

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE HOMES RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY



Better Homes, Stronger Communities



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Key

Green – links to RI Statement

Blue – links to Corporate Strategy & Business Plan

Red – links to Annual Operations Plan

Purple – links to Team Plan

Light blue – links to Menu of Options

Definitions

Tenants – NLH tenants only

Leaseholders – NLH leaseholders that own the leasehold and reside in the leaseholder property

Owner occupiers – Private owners of homes situated in NLH neighbourhoods

Residents – Anyone who lives in NLH neighbourhoods regardless of tenure

1. Our commitment to resident involvement

The Resident Involvement Strategy demonstrates North Lincolnshire Homes (NLH) commitment to resident involvement, and is driven by, and underpins our Vision, Core Values and Corporate Objectives as set out in our Business Plan.

‘Our vision, as North Lincolnshire’s largest social landlord, is to “Inspire our people and partners to make positive differences”.

The organisation’s Core Values are the key principles governing how NLH will operate and what we believe in:

- **Invest in our people**
- **Work together as one team**
- **Be customer focussed**
- **Be respectful and honest**
- **Be responsible and accountable**
- **Be positive and care about what we do**
- **Welcome challenges**
- **Value relationships with our partners**
- **Deliver the highest standards, and**
- **Continuously improve**

Corporate objectives:

- **Delivering excellent services and homes**
- **Ensuring customers are at the heart of the business**
- **Maximising resources and opportunities**

North Lincolnshire Homes (NLH) is committed to maximising true resident involvement so that it can develop a culture of partnership working and effective communication between tenants, other customers, board members and staff. We want to ensure that resident involvement and feedback is at the heart of our business.

We recognise that excellent service delivery can best be achieved by genuine and active involvement of residents in the decision making and monitoring of our services and activities. With this in mind, we will continue to actively seek to encourage more people to get involved in consultation and participation with us.

As a social landlord, we have a duty to keep residents informed of our activities and to consult with our stakeholders on proposals and changes which will affect them. We therefore give a genuine commitment to developing both existing and new innovative methods of involvement to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute at a level that suits them.

North Lincolnshire Homes will **consult and engage with tenants** so that we can:

- Contribute to the delivery of identified corporate objectives, e.g. listening and communicating

- Develop and deliver high quality services that meet residents' needs and expectations
- Achieve better homes and stronger communities for all of our tenants
- Have a reputation for excellence in resident involvement and maintain TPAS accreditation

We are committed to providing the resources required, in the shape of people, time, facilities and funding, to achieve good communications, effective consultation, participation and scrutiny and partnership working.

2. Influences

There are a number of influences which have set the way in which North Lincolnshire Homes wishes to develop resident involvement as a key part of its culture, namely:

A. Stock Transfer Consultation Document

This document made the following promises to tenants should they vote for transfer to NLH:

- NLH would continue to work with tenants to promote and develop tenant involvement
- Tenants would be able to get involved at a level that suits them best through a tenant participation 'menu'
- Tenants would have five seats on the Board of NLH
- All tenants would be able to become members of NLH , making them eligible to attend and vote at General Meetings of the organisation and to stand as a Tenant Board Member
- Tenants would be able to get involved in monitoring the quality of services provided by NLH
- NLH would provide staffing and financial support to representative tenant groups

B. The Tenant Services Authority

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) is the regulator for social housing in England. Following national consultation with tenants, housing providers and other stakeholders, the TSA launched a new regulatory framework in March 2010. The regulatory framework is built on a new 'co-regulation' approach whereby the TSA expects Boards to take a proactive role in self regulating their organisations, incorporating effective tenant involvement. Under the new approach, the TSA will adopt a 'light touch' to regulation unless they have concerns about a particular provider.

The regulatory framework contains six national standards that housing providers must comply with, namely:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and community

- Value for money
- Governance and financial viability

Housing providers must involve their tenants in assessing what action is needed to comply with the standards and in producing an annual report. They must also consult with tenants over developing 'local offers' of service.

C. Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry

The Audit Commission has set Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) that it uses to assess the performance of social landlords in terms of resident and stakeholder involvement. There are five overarching themes within each KLOE. These are:

- Access, customer care and service user focus
- Diversity
- Resources available to support
- The impact of resident involvement
- Value for money

D. The KLOEs are designed to assess the following

- How effectively an organisation communicates with its service users
- Customer care standards
- Accessibility of services
- How an organisation responds to the different needs of its communities and individuals
- How many resources it commits
- How it consults on resources needed and how they are used
- How effectively the organisation has set up partnerships
- Whether the mechanisms and processes for resident involvement provide value for money
- Impact and outcomes for service users and the organisation as a whole (as assessed by service users)

E. Residents' aspirations

In 2008 North Lincolnshire Homes commissioned the National Housing Federation to carry out a STATUS survey. All tenures (general needs tenants, sheltered housing tenants and homeowners) were included in the survey which took place between October and November 2008. The STATUS survey was split into the three local management patches to identify geographical differences in aspirations. A STATUS action plan will be developed to address areas of dissatisfaction, and in some instances may trigger a service review

Resident involvement will be developed in line with the aspirations identified in the results of the status survey, from estate plans and from all other existing feedback mechanisms.

3. Developing culture

A key part of North Lincolnshire Homes' strategy is to develop the culture where effective partnership working between residents, stakeholders and officers can develop.

As part of the process of developing a culture where resident involvement is an essential part of the core business, NLH will continue to work with residents to identify training requirements both for themselves and for staff. Residents will continue to be involved in identifying the specific training required to empower them to make informed decisions in all areas of NLH work. The following priorities have been identified to date:

- Resident Involvement Impact Assessment training – staff and active residents will receive training on the impact assessment process
- Equal opportunities training (including gender equality) - for residents and staff to create good working relationships where everyone can be involved at the level that they choose, and to ensure fair representation and take up
- Continuation of the six monthly training calendar for volunteers, to include a rolling programme of chairing skills, committee skills etc. This training will also be opened up to staff so that training can be delivered to all.

We will also promote access to training opportunities for residents via various networks and training organisations.

To ensure that a culture of resident involvement is embedded throughout the organisation and to encourage all staff to 'buy in' to the principles of it, we will provide staff with resident involvement training and targets.

4. Partnership working

A key priority is to establish North Lincolnshire Homes as a key player in regeneration activities in North Lincolnshire. We will work with existing stakeholders and forge relationships with new ones where necessary. We aim, over time, to become central to supporting the Council's strategic activities that underpin sustainable neighbourhoods throughout North Lincolnshire.

We will continue to work with and to aspire to meet the aims of the Local Strategic Partnership and will endeavour to enable stronger communities, promote and create community cohesion and tap into and support the voluntary sector.

North Lincolnshire Homes is a key member of the Council's 'Community Engagement Co-ordination Group' and has, together with a number of other local partners, influenced the production of the 'Stronger Communities Plan'.

Community investment is identified as a priority for North Lincolnshire Homes and this is being progressed to mainstream wider than housing activities for the benefit of our residents and communities.

5. Our involvement principles

- Resident involvement is central to the planning, delivery and monitoring of services
- The scope of resident involvement will cover information, consultation, participation and scrutiny.
- We will be clear to our stakeholders about the boundaries when we are informing, consulting or requesting actual participation
- We will be clear about any limits to involvement or decision making and will communicate these limits clearly, e.g. involvement can't change everything
- Residents will be involved before decisions are made
- Relevant, accurate, up to date and accessible information must be provided in a variety of communication methods and formats so that informed decisions can be taken
- Language used will be clear, free from jargon and accessible
- Support will be made available to enable involvement at all levels. This can include the provision of transport, child care, carer support, interpreters, refreshments etc.
- Formal and informal training for tenants, residents and staff will be available to ensure meaningful and equal participation
- All involvement requires resources to be built into the process from the beginning
- Involvement will be planned at a pace which suits those being involved
- Residents will be involved in monitoring the quality of services provided
- **The service will be accountable to tenants by encouraging them to be involved in the scrutiny of customer facing services and issues**
- The outcomes of resident involvement must be used to shape service delivery and planning
- Feedback following involvement activity to be accurate and delivered within agreed timeframes
- This resident involvement strategy will be developed to improve the opportunities for resident consultation, scrutiny and influence

6. Key involvement priorities

- To provide all tenants and leaseholders with information about their housing service

- To support the involvement of all tenants, and where appropriate residents, in all aspects of North Lincolnshire Homes
- To uphold the principles of the '**Resident Involvement Statement**' and to continually monitor and review all arrangements for resident involvement
- To support the continual development of and **actively promote the participation opportunities available via our resident involvement 'Menu of Options'**
- To ensure all groups of tenants and residents are offered fully inclusive opportunities for involvement. This includes people who can be often marginalised, such as people from black and minority groups, older people, people with complex needs, refugees and asylum seekers and children and young people

7. Involvement objectives

- Working in partnership with Community Voice to address better ways of working
- Forward planning a programme of consultation and engagement events to include all sections of the community
- Addressing barriers to involvement and working with under-represented groups
- Devolving decision making powers so that residents can influence local and area services, e.g. leaseholders influencing the contract specification for external major works
- Working with younger people to address how they wish to be involved
- Consulting effectively with tenants about planned improvement works to their homes
- Engaging and consulting with tenants, leaseholders and residents where major works are planned to communal areas, environments and neighbourhoods
- Using information and training to develop the confidence and skills of residents so that they can participate effectively
- Guiding and empowering constituted resident associations so that they are self sufficient within a six month period
- Promoting the opportunities for resident management
- Promoting the harmonious functioning of multi-racial communities to residents groups and assisting them to work towards the elimination of all forms of racism and discrimination
- Running regular Tenants' Conferences and events to enable tenants to hear about and influence NLH priorities, commitments and performance

- Where there is a need, we will work with residents to create formal compact agreements
- Investigating and, where applicable, developing virtual forums – use of e-mail, digital TV, social networking (such as Facebook and Twitter), telephone, short messaging service (SMS), as a means of customer engagement
- Consulting with residents to review corporate objectives and direction
- Achieving all resident involvement targets identified within the North Lincolnshire Homes Operational Plan
- Maintaining TPAS Accreditation for resident involvement

8. Methods of involvement

The organisation has a wide range of resident involvement choices, from strategic decision making by tenant board members, to a lesser involvement level such as putting forward a compliment or complaint.

A comprehensive menu of options framework is open to all NLH tenants and residents. This ensures that they can be involved in specific areas of the organisation which they are interested in.

Examples

Collectively:

- A residents' association comprising of tenants and the broader community that influences decisions that affect them at a local level, e.g. estate plans, collective complaints
- The homes improvement panel that decides on the number of choices of kitchen units that should be available to tenants as part of the improvement works
- A group of tenants and residents collectively putting forward a 'Tenants Trigger for a Scrutiny Review' for the consideration of the Resident Scrutiny Panel

As an individual:

- A tenant or leaseholder that wants to be involved in the governance of the organisation becoming a tenant board member
- A tenant that has an interest in customer services, participating in a focus group as part of the customer access review
- Any tenant can apply to be a member of the Resident Scrutiny Panel

9. Support available to residents

NLH will ensure that there is effective and appropriate support identified and made available to residents that wish to be involved. We will adopt a flexible approach to take account of residents' differing aspirations and needs.

- We will provide support to all those wishing to participate, and at a level that suits them

- We will offer informal and formal training to volunteers so that they can participate fully and effectively
- We will offer a variety of resident involvement structures and opportunities to ensure that engagement with hard to reach residents is available
- We will encourage and support resident groups to become involved in wider community issues
- We will encourage groups to develop networking links within a wider social and economic framework in order to work together on shared concerns
- We will assist groups in seeking information, advice, support and funding from other sources
- We will agree with volunteers how they will be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses for resident involvement activities and the budgets involved

10. Equality and diversity

North Lincolnshire Homes believes everyone has the right to fair and equal treatment. We recognise that the people who use our services and who work for us come from diverse backgrounds. We are committed to dealing with all forms of discrimination through our policies and working practices.

Quality resident involvement must ensure that all residents have an equal opportunity to get involved and that involvement options are varied and tailored to take account of the differing interests and circumstances of residents. For example, we will:

- Make sure that information is given to individual residents in their preferred format and medium
- Hold meetings in accessible places and at times that suit as many people as possible
- Make sure that residents have the opportunity to be heard and value their individual opinions
- Provide support and assistance to enable residents to take up involvement opportunities, e.g. hearing loop systems at meetings, child care, transport and translations
- Insist that staff and residents display respectful and non discriminatory behaviour at all times. The required standards are communicated and enforced using policies, terms of reference and codes of conduct for staff and volunteers.

We will only recognise resident organisations and representatives as speaking for others if they are open, democratic organisations that actively promote inclusion and represent the views of all resident in their constituency. NLH will support their efforts to actively promote equality and diversity, e.g. helping to develop equality and diversity statements, and will provide appropriate training and advice.

We will monitor the diversity profile of all resident involvement structures, developing actions and targets where required to address any areas of under-representation. We

will also continue to take positive action to engage harder to reach groups including black and minority ethnic communities and younger people.

11. Resources

There are costs associated with resident involvement in terms of both time and money for the staff and residents involved. North Lincolnshire Homes recognises that this involvement cannot happen without the commitment of adequate time and resources.

Residents will need to get organised in order to play an effective role in resident involvement and this may entail having somewhere to meet, administrative support, access to information, the development of skills, and the funds to pay for all of these things. All of these funds must ultimately come from the rents that tenants pay.

We also recognise that it takes time, energy and commitment on the part of our staff to consult and engage effectively, and that they too may need support and training to achieve the required standard.

We are committed to ensuring that all volunteers, resident associations and other NLH involvement group structures have access to the available resources, which enable them to achieve their aims.

12. Value for money of resident involvement

We believe that by embedding a culture of resident involvement throughout the organisation, that NLH will be able to deliver services that are more efficient and better value for money.

Residents will be provided with value for money awareness training, will be proactively involved in activities such as the Value for Money Working Group and in the redistribution of value for money gains.

Value for money will be considered when undertaking resident involvement activities and processes reviewed to ensure they are done emphasising best value.

Any resident involvement activity that results in a significant cost to NLH will be reviewed via the impact assessment framework. Findings of the impact assessment will then be used to influence how involvement is facilitated in the future.

13. Reviewing the success of resident involvement

It is very important that feedback from resident involvement is used to have a positive impact on service delivery. Feedback helps us to deliver an efficient and effective service.

We will ensure that there is a cohesive approach to resident involvement and that activities are monitored for effectiveness. Information will be analysed to ensure that the needs and priorities of residents are taken into account.

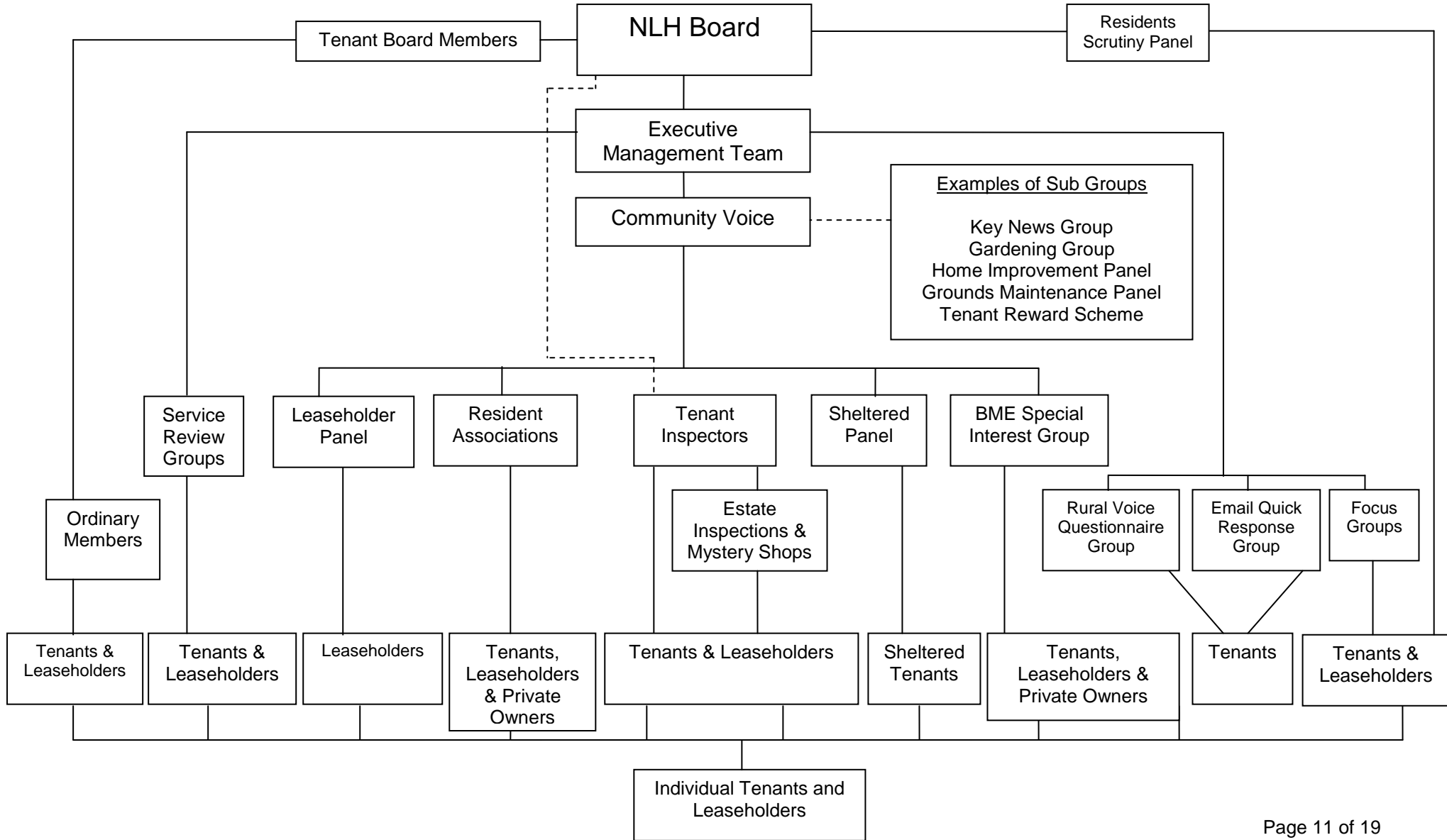
Information from involvement activities will be dealt with in a joined up way with service areas using results to shape and improve their services in the future. We also want to be sure that residents that are involved see what has been achieved and believe that they have made a real difference.

We will work alongside residents to monitor the successful delivery of this strategy through the resident involvement annual impact assessment process, through diversity impact assessments, resident scrutiny, the performance management framework and benchmarking.

We will annually review resident involvement in line with revised corporate objectives.

We will publish information and outcomes of resident involvement in a variety of ways including the North Lincolnshire Homes Annual Report and public website.

Section 14. Resident Involvement Structures Chart









Section 15. Resident involvement strategy action plan








Ref	Objective	Priority -Low/ Medium / High	Benefits/Outcomes	Responsibility/ Lead Officer	Target Date	Specific Task/s
1.	Ensure all Community Voice members attend equality, diversity and cultural awareness training	High	Volunteers committed to the ethos of equality and diversity. Behaviour of volunteers in line with the Volunteers Code of Conduct.	Karen Cowan	Jan 11	Awareness training.
2.	Agree to set Resident Involvement targets in Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) for all staff.	High	All members of staff aware that they need to consider and facilitate resident involvement where relevant.	Karen Cowan & Directors/ Heads Of Service	Sept 10	Targets in staff PDRs.
3.	Work with young people to address how they want to be involved	High	Encouraging and enabling hard to reach groups to participate with NLH.	Karen Cowan	Jan 11	Young people to be recruited as members of Community Voice.
4.	Develop the Resident Scrutiny Panel to enable greater transparency in how North Lincolnshire Homes operates	Medium	Tenant empowerment to scrutinise customer facing services and issues.	Karen Cowan	March 11	Work with Resident Scrutiny Panel to develop capacity.
5.	Promote the opportunities for tenant management	Low	Raised awareness of the opportunity to consider	Karen Cowan	Dec 10	Article in Key News. Agenda item at






			tenant management.			Community Voice and all Resident Associations.
6.	Continue to roll out resident involvement impact assessment training to staff and volunteers.	Medium	Lessons learnt used to influence the way we review services in the future.	Karen Cowan	Dec 10	Training.
7.	Investigate and where applicable develop virtual forums.	Low	Hard to reach groups enabled to participate with NLH.	Lisa Fleming / Karen Cowan	Feb 11	Text consultation. Publish information on Face Book and Twitter.
8.	Involve residents in the development of revised Service Standards in line with new TSA guidance.	High	Services that meet the aspirations and requirements of customers.	Toni Mosley / Karen Cowan	Nov 10	Agree and publish service standards.
9.	Residents to influence where value for money savings are redirected.	Medium	Services developed in line with tenant aspirations.	Martin Woodward / Holly McGlone	March 11	Identify savings. Identify where monies to be re-invested.
10.	Devise succession planning training programmes for key resident involvement structures of involvement, e.g. Tenant Board and Scrutiny Panel members.	Medium	Capacity building of individuals. Sustainable, effective structures of involvement.	Wendy Britcliffe	Nov 10	Training manuals.
11.	Develop the Mystery Shopping initiative.	Medium	Tenant scrutiny of customer facing services and issues.	Karen Cowan	March 11	Mystery Shops of services.
12.	Refresh and develop the membership of the Leaseholder Panel.	High	Capacity building of individuals, sustainable and effective group.	Kathryn Taylor / Karen Cowan	Oct 10	Develop capacity of Leaseholder Panel.
13.	Involve residents in the contents	High	Plain English, informative	Lisa Fleming	Oct 11	Publish Annual Report






	and design of the NLH Annual Report.		Annual Report that meets residents aspirations and the TSA regulatory requirements.			
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Section 16. Resident Involvement Opportunities

Time Commitment	Activity	Residents Involved	Role and Purpose
	Board of Management	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties.	The Board of Management has five Tenant Board Members, selected by a recruitment panel.
	Community Voice (CV)	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties and local owner occupiers. (2 members from each RA + 2 from sheltered panel, 2 BME reps, 2 young person reps, 1 leaseholder rep and 3 geographical reps).	Set up to work in partnership with NLH to influence improvements to policies and services.
	Tenant Inspectors	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties.	Tenants that inspect actual service delivery. Some of the duties that they undertake include: Open door visits (on any service area of their choice), improvement work quality checks, estate inspections, repair reporting and customer service. They also act as Mystery Shoppers testing out service delivery in a planned and structured way, over a short period of time.
	Local Resident Associations	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties and local owner occupiers.	Representative resident associations that work to improve homes, services and the environment in local neighbourhoods.
	Sheltered Housing Panel	A group of tenant representatives from each of the 20 NLH sheltered dwellings.	The Panel discuss issues that are specific to them and influence decisions that are to be made.
	Leaseholders Panel	NLH leaseholders living in blocks of flats.	Leaseholder representatives that come together to discuss common issues such as services charges. Note – leaseholder reps must own

			the leasehold and reside in the leasehold property.
	Diversity Working Group	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties.	Tasked with making sure all NLH customers are treated fairly and equally and have access to quality services and involvement.
	BME Special Interest Group	Black & minority ethnic community representatives and tenants living in NLH properties.	Set up to discuss their specific requirements in terms of culture, tradition, religious beliefs and language.
	Home Improvement Panel	Tenants living in NLH properties. Leaseholders.	Set up to ensure customer added value and customer focus, when NLH is choosing contractors and products. The group also determines customer choice of products. Leaseholders may be co-opted onto the panel to discuss any communal or environmental improvement works that are being planned or discussed.
	Repairs Panel	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties.	The group works to ensure that the repairs service meets the needs of its customers and that customer satisfaction is achieved via a process of continual improvement.
	Disabled Adaptations Panel	Tenants living in NLH properties.	Set up to influence policies, procedures and customer feedback mechanisms to ensure that the service is customer focussed.
	Grounds Maintenance Panel	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties and local owner occupiers.	The panel works to influence the content of the grounds maintenance contract specification, the selection of the contractor and the monitoring and continual improvement of the service delivery.
	Key News Group	Tenants living in NLH properties.	The group helps to develop content and generally influences NLH publications.

	Internet Group	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties.	Tasked with identifying improvements that can be made to the NLH website.
	Estate Inspections	Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties and local owner occupiers.	Residents are invited to join housing officers on regular programmed estate inspections. The audits involve walkabouts around an estate or area to identify environmental improvements that are required.
	Customer Meet & Greet Events (for works to homes)	Tenants living in NLH properties.	Events used to alert tenants to improvement works that are to be carried out to their homes. Tenants can raise questions directly to the contractor in advance of any works and can view customer choices of products available to them. The events are used to facilitate a communication exchange between NLH and its tenants and to recruit representatives to scheme panels wherever possible.
	Environmental Panels	Tenants and leaseholders	Set up to prioritise environmental proposals put forward and to monitor satisfaction of works undertaken.
	Customer Meet & Greet Events (for environmental works on estates)	Tenants, leaseholders and local owner occupiers.	Events used to alert local residents to environmental improvement works that are to be carried out in their neighbourhoods. Residents can raise questions directly to the contractor in advance of any works. The events are used to facilitate a communication exchange between NLH and residents and to recruit representatives to monitoring panels wherever possible.

	<p>Scheme Panels (for works to homes)</p>	<p>Tenants living in NLH properties.</p>	<p>Tenant representatives living in a sheltered scheme (or local neighbourhood wherever possible) that meet with Partners and NLH to discuss the improvement works that are to be carried out to their homes. They then continue to meet throughout the duration of the works to identify changes to the programme, problems and solutions, and to evaluate the success of the programme at the end of the works.</p>
	<p>Email Quick Response Panel</p>	<p>Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties.</p>	<p>Tenants that comment on text of standard letters and publications sent through to them from NLH via email. The group check the text for jargon and understanding and provide a quick email response of their views directly back to NLH.</p>
	<p>Focus Groups</p>	<p>All NLH customers.</p>	<p>Customers can let NLH know their views on a specific topic via targeted in depth discussions.</p>
	<p>Surveys</p>	<p>Tenants and leaseholders living in NLH properties and local owner occupiers.</p>	<p>Residents can let NLH know their views about homes, services and other issues through a range of surveys, from routine satisfaction questionnaires on repairs or improvement works, to comprehensive or targeted in-depth surveys. These surveys can be postal, or by interview, either over the telephone or face to face.</p>
	<p>Individual Consultation</p>	<p>All NLH customers.</p>	<p>Residents can give their views on any changes to the organisations main services or tenancy agreement. Specific individual consultation will</p>

			<p>relate to planned maintenance or improvement works to homes, i.e. kitchens/bathrooms and disabled adaptations.</p>
	<p>Complaints and Positive Feedback</p>	<p>All NLH customers.</p>	<p>Residents are encouraged to give both positive and negative feedback about the organisations services. This feedback is used to help shape and improve services and to monitor contractors and partners.</p>