

# Where Communities Matter

## EDEN HOUSING ASSOCIATION'S RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2007/08

Welcome to Eden Housing Association's first Impact Assessment for Resident Involvement.

### 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?

- Eden Housing Association residents and staff - to see the value of their input.
- The Housing Corporation - to show compliance with regulations.
- Partners and Stakeholders - to illustrate the benefits of partnership working.

### How is the Impact Assessment carried out?

We have looked at six key commitments set out in our 'Resident Involvement Statement' and considered work that we have undertaken within each of these areas in the year 2007/08. 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 that this work has had.

Finally, we have made some recommendations for 'commitments' to include in next years Resident Involvement Statement and be considered in the 2008/09 Impact Assessment.

Specific work examples are discussed very briefly – if you would like to find out more, or talk to staff about anything contained within this Impact Assessment, please contact us by e-mail on:

[getinvolved@edenha.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@edenha.org.uk) or call 01768 861400 and ask to speak to the Resident Involvement team.



EDEN

HOMES  
AND COMMUNITIES



## Commitment One: Encourage involvement for all and take views into account before making decisions

### Viewpoint Editorial Team

Feedback from Focus Groups looking at improving opportunities for involvement indicated that our quarterly residents newsletter "Viewpoint" required attention. Our Marketing Team met with the already established Viewpoint Editorial Team to completely overhaul the design, layout and content of Viewpoint.

#### What has the impact been?

Residents have an increasing influence over the content and are encouraged to participate in the production of Viewpoint. Each edition has dedicated areas enabling Tenants and Residents Associations, Community Groups and ECHO to publicise and promote the work of their individual groups. In 2008/09 we will carry out a reader survey that we hope will show that more people are reading and enjoying Viewpoint.

### Re-design of Eden Housing Associations Website

Feedback from Focus Groups said our website was un-inviting, the information provided was often out of date and not always relevant, and the site did little to promote Resident Involvement activities and the different ways to become involved. Working alongside the Marketing Team, residents were tasked with re-designing the website ensuring that the needs of all our customers were met.

#### What has the impact been?

The website now looks more inviting and has dedicated pages for Tenants and Residents Associations, Community Groups and ECHO. Following training, Tenants and Residents Groups will be able to update their own areas to ensure that information is up-to-date. We will be monitoring the number of hits the website receives, and will also be checking regularly with users that the site meets their needs and expectations.

### Overhaul of the Formal Structure for Involvement

A full review of resident involvement work was carried out in May 2007. One of the main recommendations following the review was the overhauling of the formal structures for involvement. A dedicated group of residents and staff worked together throughout the year to address all of the issues raised.

#### What has the impact been?

The old 'Forum' is developing its own identity as ECHO (Eden Community Homes and Organisations). A clear constitution and operating standards set out the new structures and should assist in increasing membership of the group and encouraging inclusion of more diverse groups. The decision making process is now clearer and we anticipate that the influence of ECHO members will be more widely felt. A formal review of the new structure will take place in January 2009.

### Corporate Plan 2008

Focus groups of both involved and un-involved residents were held to determine their priorities for the coming years and to seek views and opinions on what they felt should be included within the Association's Corporate Plan.

#### What has the impact been?

Residents have influenced the content of the Corporate Plan that has now been finalised for 2008-2011.

### Tenants Advisory Panel (TAP)

In order to ensure that all Service Standard Leaflets are clear, concise and relevant the TAP assisted in compiling two new leaflets, "Making Minor Alterations to your Property" and "Compensation for Tenants Improvements".

#### What has the impact been?

Customer approved service standards are clear and consistent and provide the information required by our residents. Five residents were involved in this process gaining skills and knowledge in producing publications.

### Brough Play Area

In 2004 a group of Residents in Brough carried out an estate consultation showing a real demand for a play area. EHA leased a suitable site to the group and worked with them to secure £97,000 to carry out and complete the works in 2007.

#### What has the impact been?

A survey carried out amongst residents on the estate concludes that the play area is well used and a real benefit to the whole community. The group are now sharing their experience in managing a large project, including registering as a charity, applying for funding, planning and managing the build and looking after the ongoing maintenance of the play area with other community groups.

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

### Estate Inspections

All estates were inspected over a two-day period in September 2007. Interested residents joined staff walking around the estates, discussing and reporting problems such as vandalism, graffiti, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and the overall appearance of their estates. Residents not taking part in the estate walk were able to raise issues they felt required attention by calling or writing, or by arranging a home visit.

#### What has the impact been?

A group of residents worked with staff in a half-day session to prioritise issues identified, and develop a programme of works to address the issues. A survey of fourteen previously non-involved residents shows that they feel more involved and are confident that their input will influence EHAs future priorities.

### Wasdale Consultation

Following a change in service provision, we consulted with the residents of our Supported Scheme at Wasdale, Shap on the impact of these changes. Consultation was carried out by group sessions and one to one interviews, with all residents being represented.

#### What has the impact been?

Services have been reviewed and support hours have been significantly increased in line with residents' preferences. In the Autumn of 2008, Wasdale residents will be asked about the impact the change in services has had. We hope to see a higher percentage of people very satisfied with the services.



### Raiselands Croft StreetSafe

A multi-agency StreetSafe in March 2008 included free garden clearance, and tidying of roads, paths and pavements, a litter pick involving local young people, home safety checks with free fitting of smoke alarms and advice on recycling, fly tipping and dog fouling. Residents were able to meet staff from EHA, the police, probation and fire services, Neighbourhood Watch and Eden District Council.

#### What has the impact been?

A survey following the event confirms residents now feel confident that issues will be addressed and reassured that agencies are working together for the benefit of the community. Residents also felt the estate looked tidier and the young people involved in the litter pick added that they would now think twice before dropping litter. The incidence of complaints about the appearance of the estate will be monitored – we hope to see a decrease in the number of complaints received.

### No 1 Suggestion Lane

A large cardboard house "1 Suggestion Lane" provided an informal opportunity for everyone taking part in our community events over the summer of 2007 to post responses to questions about their homes, estate and local amenities. The suggestions posted at 1 Suggestion Lane indicated what issues prevailed in each area.

#### What has the impact been?

In Kirkby Stephen, responses confirmed that positive activities for children and young people were required on the Westgarth Estate. Working together with local young people and Eden Youth Work Partnership and the police, an activities scheme has been developed where young people take part in positive action in their community such as litter picks and gain points to spend on activities of their choice such as bowling. Twenty young people have now been involved in the activities scheme. Calls for service to the police to deal with 'nuisance' behaviour from young people will be monitored – we hope to see a reduction in the number of such calls made.

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

### Residents Resource Centre

Due to increasing demand from Tenant Board Members and involved residents for access to computers, printers, scanners and photocopiers, a resource centre has been established at EHAs office.

#### What has the impact been?

During the first month nine residents registered to use the centre, and training is being provided to improve user's skills and confidence in using the equipment and facilities available. Residents are using the resource centre to produce and distribute minutes and agendas from meetings and access information on the availability of training. In December 2008 a survey of users and others will be carried out to check the Centre is providing the support required by 'involved' residents. We hope this survey will show increasing levels of satisfaction with the support and services we offer to involved residents.

### Sliver Surfers ICT Training Programme

All our sheltered housing schemes have communal computer facilities for residents to use. To enable residents to make best use of the facilities available to them, a training programme has been developed (in partnership with the Community Development Centre at Langwathby) to improve users skills and confidence in ICT – specifically in the use of email and the internet.

#### What has the impact been?

Eleven residents from two sheltered housing schemes have now completed the course and are able to use the computer facilities available to them.

### Chartered Institute of Housing Conference in Harrogate

Every year all residents are invited to attend the annual CIH conference as visitors to the exhibition, and are also given the opportunity to attend as day delegates.

#### What has the impact been?

The evaluation completed by residents attending the 2007 Conference showed disappointment with the experience. Further discussions were held with those attending, and it has been agreed that in 2008 the chance to attend the conference as full delegates would be offered to one or two residents instead. Those attending will be expected to feedback to ECHO members on their experience and learning, and will also write an article for Viewpoint to share their experience

with all residents. In July 2008 a debrief session with those attending the Conference will be held to check increased levels of satisfaction with the experience.

### Training Programme

During 2007/08 a training programme for residents (based on learning needs identified by a survey, and on informal discussions with involved residents) provided a range of courses aimed at developing skills helpful for taking part in community action or resident involvement work with us.

#### What has the impact been?

56 training places on 6 courses including Allocations, Anti-social Behaviour, Repairs & Maintenance, Silver Surfers ICT skills and Environmental Issues were taken up by tenants and residents in the district. Evaluations completed by those taking part showed that residents now have a much better understanding of the key services provided by Eden Housing Association. ICT skills gained are now being put into practice by residents using the resource centre to access emails, internet, prepare agendas and type up minutes from their meetings.

### Residents Conference

Every other year ECHO fund and run a Conference aimed at EHA residents, and tenants housed by other landlords across Cumbria. In 2007 the conference was based on the Respect Agenda, with a keynote speech given by Alex Rhind from the Home Office.

#### What has the impact been?

A dedicated team of ECHO members worked with EHA staff to plan and run the conference, developing new skills, knowledge and experience in preparing, facilitating and evaluating an event. Evaluations completed by those attending the conference showed that they felt the information supplied on the day, the workshops and the exhibition / stalls were of a very high standard – 63% of delegates rated the overall conference as excellent, 29% very good and 8% good.

## Commitment Four: Work with you to plan successful involvement

### Mock Inspection Action Plan

To test ourselves and help us prepare for inspection of our services by the Audit Commission in 2008/09, we asked consultants to carry out a 'mock inspection' in early 2007. Based on their findings from discussions with tenants and others, the consultants made a number of recommendations for improvement, and we asked focus groups of residents to help us prioritise them.

#### What has the impact been?

An action plan to address all the issues raised by the mock inspection has been established and the key priorities within this plan are those identified by residents. We will use the next full residents survey in 2009 to check on the impact this involvement has had. The STATUS Survey carried out in November 2007 showed an improved level of satisfaction with EHA as a landlord generally, and with the opportunities to get involved. We hope to see further improvements in the 2009 survey.

### Resident Involvement Statement

A group of ECHO members worked with staff to produce the Associations Resident Involvement Statement - identifying key commitments and standards for EHA during 2008/09.

#### What has the impact been?

The document has been produced to the specification preferred by those involved, and has been circulated to over 3000 residents throughout the District.



## Commitment Five: Recognise and value the part everyone plays in the community

### Intergenerational Work in Pategill

Older and young people in Pategill were keen to share experiences with each other, increase understanding and help bridge the generation gap. Supported by Eden Youth Work Partnership, residents of Sim Court sheltered housing scheme and young people from the estate worked together on a range of workshops, activity sessions and social events.

#### What has the impact been?

Positive relationships have been built between different age groups on the Pategill estate. Those involved have said there is increased understanding between them that has led to a strengthening of 'community feeling'. They have now formed a group and are planning their own programme of events to run through the coming year.

### Youth Work in Alston

High instances of reported anti-social behaviour by young people and concern about the lack of positive opportunities for young people amongst agencies including the police and County Council led us to work together with Eden Youth Work Partnership to provide weekly youth work sessions in Alston.

#### What has the impact been?

These sessions have increased confidence amongst the young people, improved awareness about key issues around drugs, alcohol and sexual health, and built positive relationships between us all. We can't demonstrate a direct link, but the number of reports of anti-social behaviour received by EHA have decreased.

### Disability Equality Scheme (DES)

For nearly a year, four residents worked with the Director of Operations and other staff to write the DES for EHA. The DES aims to ensure that we reduce and eliminate discrimination against people with impairments.

#### What has the impact been?

An immediate outcome has been the improving of access to Blain House. All staff attended a training course on disability and impairment, and there has been a drive to raise awareness of disability and impairment issues amongst staff. During the Winter of 2008, an exercise will be undertaken with residents with impairments to check that their experience of services provided by EHA has improved.

## Commitment Six:

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

### Grounds Maintenance

Residents on several estates requested that we consider carrying out landscaping work in areas that were overgrown, untidy and attracting anti-social behaviour. In response, we carried out consultations with all residents on the affected estates to find out exactly what the problems were and developed a programme of works to address the issues raised.

#### What has the impact been?

Results from a survey following the completion of work confirm that residents are pleased with the opportunity to influence the decision-making process and with the resulting work. The overall look of the affected estates is improved and residents report feeling less vulnerable than before the work was carried out. There has been a decrease in the number of reports of anti-social behaviour in the affected areas.

### Good Neighbour Agreements

Alongside partners in the fire service, police and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, we worked with residents on three estates to develop Good Neighbour Agreements (based on residents priorities, Agreements present a statement of desirable behaviour and promote neighbourliness).

#### What has the impact been?

Pategill in Penrith and Bartondale in Lazonby have now adopted Good Neighbour Agreements. Results of a survey after implementation shows residents feel more confident knowing EHA has another tool to fight anti-social behaviour and that there is clear benefit to the involved agencies working together for the good of the community. The Police CORVUS Crime Recording System shows that following the implementation of the good neighbour agreements anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and violence has decreased. These figures will continue to be monitored.

## Priorities for 2008/2009

The 2008-2011 Corporate Plan key objectives state that we will involve Residents, and the Communities in which we work, in everything we do. The following are recommendations for 'commitments' to be included in the Resident Involvement Statement 2008/09 and for consideration in next years Impact Assessment:

- To implement a range of methods to involve and engage with residents and groups at a local level making sure that we are clear about how they can get involved and that they are satisfied with the opportunities to participate
- Monitor and evaluate what we have done and be accountable to residents for the outcomes through the use of our evaluation tool for all Resident Involvement activities
- Welcome challenge and be ready and willing to change
- Achieve value for money across all of our services
- To increase the number of effective community partnerships to demonstrate this commitment to resident and community involvement



## Further Information

If you would like to find out more, or talk to staff about anything contained within this Impact Assessment, please contact us by email on [getinvolved@edenha.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@edenha.org.uk) or call 01768 861400 and ask to speak to the Resident Involvement team.

### Working together we can make a real difference!

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।

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

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 Långüagê Liñe



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