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Axiom Housing Association Limited

Corporate Strategy 2015 – 2020

Supporting - Corporate Objective
To Work Together

Resident & Service User Inclusion Strategy

Approved 28 July 2016 (Board of Management)

Service Owner: Operations Director

Health Check due: 27.7.2017
Full Review due: 2.7.2019

**Our Mission is to make a *positive* difference to people's lives and our communities
Our Values: Committed Caring Creative**

1.0 Introduction

Axiom embarked upon its resident involvement journey in 2005 and since that time is proud to have witnessed the significant growth in the influence and empowerment of resident and service user engagement throughout the last decade; with the birth of Axiom Residents Forum being established in 2007 supported and strengthened by the development of service panels.

In 2015 we achieved the Tenant Participation Advisory service (TPAS) Landlord service accreditation for our work and commitment in this key area and will look to build upon the best practice examples highlighted throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

1.1 Moving with the times

As we move into 2016, we recognise that we need to review and refresh our approach to engagement to ensure that we can continue to build on the strong partnership between Axiom and its residents and services users and attract new volunteers.

As the demands of modern life become faster paced and more complex, we recognise that we need to meet residents and service users, where they live and at a time that meets their requirements to ensure that we can continue to develop, improve and shape our services collaboratively.

2.0 Aim

Residents and service users are at the heart of Axiom and we are strongly committed to involving them in everything we do. Working alongside Axiom Residents Forum (ARF) we will continue to build on our resident and service users involvement journey to date to make sure that we deliver continual improvement and deliver services that meet resident and service user's needs and expectations.

This strategy sets out a range of activities and objectives to ensure that Axiom residents and service users have the opportunity to be involved in the development and management throughout all areas of service delivery from a community, operational and strategic level.

3.0 Our Commitment

- ◆ Support the activities of Axiom Residents' Forum to be the umbrella body for all resident and resident groups throughout Axiom
- ◆ Provide residents and service users with a menu to allow them to choose how and when they get involved, ensuring they have real choice and opportunity through the development, management and delivery of services.
- ◆ Ensure that all our residents and service users have access to services and support to live independent and successful lives.
- ◆ Ensure the needs of 'harder to reach' dispersed residents and service users and underrepresented groups needs are well understood and are supported and encouraged to participate and contribute

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- ◆ Communicate clearly to residents and service users our standards and procedures
- ◆ Developing more innovative methods for the inclusion of residents and service users.
- ◆ To support the development and establishment of a service users forum throughout the lifetime of this policy
- ◆ Provide training, facilities and support to Axiom Residents' Forum and associated residents and service users groups.
- ◆ Provide feedback and evidence about how resident and service user inclusion influences and impacts on services to individual residents, service users and their communities.
- ◆ Create a strong link between our strategic goals and the outcomes that result from resident/service user involvement.
- ◆ Promote an understanding of and meet the requirements and expectations of our regulators.
- ◆ Ensure that we meet the requirements of the Local Standards.
- ◆ Support this policy with an agreed service plan and targets

4.0 Regulatory Framework

In April 2012 the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) took responsibility for the regulation of social housing. They introduced a new regulatory framework, based economic and consumer standards:

Economic Standards

- Governance and Financial Viability
- Value for Money
- Rent

Consumer Standards

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and Community

The HCA takes a proactive role in regulating and monitoring compliance against the Economic standard. With regards to Consumer standards, the HCA will only intervene when there is a risk of serious detriment to tenants, however the HCA have advised that '*Boards are responsible for ensuring that providers comply with all the standards, both economic and consumer*'.

The standard relating to resident scrutiny and involvement is the 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment' standard.

5.0 Overall approach

At Axiom Housing true resident involvement is integral to our work. In 2015 we were awarded the TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) landlord accreditation and we will embed best practice models highlighted throughout this rigorous process into this forward looking policy.

The following are the Key objectives for our resident involvement strategy throughout the lifetime of this policy:

5.1 Resident Services Committee

The Resident Services Committee was established in September 2015, following a governance restructure. The purpose of the Residents' Services Committee is to undertake specific activities to assist the Board in ensuring the good management of the association's housing management, maintenance and resident involvement services.

The composition of this committee will be up to five residents, including representatives of the respective customer service panels.

- Housing management Panel
- Maintenance Advisory Panel
- Disability User Group
- Complaints and Compliments
- Plus the lead resident for Scrutiny

Resident members shall be nominated by the Axiom Residents' Forum (ARF) Executive.

Areas of Delegated Authority and responsibility include:

- ◆ Resident Involvement and engagement strategy
- ◆ Reports of Customer Service panels
- ◆ Service Plan Delivery and improvement plans related to the responsibilities of this committee
- ◆ Legal and regulatory compliance on all housing operational services, including all responsive and cyclical maintenance operations
- ◆ Monitoring of housing and maintenance services risks including gas safety, electrical safety, asbestos, legionella, water, fire risk assessments, lift maintenance, out of hours services
- ◆ Performance monitoring of Voids, Repairs, Maintenance services, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Services, Complaints and Anti-Social Behaviour, services to leaseholders, rent and service charge collection.
- ◆ Scrutiny Reviews

5.2 ARF

Axiom Residents Forum was formed in 2007. ARF are the main umbrella body for all resident and resident groups throughout Axiom.

Axiom Residents Forum (ARF) aims wherever possible to promote and represent the views and best interests of as many residents as possible, in matters which affect their rights, management, maintenance, improvements and services.

5.2.1 ARF Committee

A committee shall be elected to carry out the business and interests of ARF at their Annual General meeting.

At The AGM the committee will elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and the Community Improvement Grant Coordinator.

The Committee will meet at least six times a year in an open meeting, to discuss the business of the ARF.

5.2.2 ARF Executive

The Executive Committee will carry out the day-to-day management of ARF and will agree Community Improvement applications. They will also make recommendations to the ARF Committee regarding future policies and procedures.

The Committee will elect at the Annual General Meeting an Executive Committee that will consist of the 5 Officers, plus 4 other members.

The five key officers will be:

Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and the Community Improvement grant coordinator

5.3 Service Panels

Axiom in conjunction with ARF have developed a dynamic and engaging approach to co-regulation over the last 5 years throughout the establishment and achievement of the service panels.

The service panels are comprised of staff and residents. Each panel is governed by a clear set of terms of reference and meet at regular intervals throughout the financial year.

For further information about the scope of each of the panels, please see **Appendix 1**.

5.4 Scrutiny

In 2016 we have revised our approach to undertaking scrutiny reviews, maximising the potential and expertise held within our service panels.

ARF executive commission the reviews for the year ahead and nominate a relevant service panel to undertake the review, establishing a clear brief and detailing critical success factors.

ARF executive will nominate a Scrutiny lead who will liaise with the relevant service panel members and the Head of Service throughout the course of the review and on the production of the report and arising recommendations.

Completed reviews will be considered for approval by the Residents Services Committee.

5.5 Community Engagement initiatives

A key priority throughout the lifetime of this strategy is our community engagement work.

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We recognise that as modern life becomes faster paced, the traditional and more formal structures of resident involvement are less effective in reaching a wider audience.

Our learning over the years however has shown that just because people do not have the time to attend formal meetings it doesn't mean that they are any less passionate about what or how to improve the estates where they live or indeed the services we provide.

In pursuance of this key objective we will proactively move outside of the more formal structures of service panels and meetings to engage and inspire a wider group of residents and service users to meet people' where they live, at a time that suits their needs, to discuss issues that directly impact their lives'.

ARF are committed to working alongside us to develop this approach throughout the lifetime of this strategy

Key areas for future development are:

- ◆ The establishment and development of Bretton Residents Forum
- ◆ The establishment and development of Residents Associations across all estates
- ◆ To develop and expand the role of Volume Controllers
- ◆ Quarterly estate walkabouts
- ◆ Attendance at community events
- ◆ Community Improvement Panel work
- ◆ Axiom in Action

5.6 Volume Controllers

Many individuals like to contribute to the development and improvement of the service they receive from Axiom but due to work commitments or personal arrangements feel unable to contribute in more formal settings such as meetings etc.

The role of Volume Controller was established in August 2009. A Volume Controller is an Axiom Resident whom Axiom makes contact with on a regular basis to survey their views on a number of matters pertaining to the service they receive. By recording ratings given Axiom are better able to address pockets of poor performance and chart continuous improvements.

Our Volume Controllers will assess our performance at a local level. Throughout the lifetime of this strategy we will look to build on this approach to encourage wider engagement.

5.7 Digital Inclusion

The digital revolution has shown that channel shift strategies are needed across all areas of the business to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. Resident Involvement lends itself to this platform in terms of extending our reach and engaging a wider more diverse customer base, whose lifestyles may not be conducive to attendance at formal meeting settings.

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This exciting phase of resident involvement will see us make greater use of our Axiom Involved Facebook page and maximise new and emerging technologies, including investigating the use of on-line surveys and forums.

Further to this we will continue to ensure that we will provide ARF executive committee members, with the relevant, equipment, support and training to undertake their roles effectively.

6.0 Choice and menu of involvement

This strategy aims to offer residents and service users the widest possible range of opportunities to engage, shape, influence and improve the services they receive from us.

Our menu to date has been developed over the last decade in response to an increasingly diverse customer base. We will continue to work with our residents and service users over the lifetime of this strategy to develop this menu further to ensure that what is on offer remains relevant, engaging and in line with 21st century methods of communication and engagement. Our current menu of choice includes the following options:

- Axiom Resident Forum (ARF)
- Residents Associations
- Volume Controllers
- Surveys-STAR Resident Satisfaction Survey, Repairs , Complaints etc
- Residents' Conference
- Disability Users Group (DUG)
- Maintenance Advisory Panel
- Equality and Diversity Panel
- Gas Servicing and responsive repairs
- Community Improvement Panel
- Complaints Review Group
- Housing Management Panel
- ARISE Newsletter Editorial Group
- Neighbourhood Walkabouts
- Scrutiny Reviews
- Focus Groups

For a full understanding of the time commitment required for each level of involvement, please see **Appendix 1** or visit our Get Involved page on our website www.axiomha.org.uk

7.0 How we will support involvement

7.1 Training

- ◆ We want to ensure that everyone involved can make the most of the opportunities available through involvement. Training is provided for residents and service users to ensure everyone has the opportunity to develop and share their skills. Training will include formal training, sharing of good practice, skills and knowledge, visits and attendance at conferences. We will advertise training opportunities widely and take steps to make training accessible for all groups of residents and service users.
- ◆ Staff will have appropriate training to support resident and service user inclusion and to ensure that it is embedded into their day to day work.
- ◆ Scrutiny Panel members will be given support, guidance and training to enable them to deliver their role in thoroughly scrutinising key aspects of our performance.

7.2 Resources

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- ◆ The Resident Involvement Manager supports the implementation of this policy.
- ◆ A dedicated annual budget supports this policy. This budget covers training, publicity, meetings and support facilities and related costs budget. Locally based residents groups/associations are eligible to apply for funding and we provide assistance to individuals for childcare, interpretation, transport and other related out of pocket expenses.

8.0 Value for Money and Social Value

At Axiom we understand the value of effective resident and service user involvement, both in terms of value for money and social value.

Our approach to resident and service user involvement has ensured that whilst budgets may have become increasingly tighter over the last 5 years; we have continued and will remain committed to working in partnership to ensure that we can continue to deliver greater value for money outcomes for our residents, improve the customer experience and address a wide range of social goals.

We will continue to demonstrate this in a number of ways:

- ◆ Through the work of the Residents Services Committee
- ◆ Through the work of ARF
- ◆ Through the work of the service panels
- ◆ Through the impact assessments undertaken from the Scrutiny reviews
- ◆ Through the case studies and testimonies of involved residents
- ◆ Through the annual Value for Money and Social Value report

9.0 Communication

Communication is vital for successful resident involvement. We currently use a range of methods:

- A high quality Annual Report to all our Tenants, produced jointly with our Residents and service users
- A Residents and Service user newsletter (ARISE – Axiom Residents Influencing Service Excellence)
- Surveys – Feedback, New resident satisfaction, Repairs etc)]
- Leaflets – on all services we provide
- Neighbourhood walkabouts and Drop-ins
- ARF open meetings
- Resident Associations
- Resident Meetings
- Liaison meetings on sheltered housing services
- Conferences
- Letters/emails/Face-to-face
- 1-2-1 meetings for ARF exec members
- Undertake exit interviews for those leaving ARF or stepping down from Service Panels
- Involved Axiom Facebook page
- Website

10.0 Monitoring and review

The implementation of the strategy will be monitored by:-

- Axiom Residents Forum
- Residents Services Committee

The strategy will also form the basis of the annual involving our Residents service plan.

As part of our annual policy health check programme we will consider whether this policy is effective and whether there are any disincentives for residents and service users to being included.

Every 3 years we will undertake a full review of this policy in consultation with ARF

Appendix 1 Involvement Groups

Introduction

Axiom's menu of involvement has been developed over the last decade in response to an increasingly diverse customer base and an ever changing operating environment. We will continue to work with our residents and service users to develop this menu further to ensure that what is on offer remains relevant and engaging.

Terms of Reference

For further information about the role and function of each of the various, panels and forums please visit our Get involved page on our website <http://www.axiomha.org.uk/get-involved>

Time commitment

The clocks below give a rough indication of the level of time an individual would need to commit for that particular activity (3 clocks indicate more time required, 1 clock indicates minimal time commitment). We will continue to review this to ensure that there is an opportunity for all residents whatever their circumstances to get involved and help make a positive difference!

For a full view of the diary of meetings please visit our Get Involved page at <http://www.axiomha.org.uk/get-involved> and visit our events calendar

Axiom Residents Forum (ARF)



Axiom Residents Forum was formed in 2007. ARF are the main umbrella body for all resident and resident groups throughout Axiom.

Axiom Residents Forum (ARF) aims wherever possible to promote and represent the views and best interests of as many residents as possible, in matters which affect their rights, management, maintenance, improvements and services.

A committee shall be elected to carry out the business and interests of ARF at their Annual General meeting. The Committee will also elect an executive who will carry out the day to day management of ARF

The Executive meet on a monthly basis, whilst the full committee meet a minimum of six times a year.



Maintenance advisory panel (MAP)



This group looks at major works, planned maintenance and new developments. The



panel is comprised of Axiom staff and residents and meets on a monthly basis.

Meeting outcomes and information are fed back to Axiom Residents' Forum (ARF) by way of an update and for approval, if required.

Responsive Repairs, Voids & Gas Servicing Committee



This group looks at our repairs performance plus the repair and gas servicing work we do to your home.

The panel is comprised of Axiom staff, residents and contractors and meets on a monthly basis.

Members also review relevant policies.

Meeting outcomes and information are reported back to (ARF) by way of an update and for approval, if required.



Community Improvement Panel



The Community Improvement Panel was established in 2007. The Panel was convened to distribute part of the Estate Improvement Budget.

The Community Improvement Panel is comprised of Axiom staff and involved residents. The group manage and allocate the Community Improvement fund. This money has been ring-fenced to maintain and improve the physical condition, use, appearance and general repair of Axiom estates with particular interest of communal areas.



ARF have been given a specified amount of money within the wider fund, so that they may respond directly to residents' applications. The Panel meets on a monthly basis in addition to undertaking site visits in response to applications for works.

ARF nominate a Community Improvement Coordinator who plays a lead role.

Equality & Diversity Strategic Group



Our Equality & Diversity Strategic Group is comprised of staff and residents. The Group ensures that we cater for individual



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needs and in doing so create an inclusive culture that not only respects the individual but enables them to fulfil their personal aspirations and ambitions.

The group meets four times a year and plays an important role the in delivery of an environment where equality and diversity is respected, but more importantly where every individual is respected too.

Housing management panel



This panel meets on a monthly basis to look at a range of Housing Management issues, from anti-social behaviour through to empty properties and allocations.



This group also looks at the work we are doing to support those residents who are affected by Welfare Reform and benefit changes. In addition to this it reviews relevant service policies.

ARISE editorial team



This group works with Axiom employees to look at the articles that go into



the residents' newsletter, ARISE.

Members ensure there is a good balance of corporate news and information as well as stories from residents across Axiom properties.

The group's input has also been instrumental in helping Axiom to create award-winning Tenant Annual Reports.

The group meets around 3 times a year.

Compliments and complaints panel



This panel is made up of the Customer Service Manager and residents. It meets four times a year to review compliments and complaints received by Axiom



The panel looks at any trends that and how Axiom has dealt with the complaints, ensuring we comply with policies and procedures. The group also reviews the complaints' process and policies.

Resident Services Committee



The Residents Services Committee is a sub-committee of the Board of management.



This committee meets four times a year and undertakes a critical review of the Association's housing performance.

The committee is comprised of Board members and residents and reports into the Board of Management.

ARF nominate up to 5 residents from the relevant service panels to sit on this Committee.

Disability User Group



DUG acts as a leader on disability matters and helps shape the way in which we provide our services.



The resident-led group promotes equality of opportunity between disabled residents and other residents within the association, assisting with eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the Equalities Act 2010.

The group promotes positive attitudes towards disabled persons and encourages involvement of disabled residents within Axiom.

The group meets four times a year.

Volume Controllers



On a quarterly basis, Axiom provides a group of 'armchair' volunteers, called Volume Controllers, with a survey. Volume Controllers complete the survey which asks for views of the services Axiom provides either over the phone, by email or in the post, from the comfort of their home.

The results are used to monitor Axiom's performance, help Axiom set targets and improve in certain areas plus gives residents a voice who are unable to attend meeting or panel groups but would still like to be an involved resident.

Training opportunities



Involved residents are offered full support and training. This includes an induction where you will learn about Axiom and the services we provide.

We also provide specific training, dependent on which groups you choose to sit on.

Training for experience and employment

We are committed to supporting our residents to access skills and training to help them with volunteering and employment opportunities.

Axiom Academy provides a whole range of training to increase your skills and support you back into work.

If you would like further details of current training opportunities, please contact <http://axiomacademy.org.uk/> on **01733 347135**.

If you're interested in volunteering and employment opportunities with Axiom please visit our careers pages on our website.

