SP25 Resident Involvement, Support & Incentives Policy

1. Scope of policy

Why we believe in Resident Involvement

This is not just a policy; it's an expression of our shared values and commitment to building strong, vibrant, and sustainable communities. At Soha, we take pride in our longstanding tradition of actively involving and listening to our residents, recognising that their diverse perspectives enrich our collective vision.

We believe in the strength of unity and collaboration, understanding that residents' voices are not just heard but cherished and valued as essential contributors to our service delivery and communities.

Soha is more than a housing association; it's a mutual community where every individual's input is valued and celebrated. When residents choose to become involved with Soha, it reflects their genuine concern for how we interact with communities and residents alike.

Our gratitude extends to all involved residents whose dedication actively contributes to our shared goals. Each resident plays a pivotal role in helping us deliver and improve our services. We firmly believe that every resident should have a say and the ability to influence our decision-making processes. Our overarching vision is to foster strong, vibrant, and sustainable communities where everyone can find a home.

Committed to shaping our services to best meet the needs of residents and the collective wellbeing of the community, we provide opportunities that engage and involve all Soha residents and community members.

Our objective in this policy is clear: to increase resident and community engagement and investment, recognising that a thriving organisation and community comprises of many voices. We aim to harness those voices to drive forward our shared aspirations.

Residents, all staff, and the Board consistently collaborate, working hand in hand to ensure that Soha not only delivers excellent services but also plans collectively for the future. Together, we are on a journey to create a community where the power of collective voices propels us toward shared dreams and aspirations. Soha Housing – where your voice matters, and together, we shape the future of our mutual community.

This policy supports the Communities Strategy.

2. How we aim to support and encourage resident involvement

Our goal is to create a comprehensive resident involvement programme that encompasses local and corporate levels. We're committed to inclusivity, actively seeking the input of underrepresented groups. Residents' unique perspectives matter, and we want to ensure that every voice is heard and valued.

We aim to make sure residents know about all the engagement opportunities available to them. Whether it's by neighbourhood or a service received, our goal is to increase awareness of our involvement offer. We want residents to be informed and engaged in the areas that matter most to them.

We are committed to Community Led Plans that genuinely reflect residents' views. Our goal is to collaborate with residents, enabling them to turn their ideas into tangible outcomes. This approach ensures a sustainable future for communities.

We are enhancing our communication channels through social media and digital technology. This improvement is not just about staying connected; it is a significant part of our involvement offer, ensuring residents are well-informed and engaged in the digital age. We still retain a commitment to attractive hard copy publication for less urgent communication.

Residents' voices matter in guiding our business activities. We are committed to ensuring that the Board hears the perspectives of residents and communities, using residents' inputs to make decisions that support and strengthen our service delivery.

We are establishing a two-way information thread between residents and the Board. This ensures that information flows both ways, keeping everyone informed and engaged in the decisions that shape our business and communities.

We understand that life is busy. Our aim is to create involvement opportunities that are easy to access, allowing residents to participate according to their schedule and interests.

Resident involvement is not just a checkbox for us; it's integral to our day-to-day operations. Our aim is to have residents' input at the heart of everything we do.

We are open to new and innovative ways of engagement. Our aim is to encourage and support residents who are willing to explore different methods of involvement, ensuring diverse and dynamic participation.

Residents' desire to make a difference is important to us. Our aim is to provide the necessary support, training, and guidance to empower full, inclusive participation. We will assist residents and community members in accessing training, funding, and dedicated staff to help make a meaningful impact.

We are committed to ensuring that resident involvement provides value for money. Our aim is to work closely with residents to make sure our engagement efforts are effective, efficient, and deliver tangible value.

Residents' time and effort are valuable, and we recognise that. Soha will cover expenses for involved residents and may provide incentives as a way of encouraging involvement or expressing gratitude for the time spent contributing.

We believe in equality of opportunity to be heard and have influence. All residents are encouraged to get involved. We will not discriminate based on any factors and will aim to meet individual's needs to enable full participation by all. We are committed to treating every individual with fairness and justice, respecting the diversity that makes our organisation strong.

3. Our commitment to residents

Soha commits to:

1. Making major organisational decisions on issues impacting on residents with residents.
2. Be transparent with and accountable to our residents.
3. Ensure residents have access to the support and information they need to be able to contribute fully, in a manner that enables inclusive participation by all in a manner that suits them. In addition, as a mutual our Board are accountable to our resident and staff members, who are the shareholders of Soha.

At Soha, we are committed to providing residents with excellent services, and we believe that residents are the best judges of how well we are doing. Residents' opinions and insights matter, and that is why we offer numerous opportunities for residents to have their say and collaborate with us in co-designing the services they receive.

We recognise the vital role residents play in ensuring that we deliver services that not only meet their needs but also provide value for money. Residents' input is invaluable, and we want to make sure that involvement is not only welcomed but actively encouraged.

To support participation, Soha aims to create a fair and transparent approach to expenses, incentives, and exclusions. We understand that residents' time is valuable, and volunteering should not leave anyone out of pocket. Our commitment is to cover expenses so that residents can contribute without any financial burden.

Additionally, we use incentives to promote equal representation, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to get involved. Our target is to encourage new voices to join the conversation and play a part in shaping the services and community we all share.

At Soha, we are dedicated to fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment where resident involvement is not just welcomed but celebrated. Together, we

want to build a community where residents' voices not only matter but actively shapes the excellent services we provide.

4. How will we consult with residents?

Residents input is crucial to us, and we are committed to learning from feedback and consulting in many ways to ensure that diverse voices are heard. Here is an overview of the methods we will be using to engage with residents:

1. Resident Meetings:
Regular resident meetings and forums will be organised, providing a space for open discussions. These gatherings offer a direct avenue for residents to express thoughts, concerns, and ideas.
Examples: Co-regulations Awaydays, Member Events and Members' Forum and Board AGMs

2. Surveys and Questionnaires:
We will conduct surveys and distribute questionnaires to gather residents' feedback on specific topics. This method allows us to reach a broad audience and capture diverse perspectives.
Examples: Responsive Repairs and Planned Maintenance satisfaction and Tenant Satisfaction Measure surveys.

3. Digital Platforms:
Utilising digital platforms, such as online forums and social media groups, we will create spaces for information sharing and virtual discussions. This ensures that residents who prefer online engagement can participate conveniently.
Examples: Facebook page, corporate and staff, Facebook groups (Green Communities by Soha Housing, Soha Social and Events and Soha Housing Homeownership) Twitter, Instagram

4. Focus Groups:
We will organise focus groups to delve deeper into specific issues. These smaller, more targeted discussions enable a thorough exploration of particular topics, allowing us to better understand residents' needs and preferences.
Examples: Consumer Standards, Healthy Homes, Lettings process.

5. Community Events:
Engaging with residents and the wider community at community events and gatherings will provide an informal setting for interactions. We value face-to-face conversations and will actively participate in events within the community.
Example: Playdays, community events and carnivals as identified.

6. Interactive Workshops:
Workshops will be organised to facilitate hands-on participation and collaborative problem-solving. These sessions allow for a more immersive engagement experience.
Examples: Members' Events and Co-regulation Awaydays

7. Partnerships with Resident Representatives:

Collaborating with resident representatives and community leaders such as parish and town councillors, residents' group and associations, ensures that community concerns are effectively communicated. We will work closely with these representatives to maintain a strong and transparent flow of information via regular updates to the Members' Forum and Scrutiny group.
Examples: Locality teams working with the community to identify projects and improvements and support the community to lead.

8. Mobile App and SMS Surveys:
To enhance accessibility, we will have mobile apps and SMS surveys to reach residents who find these quick and convenient methods of providing feedback.

9. Community Drop in/Connector Events:
Periodic meetings will be organised in geographical areas by the Locality Leads, providing a platform for open dialogue between residents and Soha staff. These meetings aim to address community-wide concerns, individual issues and share important updates.
Examples: Connectors drop-in events are organised regularly in various locations and days/times, according to the needs of the community.

10. Data Collection and Analysis:
Soha systematically analyses resident-generated data for informed decision-making and resident engagement. We gather input through surveys, feedback forms, social media, emails, and meetings, ensuring diverse perspectives. Visualisations like charts and dashboards highlight patterns not evident in raw data. Continuous improvement is prioritised based on resident feedback, with ongoing adjustments to align with evolving needs. We share results with residents, seeking validation and additional insights for transparency and collaboration.

Our commitment is to make these consultation methods inclusive, ensuring that all residents have an opportunity to participate in a way that suits their preferences. We look forward to engaging with residents through these diverse channels to build a stronger, more vibrant community together.

5. Training, support, and resources

Soha's approach to supporting, training, and incentivising residents is driven by a commitment to fostering a sense of community, empowerment, and collaboration. Here are several key reasons for these initiatives:

1. Community-building: By supporting residents, Soha aims to create a strong and cohesive community within communities. Training and incentivising residents contributes to building positive relationships among community members.

2. Empowerment: Providing knowledge, experience, and skills to residents empowers them to take an active role in decision-making processes and community initiatives. This empowerment can lead to a greater sense of ownership and pride in their homes and local communities.

3. Co-production: Soha emphasises co-production, where residents actively participate in the design, delivery, and improvement of services. This collaborative approach ensures that the perspectives and needs of residents are considered, leading to more effective and responsive services.

4. Quality Feedback: Engaging residents in co-production helps Soha gather diverse and valuable feedback about its services, homes, and local communities. Residents, with their firsthand experiences, can provide insights that may not be apparent through other channels, leading to more informed decision-making.

5. Continuous Improvement: The insights gained from resident engagement and feedback can be used to identify areas for improvement. Soha can make informed decisions about changes and enhancements to its services, housing, and community programs, leading to continuous improvement.

6. Barriers Removal: By actively working to remove barriers to engagement, Soha ensures that all residents, regardless of background or circumstances, have equal opportunities to participate. This promotes inclusivity and diversity within the residents engaging.

7. Enhanced Communication: Training residents in effective communication and collaboration skills facilitates better interaction between Soha and its residents. This, in turn, helps in creating a transparent and open dialogue, strengthening the relationship between the Soha and the residents.

8. Capacity-building: Building the capacity of residents ensures that they have the skills and confidence needed to contribute meaningfully to community initiatives. This capacity-building approach creates a more self-sustaining and resilient community.

In summary, Soha's strategy of supporting, training, and incentivising residents is rooted in principles of capacity-building, empowerment, collaboration, and continuous improvement. By actively involving residents, Soha aims to create a positive living environment and strengthen its connection with the residents and communities it serves**.**

Appendix A – Involvement Opportunities Involvement Opportunities 2023 FINAL.pdf

5.1 Ensuring Inclusivity

Residents are involved with in a variety of ways, and we take proactive measures to ensure inclusivity in involvement opportunities. Here's a detailed explanation of the ways support is provided to ensure inclusivity:

1.Travel and Care Expenses:
Soha Housing recognises that attending meetings or events may involve travel costs or care expenses. By covering these expenses, the organisation removes financial barriers, making it easier for residents to participate.

2.Accessible Venues:
Soha ensures that venues for meetings and events are accessible.

3.Internet Access:
Recognising the importance of digital inclusion, Soha ensures that residents have internet access in communal facilities and wherever possible internet is available to participate in virtual events and enable access to online resources.

4.Providing Access to Best Practice and Housing Information:
Soha provides residents with access to best practices in community engagement and housing information. This empowers residents with knowledge, enabling them to make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully.

5. Sharing Internal Reports and Dashboards:
Transparency is promoted by sharing internal reports and dashboards with residents. This allows them to have insights into Soha's performance, decisions, and areas of focus.

6. Induction and Training Programme:
Residents involved in the Members' Forum, Scrutiny and Board receive induction and training. This programme equips them with the necessary skills and understanding to actively contribute to decision-making processes.

7. Information and Advice:
Soha provides information and advice to residents, including a 'Getting Started' pack. This pack includes support helps residents in setting up groups in communities, such as Residents Associations, tips on finding training opportunities, and securing funding for community activities.

8. Practical Help:
Residents receive practical help with organising meetings, events, and producing communication materials like newsletters and promotion leaflets. This assistance streamlines the logistical aspects of community engagement.

9. *Hometalk* Updates:
Regular updates on *Hometalk* keep all residents informed about involvement activities. This platform communicates the impact of these activities and encourages further participation.

10. Annual Report and Impact Report:
Soha publishes an Annual Report, alongside the Company's Financial Statements and an Impact Report, providing a comprehensive overview of Soha's performance, achievements, and the impact of resident involvement.

11. Locality Newsletters:
Locality newsletters replace *Tenants' Times,* ensuring that residents are kept informed about local community news and initiatives. These newsletters are resident-led and will be promoted as such.

12. Providing Information in other Formats

Soha recognises diverse needs and provides information in various formats to accommodate different preferences and requirements. Including audio, large print and other language formats.

In summary, Soha's approach involves a combination of financial support, accessibility considerations, training programmes, information dissemination, and practical assistance to ensure that residents can actively participate and contribute to the community and housing initiatives.

Appendix B Expenses and Incentives.docx

Monitoring and review
The resident budget and monitoring of this policy will be reported annually to the Members' Forum. All current (2023) incentives values are available in the Residents Involvement leaflet Involvement Opportunities 2023 FINAL.pdf

6. Context

Soha Communities Strategy
Soha's Financial Regulations
Soha's Code of Conduct 2026
NHF Code of Conduct 2026
RSH Competence & Conduct Standard 2026
Equality & Diversity Policy
Complaints Policy
Appendix A Involvement Opportunities
Appendix B Expenses and Incentives

Members' Forum Approved	16 March 2024	SLT approved SLT approved (minor amendments)	3 April 2024 27 October 2026
EIA Completed	16 March 2024	Review Due Date	By March 2027
DPIA Checklist Completed	22 March 2024		