Resident Involvement Strategy

Tamar’s Context
Tamar is a small Housing Association and many of the estates Tamar manages are relatively small and are spread out through Plymouth and surrounding areas. This means that for Tamar, some of the traditional ways to involve residents will not work as effectively as it does for other associations.

For example, residents’ meetings will always be less successful on an estate of 10 properties compared to an estate of 500. Also employment or education initiatives are unlikely to be effective for a small housing association.

Consequently, Tamar has developed its own unique way of involving residents that suits the stock and Tamar’s residents

Tamar’s Resident Involvement Priorities
- Provide a range of opportunities for residents to be involved in decision making within Tamar at all levels
- Consult with residents about changes to their environment
- Involve residents in shaping the services and in monitoring Tamar’s performance
- Provide a variety of ways that tenants can be involved to suit the amount of time that they have available
- Actively encourage residents to be involved, especially from groups that are normally underrepresented
- Build strong communities where residents can support and help each other
- Look to increase and improve the way we use social media to communicate with residents.
- Look for new and innovative ways to involve residents

Ways to get involved
In order to try to meet the above priorities Tamar will provide a variety of ways for residents to get involved. This will include:-

- Resident Board Members
- The Residents’ Group
- Resident involvement on recruitment selection panels
- Service Review Groups (including interviewing and selecting contractors)
- Community Reps
- Social Media
- Walkabouts
- Resident surveys

Current review date – June 2016
Next review date – June 2019
• The Status Survey
• Specific consultations
• The Residents’ Newsletter
• E-mail consultation groups
• Volunteering opportunities for residents

Tamar will also try to develop new and innovative ways to involve residents at all levels of the organisation.

In addition, Tamar may hold social events or estate meetings where there are specific reasons for doing so.

Social Media
Tamar and the Residents Group have decided that using social media to improve our communication with residents. This is because social media is the modern form of communication and allows residents to feedback to us quickly.

Facebook provides us with a way to engage with residents in an informal way while allowing feedback from residents. We aim to post an item of interest every day such as;
• Results of estate inspections (with photos)
• New developments
• Major works (before and after photos)
• Resident involvement items
• Short case studies of debt and welfare benefit work
• Examples of rent arrears actions, such as Court Hearings and Evictions.
• New staff
• Local events that residents may be interested in
• Practical advice

Tamar will also post items on Twitter and may use other types of social media as these become relevant.

Evaluating the success of resident involvement initiatives
Tamar will review the effectiveness of the initiatives that it runs on an annual basis and report the results to the Residents’ Group and to the Board. The purpose of the evaluation will be to ensure that Tamar does the things which are most effective in reaching residents and that Tamar learns what works. The evaluation will be based on the following;

• How does the initiative fit in with Tamar’s priorities for resident involvement
• The effectiveness of the initiative in achieving its goals (as set by the Residents’ Group)
• What the outcome of the initiative is
• Whether the activity represents value for money and how this might be improved
• The popularity of the initiative
• Whether the initiative reaches groups of residents that are hard to reach

As a result of the evaluation, Tamar may stop, expand or reduce some of the activities mentioned above or add new ones.

Resources
Tamar will provide adequate resources to carry out resident involvement activities. In addition, the Residents’ Group will be provided with funds which they can use as they see fit, to achieve the priorities of this strategy.

The budget for resident involvement will be reviewed by the Residents’ Group annually.

Tamar will also ensure that there is adequate training for residents who are involved in the Residents’ Group and other resident involvement initiatives. The Residents’ Group will review the training plan for residents annually.

Newsletter
The purpose of the Newsletter is to inform residents about what Tamar is doing, publicise events/activities and to pass out information which residents may want to know. Tamar has recently trailed resident editorial of the Newsletter. Residents write article and are involved in deciding the content of the Newsletter. Tamar will continue this involvement.

Tamar will develop a calendar of resident involvement activities, which will be published in the Newsletter.

Website
The website contains information about the services Tamar offers as well as our policies and other useful information. It is important that resident involvement activities are publicised through the website. The website is also a useful place to publish the results of any surveys and other resident involvement activities.

Joint working
As a small housing association, Tamar will have to work with partners in order to provide some services.
Tamar will actively seek to use partner organisations to provide services and to tap into what is already being provided by others.

**Resident Involvement Action Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Completion date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents’ Involvement Strategy agreed by the Residents’ Group and Board.</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report to Residents’ Group and Board on the effectiveness of resident involvement initiatives</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residents’ Group meetings</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletters – with resident editorial</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walkabouts</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residents’ Group budget meeting</td>
<td>September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residents’ Group training plan meeting</td>
<td>September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residents Status Survey</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
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