



Our vision for resident involvement

Introduction

Moat recognises the critical role residents play in making sure that we deliver effective, efficient and accessible services to all of our residents. The following pages outline our strategy and explain our approach and commitment to further develop our resident involvement.

The involvement of residents is essential in helping us achieve Moat's overall operating principles of:

- Being passionate about making a difference to people and places
- Providing the best affordable housing experience in the South East
- Growing and improving by maximising income and being efficient in everything we do.

Our strategy will help ensure that we meet our commitments in the following areas:

- Our desire to be an innovative, great performing and leading organisation for excellent customer service and resident involvement
- To build new homes that meet the needs and aspirations of residents, partners and customers
- To have a focussed and consistent approach with those who work with us to build communities which are vibrant, economically strong and diverse
- To continue to increase company strength by delivering on our promises, ensuring that we are a partner of choice for local authorities, local communities and other partner organisations.

By consulting with staff and residents during the development of this document we have been able to capture and set out our strategy and action plan for the next three years.

This partnership between Moat staff, the Board and actively involved residents has ensured that we are committed to the delivery of this strategy. It also shows that we will work together effectively to seek positive and maintained resident involvement practices.

Moat's Board, Residents' Forum and staff are committed to this strategy and agree that we will:

- Continue to build a working partnership based on trust. We will listen to each other and be open to change and be honest in discussions
- Ensure that the 'formal' resident involvement structures are maintained and align to Moat's decision making structures. This will enable informed decisions to be implemented and reviewed consistently throughout the organisation with residents
- Improve communication with each other by sharing good practice with staff and residents and explaining clearly what is being achieved
- Provide opportunities for residents to let us know where we are doing well and where we need to improve
- Actively seek ways to help residents become involved and support involvement at all times. Where possible, we will make resident involvement dynamic to ensure active involvement appeals to residents; we will also use activities and events as part of our resident involvement processes.

Our vision for resident involvement

Resident involvement will be a dynamic, innovative, valued and an equal partnership between residents, the Moat Board and staff ensuring that residents are at the heart of everything we do. The partnership approach will be clearly seen within decision making, the standards of service and mutual respect for each other. We believe that by involving residents in the services and activities relating to their homes and communities, we can help to improve their quality of life and life chances.

Our commitment

We are committed to ensuring resident involvement is incorporated within all aspects of Moat to help shape services and communities in which residents live and we work.

To realise these aims, will:

- Widely distribute our strategy and supporting action plan
- Promote the benefits of resident involvement to staff and residents alike
- Continue to encourage residents to get involved by providing a range of opportunities to ensure that they can do this in any way they choose
- Be inclusive and where barriers to involvement are identified, work to remove them
- Be committed to working with residents and the wider communities to resolve their housing and other issues
- Take responsibility for our actions, good or bad
- Work with our residents to learn from the past and improve the future
- Ensure that we are open, honest and transparent in all our involvement activities
- Make resident involvement an integral part of our business at all levels of decision making, ensuring that services provide value for money
- Provide an appropriate budget to ensure learning, support and development opportunities are available for residents who wish to be actively involved
- Develop a 'Resident Involvement Impact Assessment' which measures outcomes and achievements. This process will involve residents, staff and the Board in reviewing our progress
- Meet all statutory and regulatory requirements by ensuring that we continually review our practices and procedures in line with any changes to the governing bodies
- Review the strategy every three years and the action plan annually.



Resident involvement will be dynamic, innovative, valued and an equal partnership.

Our core service standards

We have agreed the following core standards to make sure that our strategy is delivered consistently. They will also ensure that residents, staff and Board Members can monitor how effectively it is being delivered and identify proposals for changes which may be required.

Information

We will use a range of communication methods to make sure that residents are informed and made aware of our work or any proposals for change. This will include:

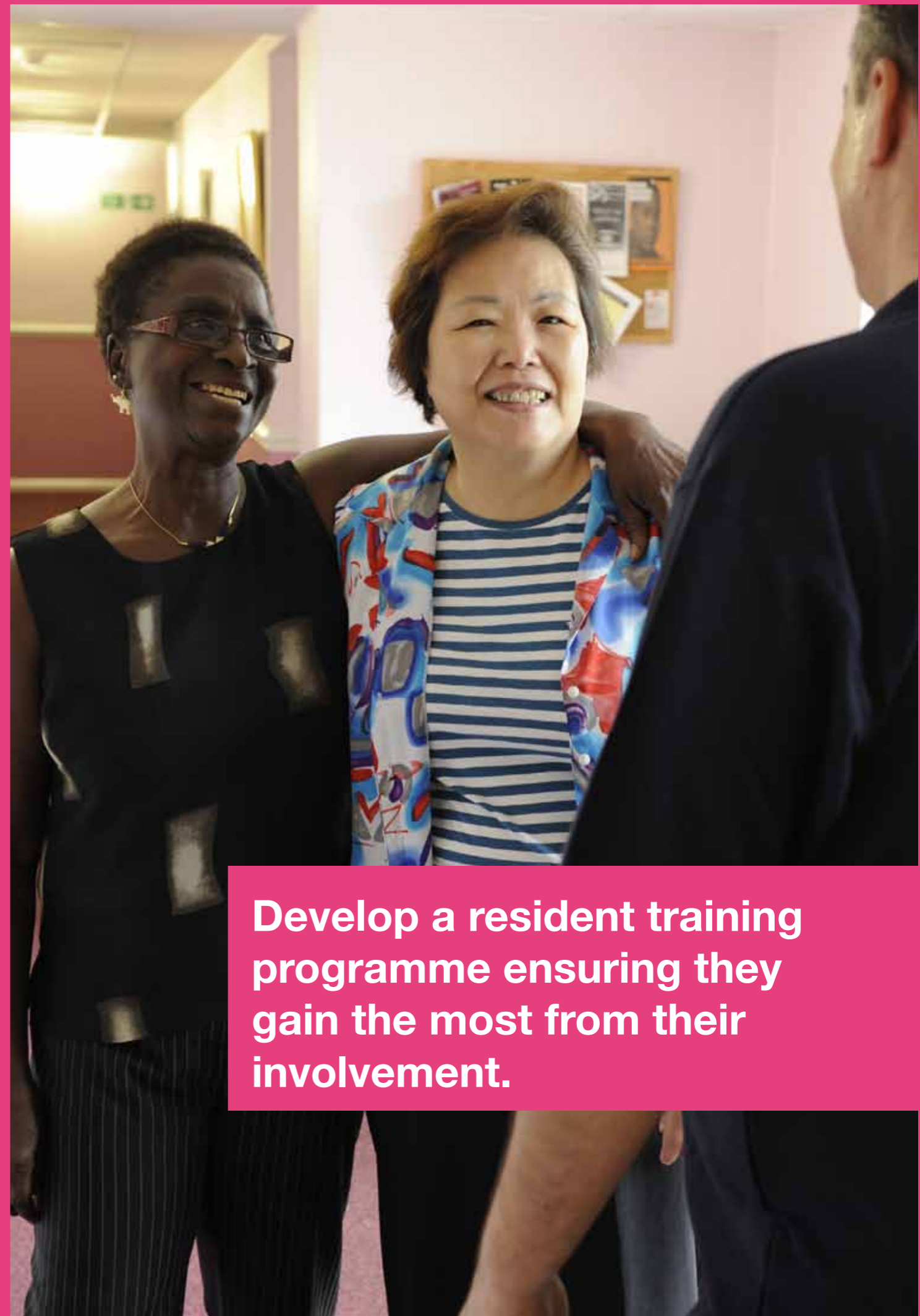
- All new residents receiving a copy of their tenancy/lease agreements and a residents' handbook/sign up pack at the start of their tenancy
- Provide local and area information. This could include resident group contact details (if agreed), local services (such as schools, doctors, and the police) and any support agreements Moat has negotiated locally with residents, including service agreements and good neighbour agreements
- Written information such as letters, newsletters (corporate and local) and annual reports
- Information available via electronic formats, such as websites (including Moat and area residents' groups' sites), text or email service and annual reports
- Information available verbally during meetings, estate inspections, on the telephone, face to face and at any other opportunities which may be available to us
- Providing essential information when asked in a way which meets needs. This includes large print, Braille, disc, different coloured paper, or audio tape (to help people who are partially sighted, blind or have a learning difficulty). We will also use Language Line to help with translation services for those residents whose first language is not English

- We will make sure that all written information is relevant and written in plain English to make it easy to understand.

To consult with residents

We will consult with residents and continually seek their views and opinions on all aspects of the services Moat provides. Therefore we will:

- Agree with residents a recognition criteria for resident and community groups
- Consult individuals and representative group(s) on proposals at the earliest opportunity
- Ensure that our planning includes sufficient time for consultation
- Explain any proposal fully, ensuring that residents have enough information to give an informed opinion on the issues being discussed
- Inform residents of the outcome of consultations, to show where they have made a difference
- Use mystery shopping; we have a group of residents who have volunteered to test our front line service, to help us maintain and monitor our standards
- Effectively use the Ideas Catcher panel. The panel helps us to gain residents' opinions and makes informed decisions with Moat Residents' Forum
- Use focus groups and workshops to actively consult with residents on specific service issues.



Develop a resident training programme ensuring they gain the most from their involvement.

- Encourage resident involvement by organising events and easy access points for residents or feedback, these can include:

- Moat Residents' Forum
- Area residents' groups
- Local residents' groups
- Open/fun days
- Social/community events
- Estate walkabouts
- Open meetings
- Local area inspections
- Community research
- Moat's mobile office.

- Continue with our regular surveys. We carry out regular surveys to gauge our service delivery and look at how we can improve. Examples include the annual satisfaction survey; the repairs survey (for residents who have had a repair recently) and local surveys (to seek the opinion of residents locally)

- Use complaints to improve. We view complaints as a tool to assist us in improving our services. Identifying how and why a service failure has happened allows us to monitor and improve

- Share compliments. These usually come where Moat has done something well and again, we want to learn from this. We will share this information with staff to further improve our services.

To involve residents

Moat will offer residents as many opportunities as possible to get involved in developing, monitoring and reviewing housing services, policies, procedures and strategies. To ensure that residents can get involved we will:

- Agree structures for resident involvement that allows residents and their representatives to work with, and be involved in, the decision making processes throughout the organisation

- Promote, encourage and support individual residents and groups to become involved

- Discuss and agree local service level agreements with recognised representative groups

- Provide clear opportunities for local groups to influence area and strategic residents' groups

- Provide opportunities for the area residents' groups to be involved in the business area service plan and budget process

- Ensure that Moat Residents' Forum and its sub-committees are effective in working with Moat to continually improve our services, and that they have a clear role in our business planning processes

- Seek ways to reach everyone and tailor our service delivery where possible to meet local needs and communicate effectively

- Continue to encourage and support the development of the formal structures for resident associations, as well as area and strategic groups

- Give residents the opportunity to be involved in any way they choose. The widest possible range of opportunities will be offered to residents, including:

- Being part of the recognised resident group structures
- Becoming a Community Champions
- Becoming resident service inspectors
- Taking part in focus groups, workshops and events
- Being part of the interview process for key staff positions (once appropriate skills training has been undertaken)
- Link to the work of other local networks for sections of our community we may not otherwise hear from.

Board and committee responsibilities

For residents who wish to take up the challenge of being jointly involved in the decisions taken within Moat, we will ensure that there are opportunities to do so. This will also ensure transparency and openness in all that we do. Moat will:

- Include resident Board Members in the appointment of Board Members, committee members and senior staff

- Ensure that the strategic direction of the organisation is influenced by Moat Residents' Forum, by:

- Providing a reciprocal arrangement between Moat Residents' Forum and the Housing and Customer Services Committee to identify issues that either group wish to discuss with the other, as an agenda item
- Providing a direct link to the Executive Team, to raise issues of concern which Moat Residents' Forum believes have not been fully discussed within the organisation
- Annually, usually in February, the Executive Team will meet with Moat Residents' Forum to discuss the draft business plan and budget. This enables, to enable them to influence the final decision documents before Board approval

- Look at ways to empower residents and communities further by providing opportunities and encouragement for them to help themselves

- Provide sufficient support to make resident involvement happen. At all opportunities we will encourage our residents to participate fully in decision making

- Ensure that residents are represented on the Board and all relevant service committees of Moat.



Strategic direction of the organisation is influenced by Moat Residents' Forum.

Resident involvement Action plan 2011-2014

Measuring residents' involvement

We will monitor and evaluate resident involvement to make sure that the strategy and our three year action plan is helping us to achieve our agreed vision, aims and objectives.

By tracking progress we are also able to identify any gaps in involvement or consultation and therefore the effectiveness of the strategy.

To make sure that we can adapt or improve the service, we will measure:

- The number of corporate and area level consultations carried out in the year, recording any with key changes that are made
- The numbers and details of residents attending events, consultation records and meetings (including internal meetings, strategic meetings, committee meetings and Board meetings)
- The number of resident groups within Moat and the percentage of residents covered by a resident group, as a percentage of the total number of residents
- Track the range of involvement methods used across Moat. This could include meetings, emails, reading groups, attendance and events
- The percentage of residents who are satisfied with their opportunities to participate through our annual satisfaction survey
- The percentage of residents who are satisfied with how Moat keeps them informed through our annual satisfaction survey
- The percentage of residents who feel they have an influence on decision through our annual satisfaction survey
- The development and implementation of a resident training programme to enable

involved residents to gain skills and knowledge, ensuring they gain the most from their involvement

- The number of local agreements we have in place to ensure participation of residents has taken place and impact assessments have been completed. This will include neighbourhood charters, good neighbour agreements, estate agreements and local management agreements
- The details of external partnerships residents' groups are engaged in. This will give an indication of how they are influencing other service providers, such as local authorities, health services, community safety partnerships, the police and others.

Diversity and equal opportunities

We value diversity and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that people are treated fairly.

It is our aim to ensure fairness, accessibility and transparency in every aspect of our work.

We will actively seek to involve all residents who have an interest in the way Moat carries out its functions, and in monitoring the implementation of its services, policies and procedures.

We will monitor this aspect of resident involvement and report back regularly to Moat Residents' Forum and annually to the Board.

To ensure that we are working towards meeting our commitment to diversity and equality, Moat will:

- Report resident involvement activity across the relevant 'protected characteristics', the full list of these is identified in the Equality Act 2010. However, for resident involvement we will report on age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race/ethnicity and religion

- Provide diversity and equality training and guidance to residents and representative groups
- Ensure that our recognition criteria is clear about our commitment to diversity and equality
- Provide information and support to resident groups to engage with their diverse communities
- Work with Moat Residents' Forum, area and local groups to make sure that they reflect the diversity of the wider body of Moat residents in the locality.

Our three year action plan to ensure we put residents at the heart of everything we do.

Objective one

Moat will make resident involvement an integral part of our business at all levels of decision making.

- The resident involvement structure reflects its decision making structure.
- Moat has effective local, area and strategic groups - we can measure their impact on the organisation.
- A wider pool of active residents are involved in the new structure.

Explanation

This will help residents and Moat to be clear about the structures and process for critical elements of resident involvement. It will also assist with clarifying the communication element, with particular reference to the Board, Moat Residents' Forum, area groups and local groups. This will help Moat plan its timetable for involvement in a more focussed way.

Action to be taken	The aim and required outcome
Moat will consult, shape and agree a resident involvement strategy with active residents.	To ensure that residents can influence decisions at all levels and have a 'voice' to enable change. Ensuring Moat Residents' Forum and portfolio groups influence the strategic, corporate operational strategies, policies and procedures.
A working group will be established to discuss the strategy proposals - with reference to aligning strategic and area groups.	To ensure the area and strategic residents' groups align to the senior level of decision making within Moat. A time limited group will be established to oversee the development of the resident involvement strategy.
Area structures to be reviewed and established - with supporting action plan for development.	To ensure area groups clearly align to area level decision making - with clear links to strategy group(s) and local level residents' groups. A consultative group will be established to influence the area service plan priorities.
Resident involvement proposal to be presented to seniors managers and leaders in the business and critical teams.	To ensure Moat's Area Business Managers understand their role and that of their teams in ensuring the success of resident involvement within Moat.
Continue to develop local residents' groups, utilising the new recognition criteria while also ensuring the area and strategic structures reflect local group involvement.	To ensure that we increase resident involvement and activity in all that we do, while ensuring a diverse and geographical reflection. To have local consultation groups that will impact on Moat's local service delivery (local offer initiatives).
Review the Moat Residents' Forum governance policy to ensure that it is reflective/aligns to the new structure.	To ensure that Moat Residents' Forum has clear and agreed aims and working protocols, which link into the revised structure to enable links to the area and locals area groups.
To review the existing area groups' governance document.	To ensure that the area groups have clear, agreed aims and working protocols which link into the revised structure, enabling links to the strategic and locals area groups.
To establish Moat Residents' Forum portfolio groups.	To ensure strong and specialist links between Moat Residents' Forum and the area groups. These groups will ensure that informed discussion and recommendations for improvement are effective.
To agree the communication protocol between Moat Residents' Forum, the Executive Team and the Housing and Customer Services Committee.	To remove potential conflict of interest from resident Board Members, by enabling Moat Residents' Forum to represent residents' views at appropriate levels, when necessary.

Objective two

Resident involvement within Moat will be inclusive and provide a range of opportunities for all residents to be consulted, involved and participate in decisions that affect their housing service.

- Satisfaction with opportunities to participate increases by 5% annually for the next two years.
- All local plans (offers) will be able to show that 20% of local Moat residents have been involved in their development and ongoing monitoring.
- Moat will be able to track the involvement of individuals and groups in the improvement of housing services (TP tracker).

Explanation

This should reduce the perception that the formal resident structures are being 'bypassed', and widen the opportunities for residents to be involved in a way that they choose.

Action to be taken	The aim and required outcome
The Ideas Catcher panel will continue to be progressed to improve the number of individual residents involved and the use of the panel members by Moat's key service departments.	The Ideas Catcher panel is a critical pool of residents for consulting on existing services. This resident involvement method is a key part of initial consultations on proposals to improve services, ensuring that we have incorporated and considered residents' views. Residents and staff are clear about where the panel fits in the overall consultation process and resident involvement structures.
To continue to utilise and improve the mystery shopping element by engaging and training more shoppers. Provide in-house certificates to mystery shoppers on completion of two successful mystery shops. (This can be used as evidence for employability skills). Ensure that the learning from and impact of mystery shopping is promoted to staff and residents.	Mystery shopping to be seen by all as an effective tool for checking and improving our front-line customer service standards (as agreed with residents).
Community Champions to be established.	To increase opportunities for residents to work with Moat at local area level, this new initiative will offer opportunities for residents to engage with us in their area of interest. Community Champions will be encouraged where a resident group is not viable. Work will commence with the aim of signing up five community champions per business area.
Resident involvement and access to information and services through the IT systems. Moat are reviewing IT accessibility.	To widen the opportunities for residents to engage with Moat in a way which they prefer. This will include enabling residents to access up to date information via Moat's website, the ability for residents to inform Moat of compliments/complaints via our website, enabling strategic and area residents' groups to have websites if required and establishing online consultation forums to improve services.
Moat will continue to use surveys both written and telephone as a way of collecting information on the services received.	To widen the opportunities for residents to engage with Moat to improve key elements of our housing services.
Participative research and action - we will develop our approach to using this family of methods. The Community Development Officers will be trained on these methods and lead the way. Other staff and residents will gain a useful insight on using these methods through the communication of information from Moat staff to shape services.	The use of these methods will help Moat staff and residents to develop local plans.

Objective three

Moat will provide support, learning and development opportunities to ensure that residents who are involved have the knowledge, skills and information to do so effectively.

- Moat will use existing information to inform active residents of sector issues e.g. Housemark and News Start e-newsletters, etc.
- Develop and implement in-house training courses.
- Support residents to attend external courses and conferences.
- Measure the number of residents who receive training.
- Support residents to network effectively at strategic and local levels.

Explanation

This will ensure that residents who choose to be actively involved will be able to participate fully in discussions and enable Moat to come to a robust, fully informed decision. It will also improve the capacity for succession planning within the formal resident involvement structures, up to and including Board and Committee Members. The inward looking focus should also improve as residents begin to develop their external networks through conference attendance.

Action to be taken	The aim and required outcome
Moat will develop a training programme for involved residents, initially consisting of committee skills, treasury skills and equality and diversity. By March 2012 the training programme will include local research, writing skills, business planning, housing association finance and basic legal courses (housing and anti-social behaviour legal issues).	Active residents are confident in discussing issues with Moat staff. Resident groups are more effective.
Moat will have a training folder which will be populated and updated with relevant training materials and information for resident involvement.	Staff will have access to the training material. This will enable them to develop individuals and groups to improve their effectiveness across the business.
Moat will provide access to external conferences for residents. This will be based on agreed criteria for residents wishing to attend and aligned to portfolios.	This will enable residents to network, learn and utilise knowledgeable information, empowering them to shape our services and reflect the wider community and economic climate.

Objective four

Moat will have a service inspection and improvement structure that places residents at the heart of this.

- 75% of recommendations will be accepted and implemented by March 2012.
- Staff and residents have a positive experience of working together - as noted in the evaluation report.
- Inspectors are eager to continue to work with Moat - also mentioned in the evaluation.

Explanation

This will help Moat ensure that we meet the statutory and regulatory requirements for services delivered. It should also strengthen the resident involvement structures within Moat, and with the demise of the audit commission, should reduce Moat's need and costs for external audit of services.

Action to be taken	The aim and required outcome
Moat will seek to recruit resident inspectors. This will include writing to potential residents who may be interested in becoming inspectors, carrying out a structured interview process and involving resident Board members and Moat Residents' Forum with recruitment.	To strengthen resident involvement structures within Moat by ensuring informed decisions are made, based on evidence collated by resident inspectors.
Moat will consult and agree a job description and work agreement for resident inspectors with already involved residents.	This will provide clarity for the inspectors and staff as to the role.
Moat will identify 'active residents' as mentors for the new resident inspectors.	This is to ensure that new residents receive support from 'peers' as well as officers.
Moat will train potential inspectors, staff and mentors on the resident inspection process.	This will enable the mentors and inspectors to carry out their role effectively. It will also ensure that the inspection process provides added value.
Resident inspectors to carry out inspections and work with key staff and mentors to enable report to be finalised.	To ensure joint working and communication to map out the required outcomes for service improvements and delivery, including timescales.

Objective five

Moat will have a resident involvement 'toolkit' that enables/supplies residents and staff with relevant information on various aspects of involvement.

- Staff and residents use the toolkit as a point of reference and guidance for their work.
- The toolkit is easily accessible to staff and residents.
- 75% of people that use the toolkit are positive about its usefulness, based on ongoing feedback.

Explanation

This will help to ensure that the whole organisation is consistent in its approach to involving residents at all levels, and that we become a learning organisation by sharing best practice, internally and externally.

Action to be taken	The aim and required outcome
Moat will develop a residents' toolkit. Information will include recognition criteria for groups, expenses guidance for already involved residents, equality and diversity information, constitutional guidance, methods of involving people (good practice), fundraising tips, advice on effective running of groups, how residents can get involved with Moat and Board Member guidance.	The toolkit will identify the benefits of involvement, give guidance on key aspects, and support Moat's involvement work.

Objective six

Moat will develop a resident involvement 'impact assessment' that measures outcomes and outputs, ensuring that our resident involvement provides value for money by being effective and efficient. Moat will meet all statutory and regulatory requirements, by ensuring that we continually review our practices and procedures in line with and any changes to the governing bodies.

- Impact assessment developed with agreed measures for outcomes and outputs - SMART.
- Impact assessment identifies that Moat is meeting all statutory and regulatory requirements for resident involvement.
- Impact assessment has a clear element for measuring Value for Money (VfM) for resident involvement activities.
- Impact assessment includes information from the TP tracker.
- Impact assessment allows Moat to benchmark its resident involvement service(s).
- Impact assessment is a genuine tool to allow Moat to continuously improve its service.

Action to be taken	The aim and required outcome
Officers and residents of relevant Moat team will consult and agree the contents of the impact assessments annually. This will be reported to Moat Residents' Forum and the Board annually.	Allows Moat to measure its progress on all resident involvement activity. The value for money element will enable Moat to ensure that its resident involvement is efficient in within the economic climate. This regulatory element will ensure that Moat are meeting this requirement regardless of changes to regulator/inspection process.
To implement TP tracker across the business, enabling us to effectively track and measure key aspects of resident involvement.	This is a key software tool to enable Moat to track who, how and when residents have been involved. It will enable Moat to report on these elements as part of the impact assessment.
Identify the benchmarking information required; for inclusion into impact assessments including other organisations' impact assessment templates.	To enable Moat to benchmark its resident involvement work against other housing organisations.
Agree impact assessment template with involved residents for trial during 2011/2012.	To enable robust reporting and benchmarking of all Moat's resident involvement activity and how it has influenced the organisation.

Glossary

Explanations of the terms used within our strategy.

Community engagement

Moat's work will impact on the wider community; where necessary we will inform, consult and involve the wider community in decisions which may affect them.

Consultation

This is the process of informing change by seeking residents' views, ideas and experience. Consultation ensures that we consider feedback from residents and it is included within the overall decision making process. Consultation can occur through many methods such as surveys and focus groups.

Information

Written and verbal information may be provided to residents through correspondence, newsletters, training, feedback requests and corporate documents such as Moat's annual report.

Involvement

Residents' views are actively sought, listened to and will affect the decision making process and influence change. Residents will be actively involved and advised about how they have shaped the service and any processes. This method of involvement will be consistent and structured through resident groups, local agreements and policy and procedure development as well as with other working groups.

Moat Residents' Forum

Moat Residents' Forum is the umbrella group consisting of the Chair, Vice Chair and other resident representatives from the service improvement advisory groups and area residents' groups.

Participation

Residents actively participate in the decision making process, and with that partnership accept joint responsibility for decisions concerning issues such as local management boards, local service agreements and annual action plans.

Resident

For the purpose of this document the term 'resident' refers to tenants, leaseholders, shared owners, users of supported housing and individuals with a direct contractual relationship related to housing services. This includes those with the right of succession living at the property.

Resident management

In certain circumstances residents may wish to take on the responsibility for the management of certain aspects of their homes. The management responsibilities will be negotiated with us and Moat will still retain the freehold rights to the property. To ensure that these properties and communities are being managed correctly, we would request performance monitoring information and track outcomes from any changes implemented by the Resident Management Team.

How to get involved

If you are a Moat resident and would like to become involved to help improve service delivery at Moat, you can do this by contacting our Customer Services Team on 0845 600 1006.

There are many opportunities for you to become involved including mystery shopping, becoming a Community Champion and joining the Ideas Catcher panel or residents' associations. All resident involvement provides a valuable contribution to help Moat shape services to reflect what matters to residents. We welcome your involvement to provide us with your viewpoints and ensure we continue to adapt our services where possible to meet resident expectations.

Further information is also included within the Moat residents' handbook and is available on our website, www.moat.co.uk.

Should you have any questions regarding resident involvement or the content of this strategy, please contact us on 0845 600 1006 or email customer@moat.co.uk and we will be happy to answer any questions you have.

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Moat Homes Limited is a charitable housing association April 2011



The information in this leaflet can be made available in large text, on audio tape, or electronic format. We offer Language Line services to people whose first language is not English. Please call us if you require these services.