

REPORT FOR: Tenant and Leaseholder Consultative Forum

Date of Meeting: 19 July 2011

Subject: INFORMATION REPORT - Feedback from other Council led Resident Involvement Activities

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington
Director of Housing

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Appendix 1 - Outcomes of Resident Involvement

Section 1 – Summary

This report provides feedback to TLCF on a wide range of Council led service specific and service wide resident involvement activities, and also reports on the outcomes of resident involvement, for example what the department has done differently because of the input received from residents.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

- 2.1** This report provides an update on the various officer led resident involvement activities that are taking place across Housing.
- 2.2** A key part of the Housing Ambition Plan is to increase the number of residents who are currently actively involved in helping to shape the Housing Service, and to ensure that this involvement is meaningful. Officers have taken on board residents concerns that their involvement is not consistent across all areas of housing. This has led to the overall target of 100 newly involved residents being split proportionally across the divisions- ensuring that each team has a target to involve residents in delivering the Housing Ambition Plan and driving through service improvements.
- 2.3** This is the second time a report to TLCF has included an appendix that details what has been done differently as a consequence of residents involvement- in other words capturing the successful outcomes of resident involvement. Members of TLCF have an opportunity to ask for more information on any of the entries on the table if they are not convinced these changes have been made. This process is intended to help officers and residents to work together to further develop resident scrutiny of housing's performance.
- 2.4** However it should be noted that there are also a number of areas where resident involvement has led to recommendations for change that are still being developed. Examples are where residents have been asked for their views on changes to operational procedures (such as the Anti Social Behaviour procedures) where work on reviewing the procedures is not yet complete or in determining what steps can be taken to improve customer services following the first round of resident led mystery shopping. These outcomes, once finalised, will be reported to future TLCF meetings.
- 2.5** Since TLCF last met the department has chosen the 3 local offers to be taken forward this year, to both comply with Tenant Services Authority requirements and respond to the improvements to services residents have asked for. This report also gives an update on progress with each of these projects.

Resident Recruitment Campaign

- 2.6** During 2010/11, through the recruitment campaign 169 residents became involved for the first time in working with us. For 2011/12 it is a priority action to increase the number of volunteers actively engaged in developing the housing service by an additional 100.

- 2.7 Residents have asked that we provide more detail on the type of activities newly recruited residents have been involved in and whether their involvement has been a one off exercise like a survey or a sustained involvement such as longer term attendance at a TRA or a focus group. Officers are currently working on the best way to capture this information across all sections of housing and figures are not available as this report is being written. Further information on the first quarter's performance will be reported verbally to TLCF.

Asset Management Group

- 2.8 Asset Management built on the Tenants Fair to call together a focus group of existing and new volunteers to work on the options for tendering a replacement to Kier contracts. The group met for the first time in May and is now scheduled to meet monthly until June 2012.
- 2.9 Consultation relating to specific schemes has taken place and an address list of where works are planned in 2011/12 is in development and will be shared with HFTRA. In addition highly praised web content specific to Asset Management has been developed and continues to be refined and added to.

Estates Services Steering Group

- 2.10 At the meeting on 25 May 2011 an update was given on the parking strategy. 6 fairly well attended public consultation meetings have been held to discuss 3 options to solve parking problems on housing estates. Following the meetings a frequently asked question and answer sheet has been sent out to all those concerned in the proposals asking them to complete a feedback sheet with their preferred options before a final decision is reached on moving forward with the parking proposals.
- 2.11 The Estates in Bloom competition was also discussed. This year we asked TRA's and Sheltered Blocks to submit entries if they wished to take part in the competition, and 18 entries were received. Flowers have now been delivered. On 25 July shortlisting will take place to narrow entries down to three TRA and three Sheltered Block finalists. Final judging will take place on 23 August.

Tenant Inspectors

- 2.12 Estates Services have been working with the West London Estate Services Steering Group, to train tenant inspectors to grade caretaking services. Harrow have partnered with Brent Housing Partnership for this year. Four Harrow residents have been recruited to assist in this project and they have undergone training on how to undertake and score estates. The training took place in Hammersmith and gave our residents the opportunity to meet other partners and their chosen inspectors. Harrow residents are undertaking the formal inspection of Brent Housing Partnership Properties on Tuesday 21 June 2011 where they will select 3 estates to inspect and score. Brent Housing Partnership's resident

inspectors will do the same on 3 of our estates on 27 June 2011. Once the outcome of these inspections is analysed the information will help us to drive forward improvements in the caretaking service.

Housing Fair

2.13 The Housing Fair on 6 April 2011 was attended by 230 residents. We would like to thank all the residents who participated and who helped plan the event. We have done analysis on feedback forms completed by attendees, and have done a debrief with people on the planning group, and will use the lessons learned in planning future events.

Complaints Panel

2.14 The complaints feedback panel meets quarterly and is made up from residents who have had cause to make a complaint to Housing. The panel met during the final quarter of 2010/11 and looked at four complaints which had been responded to by the council. Feedback was given on the quality, language and style of the responses. These suggestions were taken back to the service area and improvements are being implemented.

2.15 Since the last meeting, work has also been undertaken to review the complaints process in housing. As a result of this, a new process which is much 'leaner,' has been drawn up. The revised process now has a quality control stage built into it, and this was a result of suggestions from the feedback panel. The new process is being implemented during the month of July. Improvements will continue to be made to the complaints process as a result of the continued feedback from the complaints panel and the wider review of complaints across the council.

Housing Editorial Board

2.16 The Housing Editorial Board now meets monthly to review and approve all housing communications to residents to make sure they are in Plain English, are clearly written and convey information in a format that will be easily understood by residents. Membership of the Board has been expanded and now includes 3 resident representatives – additional representatives are welcomed particularly tenants.

2.17 At the last Board meeting the summer edition of Homing In was reviewed, amendments requested and then signed off. The board also looked at a number of draft customer satisfaction surveys and requested that a standardised template be developed to make sure they are all in the same format and include standard information regarding confidentiality. This template will be considered by the Editorial Board at its meeting on the 7 July and presented to TLCF for approval.

2.18 Sheltered Housing Review and Watkins House

2.19 A sub-group of Harrow Sheltered Residents Association has been formed to participate in planning a series of tenant consultation events to help shape the modernisation of the Sheltered Housing Service. A new model is being developed for the service which will be reported to a future TLCF once all consultation with staff, Supporting People, unions and tenants is completed. However the group has already made some valuable contributions that have led to improvements to the service. These are detailed in appendix 1.

Local Offers

2.20 The 3 local offers that will be taken forward this year were chosen following the Housing Fair in April. These are:

- Consultation Charter
- Repairs Guarantee
- Improvements to caretaking service

2.29 Work has started on taking these forward across Asset Management and Residents Services. Drafts have been written for both the repairs guarantee and consultation charter and these are currently out for officer consultation. They will be taken to residents for their views at a later date.

2.30 Enhancements to the caretaking service are also being planned to both deliver the local offer and respond to those areas within the resident satisfaction survey where satisfaction was less than 75%. Another initiative to help improve caretaking services is to increase resources by starting an apprentice scheme. This is work in progress but the objective is to recruit two local young people currently unemployed for a 12 month apprenticeship where they will receive both practical and classroom training in the caretaker role. A further report will be made to TLCF on this initiative as it progresses

Capturing Outcomes of Resident Involvement

2.31 Over the last few months Housing have been reviewing the Housing Ambition Plan and the revised plan for 2011/12 has been through a challenge process with Members, and resident representatives from HFTRA and LSG. The first part of the feedback on the outcomes of resident involvement relates to the changes made to the plan because of residents input.

2.32 The second part of the table details individual or team actions that all housing staff have been invited to provide that demonstrate how consulting residents and listening to their views lead to changes in the way we work. Members of TLCF are invited to challenge and/or ask for further information on anything contained in this table if they are not # convinced these changes have been made, or would like some more details.

Section 3 - Financial Implications

3.1 This information report has no specific financial implications. Any service improvement issues that arise as a result of residents ideas and suggestions will be considered within the relevant service area budget.

Section 4 - Corporate Priorities

4.1 The proposals in this report incorporate the corporate priority:
United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 5 July 2011		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Maggie Challoner
Head of Resident Services
Tel: 020 8424 1473

Background Papers: None

Appendix 1 - Outcomes of Resident Involvement

Resident Involvement Activity or Staff Member/ Team Name who implemented the change	What has been done differently as a result of Resident involvement/consultation	Who was involved?	Comments from Residents/TLCF
HAP 2 Challenge events	Residents asked for a simple communication and consultation plan to cover the new policies and strategies that need to be developed over the next few months. The plan that has been developed will focus on a summer campaign with a wide range of events and an information booklet on the main changes is planned. A communications planning team will oversee and coordinate planned events and the Editorial Board will oversee the development of the booklet. Both groups include HFTRA reps	Elected Members, HFTRA representatives, LSG representative and Management Team	
HAP 2 Challenge events	Residents and officers agreed "Excellent services, valued by our communities" as the overarching ambition	Elected Members, HFTRA representatives, LSG representative and Management Team	
HAP 2 Challenge events	Residents considered benchmarking information and agreed to reduce the target for leaseholder satisfaction for 2011/12 55%, which is a 10% increase on the 2010/11 achievement	Elected Members, HFTRA representatives, LSG representative and Management Team	
HAP 2 Challenge events	Residents have been involved from the outset in the procurement process for repairs contractor and feedback from them is being used to inform the process	Elected Members, HFTRA representatives, LSG representative and Management Team	
HAP 2 Challenge events	Residents asked that the management team commitment be expanded to include a commitment to being honest with residents, which was accepted.	Elected Members, HFTRA representatives, LSG representative and Management Team	
HAP 2 Challenge events	HFTRA asked for a quarterly meeting on progress with the HAP 2. These have been set up and included on the consultation calendar. This is a useful step forward in developing resident scrutiny arrangements	Elected Members, HFTRA representatives, LSG representative and Management Team	
Elaine Slowe	We have been in discussion with a tenant who is a wheelchair user to get her input into a new guidance document being produced for developers/housing associations who are building wheelchair accessible properties. Her comments on	Tenant, Partnerships and Strategy and Asset Management teams	

	<p>the issues she encounters with the layout/design of her own property are being analysed against our draft guidance document to ensure all issues that she has highlighted are addressed and any omissions are corrected. This will help to improve the design/layout of new build wheelchair accessible properties for future tenants.</p> <p>Her comments regarding her experience of adaptations in her home have been passed to Paul Mullins in Asset Management for information to improve the experience of tenants with mobility issues, having works carried out in their homes.</p>		
Beverley Bonnefoy – Resident Services	As a direct result of HSRA raising concerns over inconsistency in the Warden service across all of the sheltered schemes, improved support planning and performance management arrangements were introduced in May 2011. The new processes will be piloted for 6 months in order to gain Tenant feedback. Staff have received comprehensive training.	Harrow Sheltered Residents Association (HSRA) and the Sheltered Housing Team	
Beverley Bonnefoy – Resident Services	Members of HSRA raised concerns that a number of vulnerable Sheltered Housing tenants who appeared to have high support needs but due to mental health issues, would not or could not engage with staff. In response, we have improved guidance for staff on how to deal with these situations.	Harrow Sheltered Residents Association (HSRA) and the Sheltered Housing Team	
Beverley Bonnefoy – Resident Services	Following the introduction of a new care service at Watkins House, Tenants asked if they could have their Tenant Meetings immediately after lunch. This has now been implemented.	Tenants and the Sheltered Housing Team	
Rosy Leigh- on behalf of Housing Needs	We received a couple of complaints from customers recently that they had submitted medical information for assessment but had not received any feedback from us. We realized that we were only letting customers know the result when it meant a change of banding. As a result of the complaints we are now making sure that, even where the medical advisor's recommendation is that the banding stays the same, we will let people know formally.	Customers Housing Needs staff	