



Customer Involvement Policy

COR-POL-07

Version 4.0

Date approved: 24 March 2015

Approved by: Board

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Southway Housing Trust (Southway) is committed to customer involvement and ensuring that all customers are provided with information, consulted and given the opportunity to influence the services provided by Southway. To help achieve this commitment Southway regularly monitors delivery of its Customer Involvement Strategy and involves customers in the review of its Strategy every three years.
- 1.2 Southway believes that customers should be at the heart of everything we do. We have provided a range of options for involvement which are defined in the Customer Involvement Strategy and listed later in this document.

2. Key Objective

- 2.1 Southway will work with, consult and involve all tenants, residents and leaseholders on a range of issues that affect their homes and the way that they are managed. Southway will actively encourage customers to participate and discuss directly their views on the way in which its services are provided.
- 2.2 Southway will enable involvement in all aspects of its activities. Such tenant involvement will be available through three key methods:
- Formal Groups
 - Influencing Groups
 - Feedback Groups

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 Southway recognises its obligations under the Homes and Communities Agency's Regulatory Code and their expectations to involve customers in the delivery of the housing service. This statement sets out the principles Southway will adopt to deliver effective consultation and involvement.
- (a) We will deliver high quality customer involvement by:
- (i) Developing and supporting a 'menu' of involvement opportunities that will encourage all our customers to get involved in shaping what we do and how we do it.

- (ii) Providing high quality support to all our customers to help them take advantage of those opportunities.
- (b) We will consult tenants about any plans affecting your home or area around it. We will follow an agreed consultation procedure.
- (c) We will encourage, support and promote involvement by individuals and the community as a whole.
- (d) We will encourage tenants to self-help and assist other customers to do so
- (e) We will carry out a range of customer satisfaction surveys in partnership with tenants on a regular basis to make sure that the service is meeting your needs. We will act on the results of these surveys to improve and develop services.
- (f) We will give you accurate, honest and timely information so you can make genuine choices.
- (g) We will ensure that a structure is in place for customers to scrutinise Southway's performance and challenge policies and procedures
- (h) We will develop and use various consultation methods to ensure it is genuine and effective.
- (i) We will ask local people about what consultation methods to use and when we should use them.
- (j) Methods will be monitored and reviewed regularly to make sure they are still the most suitable.
- (k) We will use consultation to find out what concerns residents – not just as a means to solve problems.
- (l) Tenants have the right to start or join a local tenant and resident group. Southway will continue to support existing tenant and resident groups and will encourage and support the formation of new groups. Southway will also recognise, work with and support local community groups to improve the Southway area and involve residents.
- (m) Tenant management options are available for consideration, subject to approval from the Board. Southway will make sure tenants have access to the advice needed.
- (n) We will have a fair, efficient and widely available complaints procedure.

- (o) Southway, tenant groups and individual tenants have the right to keep certain information confidential. This right will be respected. This includes information protected under the Data Protection Act and any personal details that do not need to be shared.
- (p) Southway and tenant groups must work for equality of opportunity in customer involvement. The information that we share and the advice we give out will reflect Southway's Single Equality Scheme.

4. Key Policy Standards

Information

- 4.1 Southway will ensure that customers are kept fully advised about services that Southway offers and also provide information about performance and matters of general housing interest.
- 4.2 This information will be made available through reports and newsletter specifically for tenants, information leaflets, events and meetings and use of the website and social media.:

Consultation

- 4.3 Tenants will be fully consulted before Southway make any major changes which affect them. This undertaking is contained within clause 5.3 of the Tenancy Agreement. These changes may include;
 - Proposals to alter the Tenancy Agreement
 - Repair and Improvement Programmes
 - Changes in the way we manage or look after our homes
 - Changes in the cost or provision of services
 - Strategic plans such as management of programmes
- 4.4 Southway will let tenants know about the proposed changes in one or a combination of the following ways:
 - Letter
 - Visits to the tenant's home
 - Calling a tenants' meeting
 - Attendance at Tenant and Resident Group meetings
 - Public exhibitions and drop in events
 - Opinion surveys
 - Southway Stories newsletter
 - Southway website and social media forums

- 4.5 Southway will take tenants' views into account when making a decision and will tell tenants what has been decided.
- 4.6 If Southway is required by law to change policies or practice, Southway will inform tenants of such changes as soon as possible and usually in writing.

Involvement

- 4.7 Southway is committed to active involvement within its policy and procedural frameworks.
- 4.8 A range of involvement methods have been developed and the details of these can be found in the Customer Involvement Strategy

5. Key Targets and Performance Indicators

- 5.1 These are:
- (a) To increase the number of customers involved and giving feedback from the diverse customer base
 - (b) To successfully implement the three year Strategy and varied methods of involvement
 - (c) Current Home and Communities Agency Performance Indicators on tenant satisfaction and complaints

6. Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed each time the Customer Involvement Strategy is reviewed to ensure that it complies with relevant, up-to-date legislation and reflects the strategy.
- 6.2 Regular progress updates on customer involvement will be provided to the Residents Consultative Group, Southway's Senior Management Team and the Southway Board.

7. Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 Southway will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all our customers. We will adhere to our obligations and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and this will be reflected in our Single Equality Scheme.

7.2 Southway recognises its responsibility under the Equality Act and will consider the needs of all individuals in our day to day work in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to our employees.

8. Related Policy Documents

- Customer Involvement Strategy
- Single Equality Scheme
- Customer Care Policy
- Customer Compliments and Complaints Policy

POLICY REVIEW HISTORY	
<i>To be completed during each review</i>	
Previous versions (version number – approved by – approval date – title if different)	
V1 – Shadow Board – 19/06/2007 V2 – Board – 24/11/2009 v3 – Board – 29/11/2011	
Date of last EIA:	Oct 2011
Review lead by:	Maureen Ward, Customer Involvement Manager
Main points or amendments made and reasons	
Key changes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revising the section on Local Offers, which are now Community Agreements and Neighbourhood Promises. ▪ Significant updating to bring in line with the new Strategy and involvement methods. 	
Next review due:	Q4 2017/18
Approval level:	A – Board