

# Where Communities Matter

EDEN HOUSING ASSOCIATION'S RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT  
IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2009/10



EDEN

HOMES  
AND COMMUNITIES



# Impact Assessment 2009/10

Welcome to Eden Housing Association's third Impact Assessment for Resident Involvement which covers 2009/10

## What is an Impact Assessment?

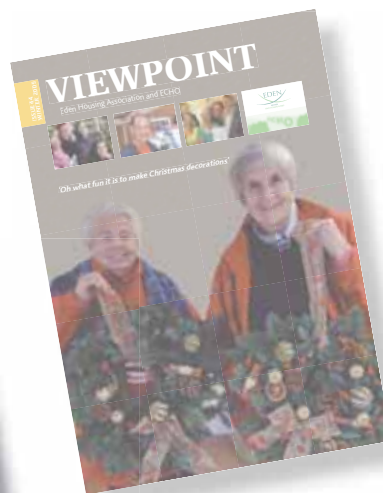
An Impact Assessment is a tool for demonstrating the difference that has been made by Resident Involvement. The Impact Assessment will provide evidence of the value of resident involvement, and is a useful way of planning and monitoring progress. It will help to identify priorities and assist in making decisions about future activities.

## Who is the Impact Assessment for?

- All Eden Housing Association residents and staff – to see the value of their input
- Our regulators – to show compliance with regulations to meet good practice
- Partners and Stakeholders – to illustrate the benefits of partnership working and continuous improvement

## How is the Impact Assessment carried out?

We have looked at 10 key commitments set out in our 'Resident Involvement Statement' and considered work that we have undertaken within each of these areas in the year 2009/10. We have then looked in more detail at specific examples of work, and using evidence collected throughout the year we have considered the outcomes and impact this work has had. Finally we have included some details about priorities for us to work towards in the coming year, which should be considered in next years Impact Assessment.



## Commitment One:

Encourage involvement for all and take all views into account before making decisions

### Viewpoint Editorial Team

New residents are regularly joining the dedicated Editorial Team bringing fresh ideas which have contributed to the continued improved design and content of Viewpoint. The team has representation from a diverse range of residents, from across our profile.

#### What has the impact been?

Each edition has an increased level of input from the Editorial team, with members providing professional and informative articles. The teams contribution enables a well balanced publication, which is relevant and of interest to our residents. This has been reflected in a 10% increased number of competition entries and positive feedback. The editorial teams membership has increased by two members.

### Short Notice Inspection Prioritisation Focus Groups

In November 2009 the Association was inspected by the Audit Commission at a weeks notice. Tenants and residents attended focus groups to give their feedback on our performance to the inspectors.

Following the inspection recommendations for improvements were made by the Audit Commission. In January 2010 we held a further two focus groups, one at Blain House and one at Sim Court, Penrith to give tenants and residents the opportunity to prioritise the recommendations and the agreed priorities were incorporated into the action plan which was sent to the Audit Commission. ECHO, the residents' assembly also met to approve the final action plan before it was sent.

#### What has the impact been?

Some of the recommendations that have been actioned are as follows:

- We have improved the time it takes to re-let empty (void) properties to save money. The average 'void turnaround' has reduced from 42 days in 2009/10 to 24 days for the year to date.
- We have set efficiency targets to drive down costs.
- We have made sure that the gas servicing contractor is informed about tenants' access arrangements so they can make appropriate appointments.
- We have started discussions with our maintenance contractor about making shorter appointment slots. Currently we have 2 slots a day (am/pm). We hope to move this to 3 slots a day and we will keep you informed of progress.

### Rent Statement Review

With consultation with our residents we looked to improve the production and presentation of rent statements. The reason why we undertook this project was that the existing statements generated a large number of queries and were inefficient to produce.

#### What has the impact been?

From discussions with residents we have set up additional resources such as the text balance and text rent statement options, where tenants can request either the balance of their rent account or request a rent statement by sending a text message. We have also had a reduction in the number of queries from issuing rent statements as well as improved efficiencies within the production process.



## Commitment Two: Consult on issues that affect you and your community

### Estate Inspections

The third annual Estate Inspection was carried out on all of Eden's estates over a 3 day period in September 2009. 80 residents throughout the district took part in the inspections and an additional 234 residents unable to attend completed a postal questionnaire giving them the opportunity to raise any estate issues which they wanted us to investigate whilst out and about on their estates. The information collected during the Estate Inspections was collated and formed a lengthy action plan. 20 residents took part in a focus group which was held in February 2010 to prioritise the works identified during the inspections.

#### What has the impact been?

Following the Estate Inspections the following issues have been addressed:

- Approximately 50 reports of untidy gardens dealt with
- Approximately 5 reports of untidy communal areas dealt with

- We ordered 13 signs with new EHA logo
- We ordered 22 day to day repairs at a cost of £1000
- Reported 7 issues of dog fouling, 3 requests for dog bins, 1 issue of fly tipping, 1 untaxed vehicle and 11 landscaping issues to Eden District Council
- Reported 37 issues to Cumbria County Council Highways Department
- Reported 3 issues to Network Rail
- Reported 3 issues to United Utilities
- During the residents Focus Group 16 issues were prioritised of which 8 have already been actioned

*"The internal painting works were done quickly and the decorator left the area clean and tidy. It looked shabby before and needed doing – much improved" Richard Longstaff, resident at Fernleigh.*

*"I have noticed an improvement with the weeds and rubbish round the garages at Dunfell View. Following the Estate Inspections the area looks much tidier" Resident from Dunfell View, Kirkby Thore.*

## Commitment Three: Support and inspire people to become involved

### Training Programme

During 2009 tenants were consulted and a focus group was held, leading to the creation of the new, customer approved, 2010 Training Programme. Based on tenant suggestions the courses have a more practical focus, offering skills to help tenants manage their homes and save money. Examples include; An Introduction to Growing Your Own, Cooking for One, Low Maintenance Gardening and Money Matters. Courses are held across Eden to make sure everyone has the opportunity to get involved.

#### What has the impact been?

The 2010 training programme has already shown evidence of achieving our aims, attracting a more varied and diverse group of tenants. Many of the courses have been fully subscribed, including those held in our rural towns and villages; this has proved the benefits and viability of taking training out to rural areas. Many attendees have left courses inspired to get home and put their new skills into use. *"It motivated me to try things"*

An additional benefit has been the social impacts of the courses, with attendees commenting they've been a great way to meet other tenants and make new friends. *"Good ideas and pleasant company"*

*"The tutor was very friendly and informative, the best training I've attended."*



## Commitment Three: Support and inspire people to become involved (continued)

### ECHO Celebration Event

The 2009 event 'Celebrating Eden' focused on Communities. The event was tenant-led with eight members of ECHO, our Residents assembly, heavily involved in the planning, organising and delivery of the day. The 87 guests learnt about the opportunities and support available from a cross-section of community organisations and charities. Throughout the day guests attended workshops from Connexions Cumbria, Penrith Crafts, Barnardo's and Cumbria CVS, with many other groups on hand to offer information.

#### What has the impact been?

*Sylvia Sloan, ECHO member said "We wanted to do this for the community, to bring the community together to learn about the support that is available across Eden. I think we have achieved what we set out to - and more. It was a great day, interesting, educational and fun."*

The day was well received with 84% of evaluation respondents rating the event as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good'. The event attracted a different group of tenants to previous years with 52% of respondents being new attendees. The use of an accessible local venue proved popular with 95% of respondents rating the venue as excellent or very good.

*"An organised event like this is ideal for someone who is visually impaired."*



## Commitment Four Be clear about how all our residents can get involved

### Updated Menu of Involvement

The Menu of Involvement that was developed in June 2008 was revised in early 2010 to take into account the wider range of opportunities for tenants and residents to get involved and also to record interest in particular subjects. Equality and diversity information was also included so that we can profile our involved residents and target those groups least involved. The Menu was circulated in Spring 2010 and it is also completed with residents at the New Tenant Visit which takes place approximately 6 weeks after their tenancy has commenced.

#### What has the impact been?

A database has been developed to store the information collected so that it can easily be accessed by staff to consult tenants and residents and inform them of events that they may be interested in taking part in. As we are now not only collecting information on ways to be involved but subjects they are interested in along with equality and diversity information involvement can be targeted.



## Commitment Five

### Work with you to plan successful involvement

#### Community Representatives

The role of Community Representative has been developed in consultation with ECHO to give tenants and residents formal representation in areas where there are no Tenants and Residents Associations. Each Representative has a defined management area which they represent this can be a street, estate, village or wider geographical area. Any Community Representative is appointed in consultation with the community within the defined management area.

#### What has the impact been?

We have had several members of the community come forward to take up the role of Community Representative. We now have formal representation and an additional way to communicate with groups of tenants and residents in areas which do not have a Tenants and Residents Association.

The Community Representatives form part of the quorum for ECHO.

*"I think that is a good thing that there is someone in the community that is known by the tenants and residents that they trust that they can go to with their personal issues and complaints knowing full well that their comments will be kept confidential and dealt with."*  
Chris Christopher, Community Representative, Brough.



#### ECHO Celebration Event planning team

The 2009 event 'Celebrating Eden' was tenant-led with eight members of ECHO, our Residents assembly, heavily involved. Prior to the event these tenants all received training to increase their skills and confidence. As a result they contributed a great deal to the planning, organising and delivery of the day, with individuals taking responsibility for different elements such as organising catering, goody bags and raffle prizes.



#### What has the impact been?

The involvement of the planning team was vital to the events success as it ensured the day truly represented tenant needs and interests. The team were also able to promote the event in their own communities which proved a very effective way to attract a variety of guests from across Eden. The team felt a great sense of achievement, and now have the experience and confidence to get involved in other community events and activities. The group were able to be part of the process from conception to evaluation, leading to meaningful aims and ideas for future events.

#### Training programme planning team

The 2010 Training Programme has been tenant-led. This process involved evaluation from the previous programme, where all attendees were asked to give suggestions for future courses they would like to see offered, as well as times and days that suited them. Then a focus group was held where all suggestions and ideas were considered to short list the most popular course topics. Tenants were also involved in the design and style of the Training Brochure helping to refresh it, aiming to attract a more diverse group of attendees.

This overall process has led to a 'customer-approved' programme for 2010.

#### What has the impact been?

When delivering a service for tenants it is vital for them to have input. Our aim to attract a more diverse cross-section of tenants has proved successful, which shows that involving tenants in choosing the programme content has been effective in delivering courses that people want. *"I've been to numerous Training Days over the years, but this one excelled them all."*

One of our ECHO members had suggested a change of style for the training brochure, based on an example she had seen and liked. Her suggested style was discussed with other tenants and when everyone agreed it would be an improvement, this change was implemented. This tenant says *"I was pleased my suggestion was considered and then used, it made me feel my views are listened to and taken seriously."*



## Commitment Six

Recognise and value the part everyone plays in the community

### Youth Work in Rural Communities

The Young People of Alston and Kirkby Stephen now have their own space, with the 'Scran Shed' and the 'Pavilion' both opening in 2009. Led by Eden Youth Work Partnership these projects give our Community Development team direct involvement with the young people in our communities. Both centres are free to attend, making them accessible to all, and have proved a great success with 15-20 young people regularly attending the weekly sessions.

#### What has the impact been?

The 'Scran Shed' and the 'Pavilion' provide a dedicated place where local young people can come to meet, relax and get advice and information. In many of our rural communities there is very little for young people to do and with no public transport they have very limited opportunities. These youth spaces provide a safe place for young people to come and gives them an alternative to hanging out on the streets, especially in the dark, cold winter months.

We have worked with young people from these communities to help improve the estates where they live. Projects have included litter picks and creating hanging baskets to brighten up estates.



## Commitment Seven

Show we have consulted, listened to and understood the community and given feedback

### Reception Refurbishment

In 2009 the Blain House reception received a make over. This was led by customer feedback and our desire to go further to meeting the needs of our disabled customers and guests. The design was the result of consultation with customers, staff and partners.

#### What has the impact been?

The new reception has much more welcoming feel, with more space and light. The reception counter is lower making it more customer friendly and enabling the reception team to greet customers as they arrive. Feedback from customers has been very positive.

*"Since the reception has been refurbished I have seen a vast improvement. The automatic door and the lowering of the counter has been a very big improvement for wheelchair users, before the counter was lowered you couldn't see if anyone was behind there. It's marvellous and better for the staff too." Ivy Wilkinson, Pategill Resident*

### Wasdale Redevelopment

This complex redevelopment project was initiated to make better use of the existing space, changing from a combination of flats and less popular bedsits, to 15 modern and bright one and two bed roomed flats serviced by a newly installed lift as well as stair lifts. This has made the properties much easier for residents to access, also the adjoining house was demolished and the space utilised to create 3 large bungalows.

#### What has the impact been?

Consultation meetings were held with residents prior to and throughout the duration of the remodelling and also after its completion. Residents are now benefiting from a complex and flats more suitable to their needs. There is now a large communal room and kitchen area better designed and equipped for social events, residents were also consulted on communal garden planning and now have a private seating area which is in the process of being planted up with shrubs and flowers etc.

*"It's fantastic to have more space and I cannot speak highly enough about the support and care provided by staff while the work was being done here at Wasdale. We are very much a community and have coffee together every morning in the main communal lounge." Mary Rainsbury, Resident Wasdale Bungalows*

## Commitment Eight

Monitor and evaluate what we have done and be accountable for the outcomes

### The Evaluation Tool

The Association now uses an evaluation tool for any resident involvement or community development work it does. A standard short evaluation form is completed before and after the activity takes place.

#### What has the impact been?

Any resident involvement or community development activity that is carried out is focused and has

clear aims. We have a methodical way to evidence and measure the impact the activity has had and the resources used.

This helps us achieve Audit Commission KLOE 5 (one of the standards the Association is measured against) 'Is there clear evidence that involvement has led to improved services and made a difference to services users in your organisation?'

*"The evaluation tool helps us to constantly assess the value of our work. For each project we consider the benefits and costs to ensure we offer quality activities and projects that are value for money and have positive outcomes for our tenants. Tenant feedback is a vital part of this evaluation process". Jessica Worlock, Community Development Officer*

## Commitment Nine

Welcome challenge and be ready and willing to change

### Choice Based Lettings Tenant Panel

Eden Housing Association is working with the 6 District Authorities and 7 other housing organisations to develop a new way of letting properties to give more choice to local people needing social rented housing. This new way of letting properties is set to happen in March 2011. Tenants from all the organisations taking part were invited to be on the Tenants Panel so that their views can be taken into account. There are two tenants on the Cumbria Choice Board who have one vote.

#### What has the impact been?

5 tenants from Eden Housing Association attend the quarterly panel meetings and several of them have been involved in sub groups including IT. They continue to have their views heard and to influence the scheme before its implementation in 2011.

*"Its good to bring Cumbria together, it feels good for the County to be as one. Being on the Choice Based Lettings panel has given me a greater a much more in depth understanding of the allocations process and how it will work in the future." Donald Taylor, Choice Based Lettings Tenants Panel Member.*

is most important to get right. Tenants were also given the opportunity to visit the TSA's Pink Camper Van while it was in Carlisle.

Once Phase 1 had been completed draft standards were drawn up by the TSA and another consultation took place to obtain tenants views on the proposed standards (Phase 2). A focus group was held and tenants also had the opportunity to give their views direct to the TSA through their website.

#### What has the impact been?

Tenants and residents had the opportunity to be part of a national event and influence the national standards that the Association will be working towards in the future. They were able to express what they felt was right and what was wrong with services they currently receive and what is most important to them as a social housing tenant.

In 2010 tenants and residents will continue to set standards for social housing and will be heavily involved in setting 'local offers'.

### TSA National Conversation Phase 1 & 2

Two focus groups were held on the Tenants Services Authority National Conversation which gave local people the opportunity to take part in the largest ever consultation with tenants of social housing. The TSA have drawn up a brand new set of standards for all social landlords. These standards are about the services that are most important to tenants. Phase 1 focussed on what tenants think of the current services provided and what



## Commitment Ten

Achieve value for money across all of our services

### Performance Posse

Following the 'Do We Measure Up' focus group in April 2009 the Performance Posse was developed as a sub group of ECHO to scrutinise and challenge performance, and improve services. Prior to this figures were looked at in less detail at the ECHO meetings. The Posse have a slot on the agenda at each ECHO meeting and a Posse member reports back to ECHO.

#### What has the impact been?

Tenants and residents have been able to set their priorities which are repairs and anti social behaviour. They have scrutinised performance figures in depth and have changed the way in that performance is reported. The Quarterly Operations Report now includes figures as well as percentages and we now measure anti social behaviour response times. The Posse have also given feedback on proposed surveys, scrutinised the Status Survey results and Short Notice Inspection Action Plan.

*"We are getting a better in depth look into the performance figures, I am hopeful that the Association will listen to the Posse's views. Now that actual figures are used as well as percentages in the Operations Report it is easier to follow. The Posse are coming up with some good ideas." John Denwood, Performance Posse Member*



## Resident Involvement Relationships at Eden Housing Association

### Priorities for 2010/11

The 2008-11 Corporate Plan key objectives state that we will involve residents and the communities in which we work in everything we do. The following are priorities for our work throughout 2010/11 which will be evidenced in next years Impact Assessment.

- European Neighbours Day 2010
- Reviewing the ECHO Constitution
- Training for ECHO members on meeting protocols and further training for the ECHO Committee on there their and responsibilities
- Training and implementation of Tenant Inspectors
- Developing the TSA's local offers
- Support ECHO to implement there priorities of the year
- Profiling of people involved to ensure that we are getting representation from all groups of the community
- Review of ECHO grants scheme





## Working together we can make a real difference!

If you want to find out more about any of the above please contact the Resident Involvement Officer on **01768 861419** or by e-mailing at **getinvolved@edenha.org.uk**

### OTHER FORMATS, OTHER LANGUAGES

এই নথিতে দেখানো হয়েছে যে, অধিবাসীরা কিভাবে আমাদের কাজে অংশগ্রহণ করেন এবং এর কি প্রভাব পড়েছে।

本文件显示了我们是如何让居民参与我们的工作以及他们的参与给我们的工作带来的影响。

Niniejszy dokument przedstawia zaangażowanie mieszkańców w pracę na rzecz spółdzielni mieszkaniowej Eden (Eden Housing Association) i jego wyniki.

Bu belge, konut sakinlerinin çalışmamıza nasıl katılımda bulunduğunu ve bunun nasıl bir etki oluşturduğunu göstermektedir.

We will do what is reasonable to provide information in alternative formats on request, including tape, Braille, large print and translations. If we encounter difficulties meeting your request, we will discuss the best solution with you.

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

Jeżeli chciałoby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

Bu belgenin Türkçe'sini edinmek ya da Türkçe bilen birisinin size yardımcı olmasını istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.



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