature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intermittent communication with potential applicants can lead to confusion.</li> <li>Promoting support locally strengthens case for homes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change to 08/09 targets</li> <li>Offer viewings to successful residents</li> <li>Acknowledge registration of interest and formalise further contact, which will be at planning application/granted and start on site.</li> </ul>
Resident Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual satisfaction survey carried out in December 20007.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue annual survey but consider carrying out in February rather than December to see if response rate increases.</li> <li>Ensure survey continues to meets NHF/Housing Corporation guidance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not achieved. Due to falling response rate decision taken to carry out survey every 2 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data can become outdated, but can be supplemented by 6 week sign-up survey and refreshed again at 6 months.</li> <li>Different expectations from different partners, but need to balance apathy towards surveys and ensuring accurate data captured.</li> <li>Change timing of survey from December to February.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual survey to be carried out in February 2010.</li> <li>Establish formal arrangements to capture data from incoming residents.</li> <li>Consider introducing a project review to include local delivery partners with feedback informing future projects.</li> </ul>
Board Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates sought and elections for resident board members held.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of Governance Manual to assist board members.</li> <li>Continue to offer training opportunities and support to resident board members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance manuals (Standing Orders and Financial Regulations) completed but no formal pack for Resident Board Members.</li> <li>Resident Board Members benefited from Board training programme and other ad-hoc courses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No introductory pack available for Resident Board Members introducing their role, the Association or other jargon.</li> <li>Lack of info can presents a barrier to full participation at Board level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In discussion with existing Resident Members produce introductory pack for Resident Board Members to include; role info, background on the Association, explanation of jargon, organisation structure, development programme information, level/location of current stock.</li> <li>Carry out appraisal of Resident Board Members to identify skill gaps.</li> <li>Continue to promote/offer training opportunities.</li> </ul>
Resident fora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas where English Rural holds stock broken down into 3 geographical patches; South Central, South East and East. Fora were held on a 6 monthly basis in each patch.</li> <li>The following events were held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21 May 2007 – Shiplake, Oxon;</li> <li>11 June 2007 – Smarden, Kent;</li> <li>17 July 2007 – Thaxted, Essex;</li> <li>29 January 2008 – Woodchurch, Kent;</li> <li>27 February 2008 – Ashdon, Essex;</li> <li>25 March 2008 – Milford, Surrey.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set dates in advance and promote in newsletters.</li> <li>Highlight and promote the importance of fora and opportunity to meet with staff/board members directly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotating programme of regional fora continued.</li> <li>Targets achieved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited interest/attendance.</li> <li>Content continues to be personal/scheme specific.</li> <li>Events benefit representation from across the organisation.</li> <li>Formal structure can present barrier.</li> <li>Limited output per resources invested.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change from 09/10 targets.</li> <li>Change format to informal VICE style event, holding less frequently and at wknds.</li> <li>Include refreshments and different stands providing information and advice from internal/and external representatives eg. Resident Board Members, Repairs and Maintenance, HB advice.</li> </ul>
Residents Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoted benefits of residents associations in newsletter.</li> <li>Successfully supported the SaintsField Residents Association.</li> <li>Provided guidance in response to interest from residents living at Knights Field, Eynsford.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to attend and support resident associations.</li> <li>Offer/promote training opportunities to formal residents associations.</li> <li>Highlight benefits, using SaintsField as an example.</li> <li>Consider entering SaintsField for community award.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets achieved.</li> <li>Saintsfield RA Secretary drafted content for newsletter.</li> <li>Eynsford and Tatsfield expressed interest in localised group.</li> <li>Details of TPAS training passed to existing groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited interest due to small numbers and level of motivation/time required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change from 08/09 targets.</li> </ul>

Development Tours/Housing Management Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board tours held in Surrey, Hampshire, Sussex areas.</li> <li>Regular visits from housing staff to developments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look to introduce a scheme visitation schedule once housing services are all provided by English Rural. This will ensure all schemes visited on a regular basis and dates of last visits recorded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular visits from Housing Managers becomes more formalised.</li> <li>HM Panel toured Essex and Leicestershire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These events make Board Members more approachable.</li> <li>Benefit Board Members who can identify delivery at ground level with strategic decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to formalise arrangements for recording HM visits.</li> <li>Promote benefits of on the ground contact to Board Members</li> <li>Include opportunity for all Board Members to be included in tours.</li> </ul>
Maintenance Quality Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents are asked to feedback on all day-to-day repair jobs.</li> <li>All works over £500 are inspected by Hastoe agent and residents.</li> <li>All planned/major works inspected by agent and direct resident feedback sought during inspection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look to increase level of feedback.</li> <li>Include feedback on all repairs and maintenance work once English Rural providing directly.</li> <li>Use feedback to inform preferred contractor list.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets achieved other than level of feedback remains low.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some residents may have low expectations and would not report poor performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look to clarify service expectations within Quality Promises.</li> <li>Incorporate internal audit recommendations relating to post-inspection.</li> <li>Increase email contact with residents relating to feedback by asking for email at point of contact and drafting electronic feedback form.</li> </ul>
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer and Winter Newsletter sent to all residents.</li> <li>Annual Report sent to all residents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider including updates/feature from resident board members in newsletter.</li> <li>Consider asking SaintsField RA to contribute on their experiences.</li> <li>Circulate new Housing Management Manual to all households once in-house.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets achieved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive feedback on the content of newsletters and publications and accessibility to useful and relevant information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote resident involvement within publications.</li> <li>Keep content and style relevant and accessible.</li> <li>Improve web accessibility and functions for residents.</li> </ul>
Direct Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct contact with residents is ongoing and encouraged, particularly with localised staff in order to develop productive and beneficial relationships.</li> <li>Direct contact details for staff promoted in newsletters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate contact details for new staff once arrangements are all in place.</li> <li>Continue to develop and promote approachable relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to formalise regularity of visits via visit schedule.</li> <li>Introduction of 6 week visit to assess resident satisfaction, feedback and reinforce relationship with Housing Manager.</li> </ul>
Virtual Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued use of residents' virtual forum as a sounded board, principally for policy and procedure documents. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rechargeable Repairs Policy;</li> <li>Involvement and Consultation Policy;</li> <li>Rent Arrears Policy;</li> <li>Anti-social Behaviour Policy;</li> <li>Transfer and Mutual Exchange Policy;</li> <li>Complaints Policy and Procedure;</li> <li>Allocations Policy and Procedure;</li> <li>Tenants Compensation Policy and Procedure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider widening to consultation forum including other methods of contact not just electronic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited success against targets to widen and include other methods, despite promoting in publications.</li> <li>Continues to offer an alternative way to canvas resident opinion and number of documents placed for consultation via this method over year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email addresses become dated.</li> <li>Low level of response/input.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To expand number of resident email addresses held via 6 week survey.</li> <li>To summarise documents being circulated for consultation in plain English.</li> <li>To design a simple format which residents can use to respond.</li> </ul>
Residents Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research feasibility of piloting Residents Panel to meet and help improve service delivery and accountability.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In consultation with residents draft and formally adopt a 'Service Quality Promise' detailing service expectations across the business.</li> </ul>