



**“Our commitment to resident involvement”
A Strategy for 2010 – 2013**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Magna’s Purpose is: “To help people meet their housing and related needs and aspirations”. Resident involvement is key to achieving our Purpose and it is embedded in the culture of the organisation.
- 1.2. The reason we involve residents in our business both formally and informally is to ensure they have the opportunity to influence the decisions affecting their homes and neighbourhoods and other services they receive from us.
- 1.3. This strategy will make clear our commitment to resident involvement and our approach to continuous improvement.
- 1.4. Our commitment complies with the standards for resident involvement set out by our regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).
- 1.5. The content of this strategy was agreed at the Tenants’ Conference in November 2009. It is supported by a plan and service standards. The plan will be reviewed quarterly with the Tenants’ Panel. The service standards were set in consultation with residents.
- 1.6. This strategy has undergone an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 1.7. The Community Services Manager is responsible for the delivery of our commitment to resident involvement.

2. Key objectives

- 2.1 Our commitment to resident involvement will help us to achieve our Purpose and Strategic Objectives.
- 2.2 The relevant Magna Strategic Objectives are:
 - 2.2.1 To have good leadership and governance
 - 2.2.2 To be excellent in our services and always improving
 - 2.2.3 To achieve value for money in the use of our resources
 - 2.2.4 To be the partner of choice for the communities and others we work with

3. Background Information

- 3.1 In 2007/08, the National Housing Federation carried out a STATUS satisfaction survey of MWS residents, which included three direct questions on resident involvement: tenants preferred method of receiving information and consultation; satisfaction that tenants' views are being taken into account; and how tenants might like to get involved in the management and decision making processes of MWS.
- 3.2 85% of respondents preferred information and consultation by letter, 66% of tenants were satisfied that their views were taken into account, and 84% of tenants were not interested in getting more involved. A further survey will take place during 2010 and the results will be compared to the 2007/08 survey. The results of the 2010 STATUS survey will also help us to assess ourselves against the TSA standards.
- 3.3 In the summer of 2009, Quality Housing Services Ltd (QHS) undertook an assessment of our resident involvement service and compared our practice to the QHS Standard, and scored us at a commendable 86%.

4. The purpose of resident involvement

- 4.1 Magna's purpose "to help people meet their housing and related needs and aspirations" could not be met without resident involvement. We are committed to involving residents at all levels to ensure we offer good quality and relevant services.
- 4.2 As a Registered Provider of Housing (RP), we are required through statute and regulation to encourage and enable residents to be involved in the formulation of policies and procedures and to have an influence on areas of housing and housing related services. The Tenant Services Authority's Regulatory Framework requires that RPs make an agreement, developed in partnership with residents, setting out how they will

be involved, consulted and informed and how this will be resourced, measured, monitored and reviewed. We currently involve residents both formally and informally in all areas of our business. We will continue to develop diverse and innovative ways to encourage more residents to become involved.

5. How are residents involved?

- 5.1 At the highest level, four out of eleven members of the MWS Board of Management are tenants. There are also tenant members on our Development and Finance Committees.
- 5.2 MWS has had an active Tenants' Panel since its formation in 1998. The Tenants' Panel are known as the "Tenants' Panel of MWS" (TP). In addition to the TP, there are independent tenant representatives and tenants who are actively involved in service reviews. For example, the Tenants' Repairs & Maintenance Monitoring Group and the Tenancy & Neighbourhood Management Group. The sheltered and supported housing service review group have recently asked for support to become a more formal group. We are working with them to achieve this.
- 5.3 The TP meets monthly and service review groups meet quarterly or when agreed. We also set up focus groups to look at specific areas of our work on an ad-hoc basis.

6. Our Commitment to resident involvement

- 6.1 The TP and independent local tenant representatives represent residents' interests at local level. **We will continue to provide funding, training and officer support to all recognised MWS tenant and resident groups, including service review groups. In addition, we will provide support to informal groups that are relevant and sign up to our Equality and Diversity Policy.**
- 6.2 We are committed to developing resident involvement and we are working towards **Landlord Accreditation in Resident Involvement through the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)**. This is considered a 'kitemark' for resident involvement and will help or improve our effectiveness.
- 6.3 We currently have 15% of residents who have expressed an interest in getting involved. We aim to increase this to 22% over the next 2 years. We will do this by developing new ways of getting involved. **A priority area is setting up a 'virtual' group of tenants.** This means that we will use the internet to communicate with residents. There will be opportunities to complete on-line questionnaires and review consultative papers, etc.

- 6.4 **We will work with residents to develop community groups** when requested and where it will improve the local area.
- 6.5 **We will use resident profiling information and customer insight techniques** to give us a better understanding of how residents want to be communicated with. It will also give us a better understanding of diverse needs and ensure groups are representative of residents as a whole.
- 6.6 **We will carry out an annual impact assessment** demonstrating the impact of resident involvement and we will publish this.
- 6.7 **We will continue to hold an annual conference that is open to all MWS residents.**
- 6.8 We will maintain a range of mechanisms for resident involvement exploring new ones with residents, and review the value of existing methods. We are flexible in the way we involve our residents. We understand the diversity of residents and will take into account the Group's Equality and Diversity policy and procedures when delivering services.
- 6.9 **We will carry out a full cost benefit analysis of resident involvement.** This will enable residents to help prioritise resources and to assess the value for money of Resident Involvement.

7. The TSA National Standards

- 7.1 The Tenant Services Authority replaced the regulatory arm of the Housing Corporation on the 1 December 2008. They held a "National Conversation" with tenants across the country during 2009. The purpose was to develop a new regulatory framework. MWS held two events to ensure residents had the opportunity to contribute. The six new standards, effective from 1 April 2010 are:
 - 7.1.1 Tenant involvement and empowerment, including customer service, choice and complaints, and understanding and responding to diverse needs
 - 7.1.2 Home, including repairs and maintenance and quality of accommodation
 - 7.1.3 Tenancy, including allocations, rent and tenure
 - 7.1.4 Neighbourhood and community, including neighbourhood management, local area co-operation

and anti-social behaviour

7.1.5 Value for money

7.1.6 Governance and financial viability

7.2 The regulatory framework sets out the approach the TSA will take to ensure landlords are meeting the standards. The TSA will be looking at outcomes against the standards and require the landlord to provide tenants with an annual report setting out how they are performing against the TSA standards. The first full report is due by 1 October 2011.

7.3 MWS will carry out a gap analysis against the standards to assess what MWS needs to do to comply. The plan arising from this strategy will set out how we will measure our performance in meeting the standards and how we will involve residents in this task.

8. Local Offers

8.1 The TSA view the new national standards as 'basic' standards to be met by all RPs. They are expecting Landlords to enter into agreements with residents to set local standards, known as 'local offers'. **We have decided that our local offers will be Magna West Somerset-wide.** This is something we have consulted the Tenants' Panel about and they are in support of this proposal.

9. Review

9.1 **The resident involvement impact assessment will be reviewed annually** and reported to the MWS Board of Management. The review will take into account feedback from residents and other stakeholders and this will influence the Association's priorities and future Strategic Plans.

9.2 The Strategy is a live document and will be reviewed annually.

9.3 Resident involvement will undergo a **Magna service improvement review every five years.** This review will involve residents, staff, stakeholders and Board members.

10. Summary

10.1 Resident involvement is key to achieving Magna's Purpose. We have high levels of resident satisfaction but there is more to do to meet higher expectations.

- 10.2 Landlords that perform poorly in involving their residents will not meet the expectations of the TSA.
- 10.3 We are working to achieve TPAS landlord accreditation. This accreditation will help us meet the TSA Standards for Tenant Involvement and Empowerment.
- 10.4 We are developing ways to demonstrate how residents are involved and their influence in shaping the services we provide.
- 10.5 We will use resident profiling information to help us communicate with and involve residents in ways in which they want be involved.
- 10.6 We aim to have a greater understanding of the real cost of resident involvement and will carry out a cost benefit analysis to achieve this.
- 10.7 The plan arising from 'our commitment to resident involvement' will help us achieve our objectives set out in section 2.