



The Gateshead Housing Company Customers and Communities Committee

Wednesday 20 January 2010 at 10am
Board Room 1, The Gateshead Housing Company, Keelman
House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley
Trading Estate, Gateshead NE11 0XA

Agenda

Item	Business
1.	Apologies for Absence <u>ITEMS FOR DECISION</u>
2.	Minutes (Pages 3-8) To approve as a correct record the minutes of the inaugural meeting of the committee held on 18 November 2009
3.	Matters Arising
4.	Service Standards and Tenants Guide (Pages 9-11) Report of Director of Finance
5.	Anti-Social Behaviour Performance Update – October to December 2009 (Pages 12-27) Report of Director of Housing Management <u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>
6.	Tenancy and Estate Management Strategy 2009/10 - Update (Pages 28-43) Report of Director of Housing Management

Contact: Stuart Gibson Tel: (0191) 433 5308 Date: 14 January 2010

Item	Business
7.	Involvement Week – Opportunity Knocks (Pages 44-60) Report of Director Finance
8.	Customer Involvement Activity – Update (Pages 61-88) Report of Director of Finance
9.	Profile of Involvement Database – Update (Pages 89-95) Report of Director of Finance
10.	Items for Future Agendas
11.	Date and Time of Next Meeting The next meeting of the committee will be held on Wednesday 21 April 2010 at 10am in Board Room 2, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead.



CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

18 November 2009

PRESENT:

Directors

Jim Willis (In the Chair)
Robert Buckley
John Hamilton
Joachim Moussounda Mouanda
Bill Patterson

Advisers

Bill Fullen	Chief Executive
Jon Mallen-Beadle	Director of Finance
Paul Proud	Acting Director of Property and Technical Services
Neil Bouch	Director of Housing Management
Darren Wilson	Neighbourhood Relations Manager
Stuart Gibson	Company Administrator

Apologies

Pauline Dillon
Kathryn Ferdinand
Valerie Hodge

1 CONFIRMATION OF CHAIR AND APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

The Board agreed, at its meeting on 12 November 2009, that Kathryn Ferdinand be appointed as Chair of this committee until the first meeting after the next Annual General Meeting.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the appointment of Kathryn Ferdinand as Chair of the committee until the first meeting after the next Annual General Meeting be noted.
- (ii) That Valerie Hodge be appointed as Deputy Chair of the committee until the first meeting after the next Annual General Meeting.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference of the committee were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the terms of reference be noted.

3 HOMERPAIRS REPORTING SERVICE PERFORMANCE

The committee received an update on the impact of additional Customer Services Assistants in the HomeRepairs reporting centre.

In February 2008, it became clear that tenants were experiencing difficulty accessing the service. This was a result of the introduction of a new telephone system, the co-location of Morrison's supervisors in January 2008 and the increased call handling time necessitated by the new Northgate repairs module. In addition, advice from a leading call centre expert suggested that the service was understaffed and would not achieve the industry standard of answering 90% of calls within 60 seconds.

The inspection in December 2008 found that in relation to the repairs reporting service 'customers have difficulty in contacting the repairs reporting service by telephone and improvements are very recent but not yet proven over time'. One of the inspection recommendations was 'To improve access to services by ensuring customers can report repairs by telephone quickly and efficiently'. The expected benefits of this recommendation were that customers would be more willing to report repairs and customers would be more satisfied with the service.

Additional Customer Services Assistants (four full time and four part time) were appointed to address the reported understaffing.

The impact that the additional resource has had on the performance of the service has been positive. Statistics on calls received, calls answered, average waiting time and percentage of calls answered against set targets were reported.

In addition to handling repairs enquires, the service also undertakes telephone and postal surveys to ascertain customer satisfaction levels of tenants contacting the repairs centre and the levels of service offered and also to determine tenant's levels of satisfaction once the repair is complete. Levels of customer satisfaction for the current financial year against a target of 95% indicates a consistent level of satisfaction of tenants surveyed in the year to date.

Whilst customer satisfaction is quite high, it is important that the company responds positively where there is reported dissatisfaction. The company's post inspectors work closely with the HomeRepairs complaints section giving relevant technical advice and support and also carrying out home visits to help resolve any issues raised by customers.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

4 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The committee received an update on anti-social behaviour (ASB) activity between July and September 2009 and an outline of current developments and progress in line with the ASB Strategy.

The current caseload at the end of September 2009 is 674 cases. This is a decrease compared to the same period last year where the caseload was 706.

During July to September 2009, 511 new cases were opened. This is an increase on the 373 cases opened during the same period last year.

There were 490 cases closed during the period. Of these, 474 (97%) were resolved without the need for legal action. This can be compared with the same period last year where 530 cases were closed. Of these 518 (98%) were resolved without the need for legal action.

During the period, 148 legal and formal actions were taken. This is a decrease compared to the same period last year where 226 actions were taken.

The committee also received an update on the following current developments and progress in line with the ASB Strategy: -

- Customer Satisfaction
- Managing dissatisfaction
- Private Rented Team
- Warden Service Agreement and quarterly performance
- Barnardo's Parenting Officer
- Brief Intervention Alcohol Worker
- Mental Health Link Worker and measuring value for money from the post
- Mental Health and Housing Partnership Day
- Young Persons Officer Quarterly Report
- Victims and Witnesses
- Hate Crime and Racist Incidents
- Victim Support
- Mediation
- Winlaton Multi Agency Group
- We Ask you say
- Family Intervention Project
- Family Intervention Tenancies.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

5 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY 2008-10 UPDATE

The committee received an update on the company's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2008-10 and accompanying action plan. Details of the key achievements during 2008/9 and a summary of areas of work planned for 2009/10, directly linked to the six Respect Standard themes, were reported.

RESOLVED – That the progress made to date be noted.

6 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT GROUPS – OUTCOMES

The outcomes achieved by the Service Improvement Groups (SIGs) representing the various services across the company from April to September 2009 were reported.

A SIG steering group meets bi-monthly to oversee and direct the work of the SIGs. This is chaired by a tenant giving them a key role in the strategic direction of the groups. This group also gives SIG leads the opportunity to feed back progress and outcomes from the groups, address any common issues that arise, share best practice and discuss any potential new areas of work for the groups.

Since the last update, the Tenancy Management and Estate Management SIGS have merged to provide more focus and direction to the group.

A set of ground rules have been introduced for the SIGs and all other involvement activities to follow. These were developed with customers following an incident with a particular member at a SIG resulting in customers feeling uncomfortable. These are now referred to in each meeting to ensure both customers and officers are happy with them.

A number of outcomes have been achieved from the SIGs, some examples of which were reported.

The following three priorities were agreed for all SIGs to deliver in 2009/10: -

- Annual Service Planning
- Scrutinising Performance Data
- Checking Service Standards.

RESOLVED – That the progress made to date and outcomes achieved by the Service Improvement Groups be noted.

(Note: Robert Buckley declared a non-pecuniary interest in this issue due to being the Chair of the Service Improvement Steering Group)

7 CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY – 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2009

During the period 1 July to 30 September 2009, over 130 involvement activities took place. Customers have been involved in involvement activities on over 7,600 occasions although some may have been involved in more than one activity.

Customers were given an opportunity to get involved through a variety of methods. Activities took place at a variety of locations across Gateshead on various days of the week, at different times of the day and evenings. The Involvement Team, Service Improvement Group leads and other officers continue to target under represented groups to make involvement representative of the wider community.

There have been a number of key outcomes from customer involvement during this period, details of which were reported.

Customers were also involved in planning 'Opportunity Knocks', a week of involvement activities held during the week commencing 19 October 2009. The aim of this week was to get out to people in their local communities and raise awareness of the vast range of involvement opportunities already out there for people.

A set of 'Big Questions' were agreed to be asked as part of the week. These were issued at all events as well as being included in the newspaper sent to customers the week before the event. Findings from these questions are currently being compiled.

A full report will be submitted to the next meeting of this committee outlining outcomes from the week, any follow up actions, findings from the 'Big Questions' and learning points for future events.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

8 HOUSEMARK – RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT EXERCISE 2008/09

In March 2008, a Resident Involvement Benchmarking Service was introduced by Housemark in partnership with TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service). The company took part in the Housemark exercise for 2008/9 allowing it to compare services like for like and make value for money judgments about the service it provides on both a regional and national level.

90 organisations took part in the benchmarking exercise although not all organisations submitted information for each indicator. A range of ALMOs, Housing Associations and Local Authorities took part in the exercise although the majority were housing associations (52 of the 90) and approximately one third of the organisations took part from across the country although more than a third were from the North.

Housemark has produced a report outlining the key findings from this national exercise, details of which have been posted on the Board Members Website.

The quartile performance of the company compared to the Resident Involvement Group for all indicators was submitted. Some of the key findings were highlighted.

The report highlights that expenditure on resident involvement is significantly lower than other organisations nationally, however part of this is due to external funding being brought into the service via the Moving Forward programme.

RESOLVED – (i) That the findings of the benchmarking exercise be noted.

(ii) That the company participate in the exercise for 2009/10.

9 MOVING FORWARD CUSTOMER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2009/10 – UPDATE

The committee received an update on the Moving Forward Customer Training Programme 2009/10 since its launch in April 2009.

A total of 12 courses have run since the launch of the 2009/10 programme, which is the same number that took place at this point in the year for the 2008/09 programme.

For the period 1 April to 30 September 2009, 100 customers have attended courses and at the same period in 2008 there were 83 attendees.

In August 2008, funding was secured from Skills for Life where the company receive £3.80 per person per hour of learning. For the period 1 April to 30 September 2008 the company received £399 and for the same period in 2009 it will receive £775.

By introducing demand led courses to the 2009/10 programme, the company ensures that courses are run when there is guaranteed attendance, rather than spending time and money on a session where there is little or no take up by customers.

Both the 2008/09 and 2009/10 programmes cost £4,000 to design and print. However, by sending it to all tenants and leaseholders via the newspaper it has cost 19p per programme compared to £2 per programme last year.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and the committee receive a further update at the end of the programme.

10 DATE AND TIME OF MEETINGS 2010

To be agreed.



Report to the Customers & Communities Committee

20 January 2010

Title: Service Standards and Tenants Guide

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on the progress being made in developing our updated Service Standards and tenants guide.

Background

2. At its meeting on 12 May 2009, the Board noted the company's formal response to the inspection report and recommendations that had been sent to the Audit Commission on 8 April 2009.
3. There were five recommendations made.
4. Recommendation 4 stated

"Improve the provision of information to customers by setting challenging standards and responding quickly to customers who complain, acknowledging the complaint where an immediate response cannot be made and keeping customers up-to-date with progress; measuring customer satisfaction with services in all service areas using the information to improve services and providing feedback; measuring performance achieved against agreed service standards in all areas and providing regular reports to customers, the Board and managers. To be implemented by May 2009."

5. There were three main outcomes required from this recommendation:
 - Setting challenging standards for dealing with complaints
 - Measuring customer satisfaction in all services and providing feedback
 - Measuring performance against service standards in all areas and providing feedback to the board, managers and customers
5. Following this recommendation a new approach to Service Standards is being developed with our tenants who have been responsible for shaping and influencing the work carried out to date.

6. Rather than just develop a document that would satisfy the requirements of the inspectors, we are in partnership with our tenants developing a comprehensive guide to our services that our customers should expect.
7. This guide will not only incorporate service standards and how we will measure them but also place these service standards in context by describing the service we will provide.
8. Following early involvement of tenants via the Service Improvement Groups it is proposed that the guide to our services would cover the “customer journey” from applying for a tenancy, moving in, experiencing all the services we provide to tenants through to finally moving out.
9. In many instances measuring service standards will involve asking customers if they are satisfied. We will develop a programme of satisfaction exercises across the year to address this.
10. The work being undertaken is almost complete. The next step in the process is to take the proposed draft back out to the tenants
11. We are proposing to discuss the guide at the following Service Improvement Groups from mid January to mid February.

Service Improvement Group	Date
Tenancy & Estate Management	Tuesday 12 January
HomeChoice/Voids	Wednesday 13 January
Value for money	Wednesday 13 January
Involvement	Wednesday 20 January
Older Persons	Friday 22 January
Anti-social behaviour	Tuesday 26 January
Disabled Persons’ Housing Forum	Wednesday 27 January
Leaseholders	Monday 1 February
HomeRepairs	Thursday 4 February
BME Housing Forum	Monday 15 February
Customer Service	Wednesday 17 February
Decent Homes	Friday 19 February

12. In addition to this tenant views will be sought - via our website, in this way tenants will have the opportunity to make comments, provide feedback and influence the development of the Tenants Guide and service standards.
13. Once this is complete due to the significance of this guide, we are proposing to hold a one off single topic Customer & Communities Committee to enable the committee to scrutinise the proposed guide prior to Board approval at the March meeting. The meeting would be held at a convenient time to all Committee members in late February / early March.

Impact on tenants

14. The proposed guide will set out clearly to all our existing and prospective tenants the standards of service they can expect from us. All standards will be measurable and performance will be reported on a regular basis to all tenants.

15. Tenants have an opportunity to help design and influence how our services are delivered and will be involved in monitoring the standards once they are in place.

Customer Involvement

16. Customers have been involved in the development of the guide and service standards. The proposed document will be discussed further at a number of Service Improvement Groups over the next four weeks.

Link to values

17. The activity outlined in this report relates to the following company values:
- Being customer focussed, innovative and professional
 - Being positive and responsive
 - Being motivated, trained and committed across the company
 - Being a listening and learning organisation

Risk Management Implications

18. The proposed guide will ensure we continue to be responsive to customers needs, provide high quality and cost-effective services that are flexible and convenient, and deliver them in fair and accessible ways.

Financial Implications

19. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the cost of publishing the new standards can be met from existing budgets.

Equality and Diversity Implications

20. This guide will aim to improve customer service and ensure extended, inclusive access to services, advice and information for all customers of TGHC.

Value for Money implications

21. Development of the guide will provide value for money benefits.

Involvement carried out

22. Involvement carried out is highlighted throughout this report.

Recommendations

23. The views of the committee are sought on
- Whether the committee is satisfied with the progress made to date and proposed future actions.
 - Whether to hold a one off single topic meeting in late February / early March.



Report to Customers and Communities Committee

January 2010

Title: Anti-Social Behaviour Performance Update – October to December 2009

Report of: Director of Housing Management

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a service update on performance between October and December 2009. The report also outlines current developments and proposed changes to how we will report in future to the Customer and Communities Committee.

Background

2. The report provides details on the number and types of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and actions taken during this period. This includes cases of ASB reported by customers. The report also details satisfaction data including dissatisfied customers, their reasons for dissatisfaction and what we have done to help change their concerns about the service we have provided to them.
3. We propose to change how we will report performance to the committee for 2010/11 as follows: -

Quarter One	Performance data and ASB statistics
Quarter Two	Six month report on activity against ASB Strategy and Partnership updates
Quarter Three	Performance data and ASB statistics
Quarter Four	Annual Report on activity against ASB Strategy and Partnership updates

Performance

4. The current caseload at the end of December 2009 is 657 cases. This is a 19% increase compared to the same period last year where the caseload was 533.
5. During October to December 2009, 456 new cases were opened. This is a 31% increase on the number of cases that were opened during the same period last year which was 323 cases.

6. There were 548 cases closed during October to December 2009. Of these, 529 (97%) were resolved without the need for legal action. This can be compared with the same period last year where 489 cases were closed. Of these, 461 (94%) were resolved without the need for legal action.
7. During October to December 2009, 147 legal and formal actions were taken. This is a decrease compared to the same period last year where 173 actions were taken.(Appendix 1 provides a summary of activity during Quarter 3)

Customer Satisfaction

8. Satisfaction surveys are carried out with customers while the case is open as we are aware that we are unable to influence dissatisfaction after a case has been closed

Closed case surveys

9. The table below shows the number of customers surveyed once the case was closed that were satisfied and dissatisfied with how their case was handled. 79% of customers surveyed were satisfied with the way their case was handled, this is an increase from last year where 63% of customers were satisfied.

Number of households surveyed	Very / fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied With the service provided.	Dissatisfied
72	57 (79%)	0 (0%)	15 (21%)

Open case surveys

10. The table below shows the number of customers surveyed while the case was open that were satisfied and dissatisfied with how their case was being handled.

Number of households surveyed	Very / fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied With the service provided.	Dissatisfied
42	29 (69%)	2 (5%)	11 (26%)

Managing dissatisfaction

11. As part of our commitment to continue to improve our satisfaction data where dissatisfaction is expressed, we make contact with the tenants. In October 2009, we began contacting customers whilst there case was still open to carry out a survey on satisfaction. Any issues identified are then actioned by the investigating officer. This has helped us gain a better understanding of ongoing case management and ensured that we resolve any issues at the earliest opportunity. This approach is designed to improve case management and improve overall satisfaction with ASB services.

12. Of the 72 closed cases surveyed this quarter, 15 customers expressed dissatisfaction, seven of which are detailed below in our survey feedback the remaining cases are still being contacted by independent officers to establish the reasons. Please see below for a more detailed insight into dissatisfaction:-

Closed cases (all cases investigated by independent officers)

Reason for dissatisfaction	Number of cases	Action Taken
Case management taking too long	2	The cases have been reviewed and the tenants have been updated on the process required to resolve cases through the legal system
Meeting of the service standards	1	The case has been reviewed and the Estate Officer has been provided with guidance on improved communication
Personal contact by home visit required	1	The case has been reviewed and the Estate Officer has been provided with guidance on improved communication
Improved feedback	3	The cases have been reviewed and the Estate Officers have been provided with guidance on improved communication regarding feedback to customers

Open cases (all cases investigated by independent officer)

- Of the 42 open cases surveyed in this quarter 11 customers have expressed dissatisfaction for the following reasons:

Reason for dissatisfaction	Number of cases	Action
Customers felt that they are not receiving regular updates	4	Issues discussed with Estate Officer and improved action plans have been implemented
Customers felt that it was taking too long to resolve their case	3	Relevant Housing Manager has contacted each tenant to provide updates
Two customer said they had not been visited by an officer	2	Relevant Housing Manager investigated. Customers updated and attempts made to visit tenants.

- There are a further two open cases where tenants have expressed some form of dissatisfaction and an update on these will be provided in the next performance report.

Online Reporting

13. 12 ASB reports have been received during this period via TGHC's website. These reports relate to the following: -

4	neighbour dispute
2	Drug misuse
3	youth disorder
1	Vandalism
2	threats to neighbours

14. The availability of online ASB reporting will continue to be advertised within the Housing Company newspaper and it is anticipated that the publicity will encourage more customers to report ASB through this facility.

Hate Crime and Racist Incidents

15. During the period October to December 2009, 13 reports of hate crime incidents have been received by TGHC.

Year	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total
2005/06	2	5	3	3	13
2006/07	5	10	9	2	26
2007/08	5	3	2	2	12
2008/09	1	8	17	6	32
2009/2010	8	11	13		32

16. There are currently 23 ongoing cases being investigated in partnership with other agencies relating to hate crime incidents.
17. The table below details closed racist incident cases and reason for closure.

2009/10	No of cases closed	Closure reasons
October to December 2009	7 – Racial 1 – Religion 2 – Disability 1 - Transphobic	1 – NRT Investigated –monitored & agreed closure with complainant 3 – Written Warning Issued 7 – resolved without the need for legal action

Link to values

18. This report relates to the following values of the company: -
- Being customer focused, innovative and professional.
 - Being motivated, trained and committed across the company.
 - Embracing equality.
 - Being a listening and learning organisation – staying in touch with what customers want.

Risk Management Implications

19. Tackling anti-social behaviour effectively has continued to be a key priority both nationally and locally for tenants in Gateshead. The company's Commitment to addressing this issue is recognised through our service priorities, one of which is not only to deliver on the Respect Agenda but to surpass this national standard by continuing to provide excellent services for tenants, residents and leaseholders by taking innovative approaches to tackling Anti-Social Behaviour.

Financial Implications

20. The Director of Finance and ICT confirms there are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report. All actions and current progress has been planned via budget meetings held in February 2009 and monitored via the monthly budget monitoring process.

Impact on tenants and residents and consultation

21. Although we are proposing changes to the reporting process for the Customer and Communities Committee we will still be providing Bi – monthly updates to our service improvement group and news stories regarding our enforcement actions and prevention services on our website.

Value for Money implications

22. There are no additional value for money implications as a result of this report. However by tackling ASB we are helping to increase satisfaction and improve sustainability of tenancies and estates, therefore reducing voids and associated costs.

Equality and Diversity Implications

23. There are no additional equality and diversity issues on the basis of this report. We continue to monitor the profile of customers to ensure that all cases are treated equally and fairly.

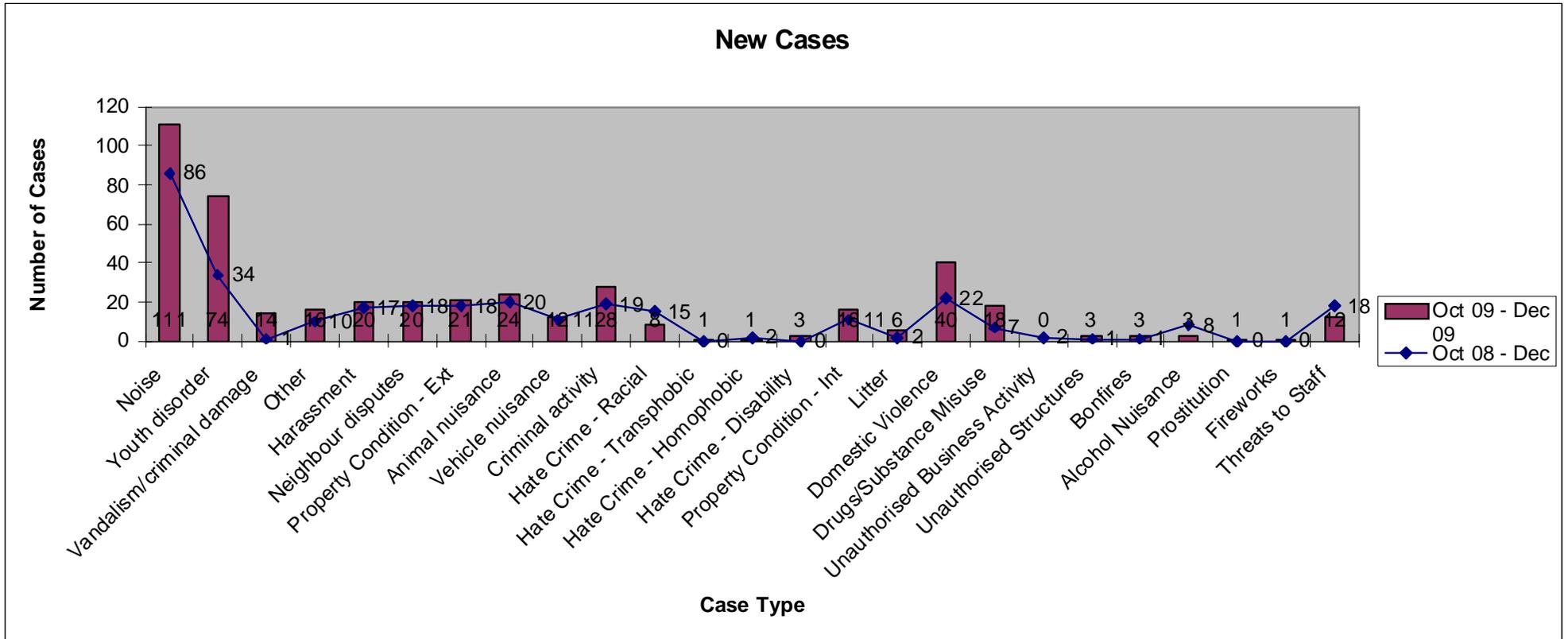
Recommendations

24. The views of the committee are sought on: -
 - Whether it is satisfied with the company's performance in tackling anti social behaviour during the period October to December.
 - The proposed changes to the way ASB performance will be reported to the committee in 2010/11.

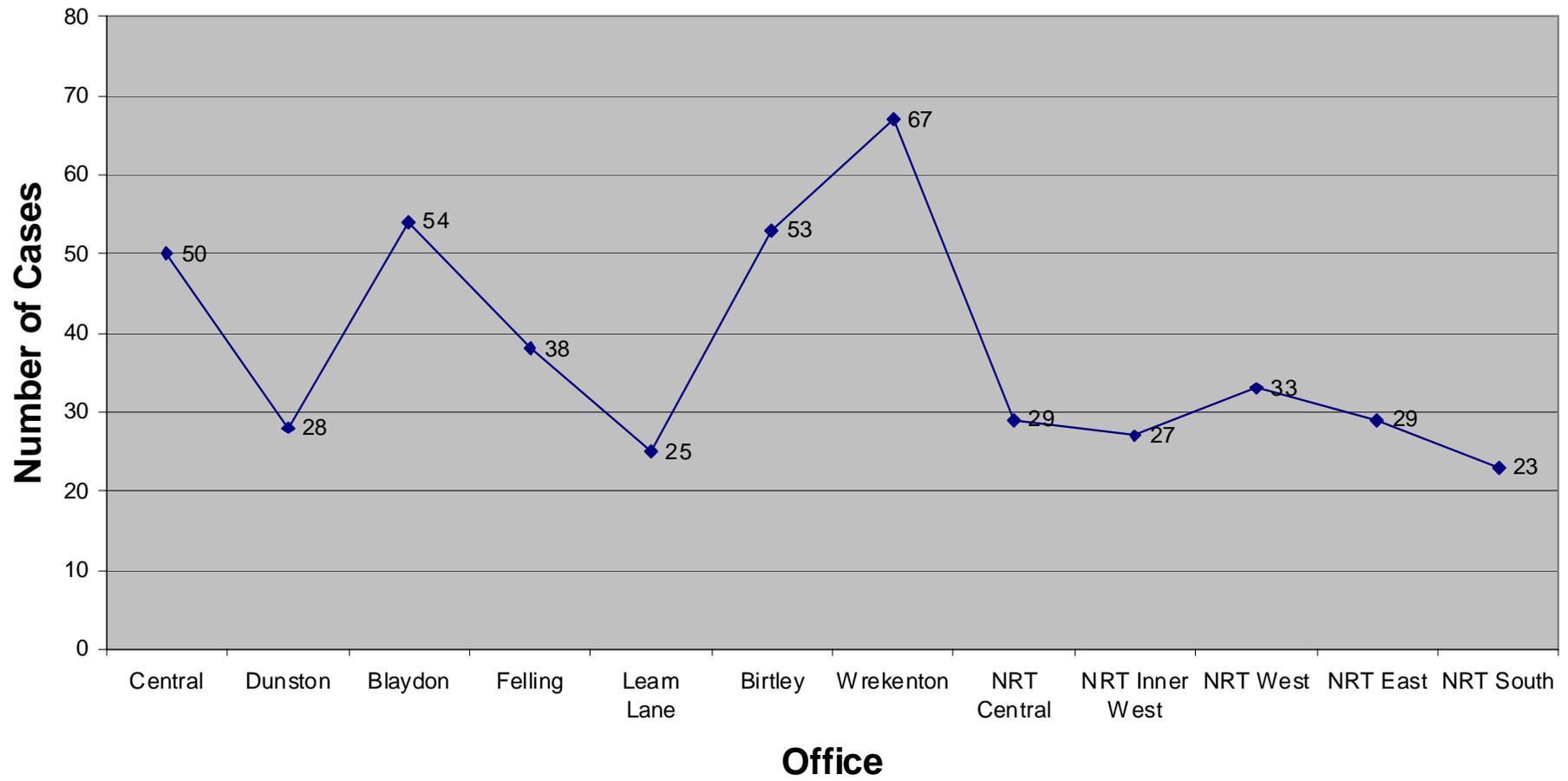
Contact: Darren Wilson, Neighbourhood Relations Manager Tel No: (0191) 433 5329

ASB Summary

There were 456 new cases opened across the borough during October 2009 to December 2009, this shows an increase in new cases compared to the same period last year when 323 new cases were recorded.



New Cases



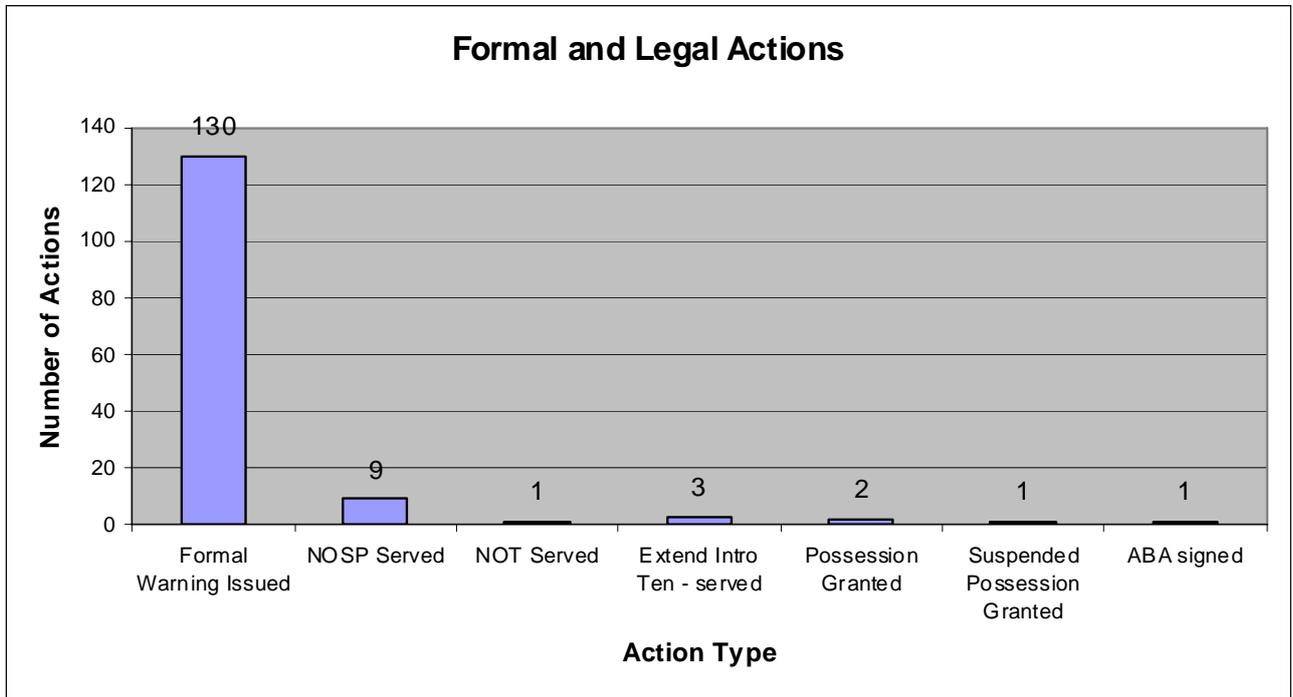
Current Caseload

At the end of December 2009, 657 cases being investigated in the borough. This is broken down as follows:

ASB Category	Number of Cases					Total
	West	Inner West	Central	South	East	
Noise - General	10	22	36	30	18	116
Youth disorder	16	13	5	30	20	84
Noise – Loud Music	5	14	8	17	3	47
Property Condition – Rubbish/Furniture	3	3	7	0	4	17
Animal nuisance	2	5	2	12	3	24
Property Condition – Overgrown Garden	3	6	3	2	15	29
Neighbour disputes	10	6	3	6	2	27
Drugs/Substance misuse/Drug dealing	2	11	6	17	2	38
Harassment	8	5	5	10	4	32
Property Condition - Internal	9	2	15	14	3	43
Domestic Violence	8	14	8	9	14	53
Threats to Staff	1	3	3	0	3	10
Criminal activity - General	8	4	8	7	0	27
Noise - Doors	2	0	0	1	1	4
Other	0	2	3	7	5	17
Alcohol Nuisance	2	1	1	4	2	10
Vandalism/criminal damage	3	0	1	5	6	15
Criminal activity - Assault	1	4	2	3	0	10
Hate Crime - Religion	0	0	1	1	0	2
Hate Crime - Racial	2	2	1	4	2	11
Parking disputes	2	1	2	1	0	6
Criminal activity – Burglary	2	1	3	3	1	10
Property Condition – Hard stand, vehicle crossing	0	1	0	1	0	2
Property Condition – Overgrown Trees/ Shrubbery	2	0	0	1	0	3
Litter	0	1	1	0	0	2
Illegal Occupation	0	0	1	0	0	1
Vehicle nuisance	3	1	0	0	0	4
Bonfires	0	0	0	1	0	1
Prostitution	0	0	0	1	0	1
Hate Crime - Homophobic	0	2	1	1	0	4
Hate Crime - Disabilities	1	2	1	1	1	6
Business activity	0	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	105	126	127	189	110	657

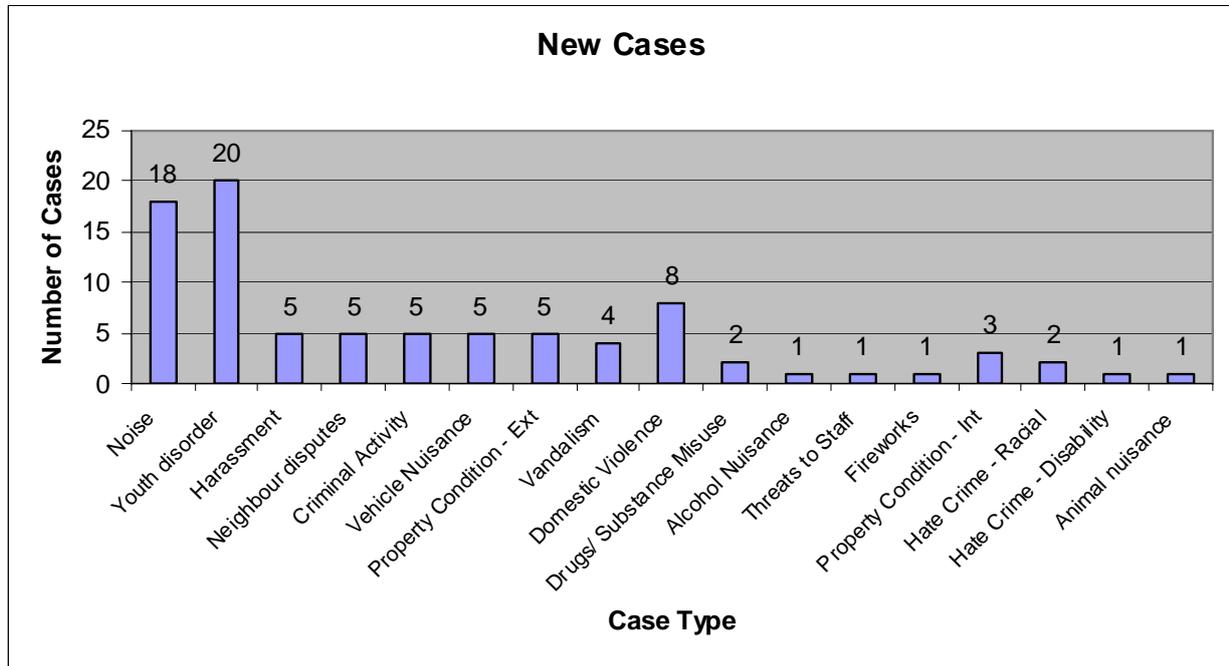
Formal & Legal Actions

There were 147 formal or legal actions taken during October – December 2009. These can be broken down as follows:



West

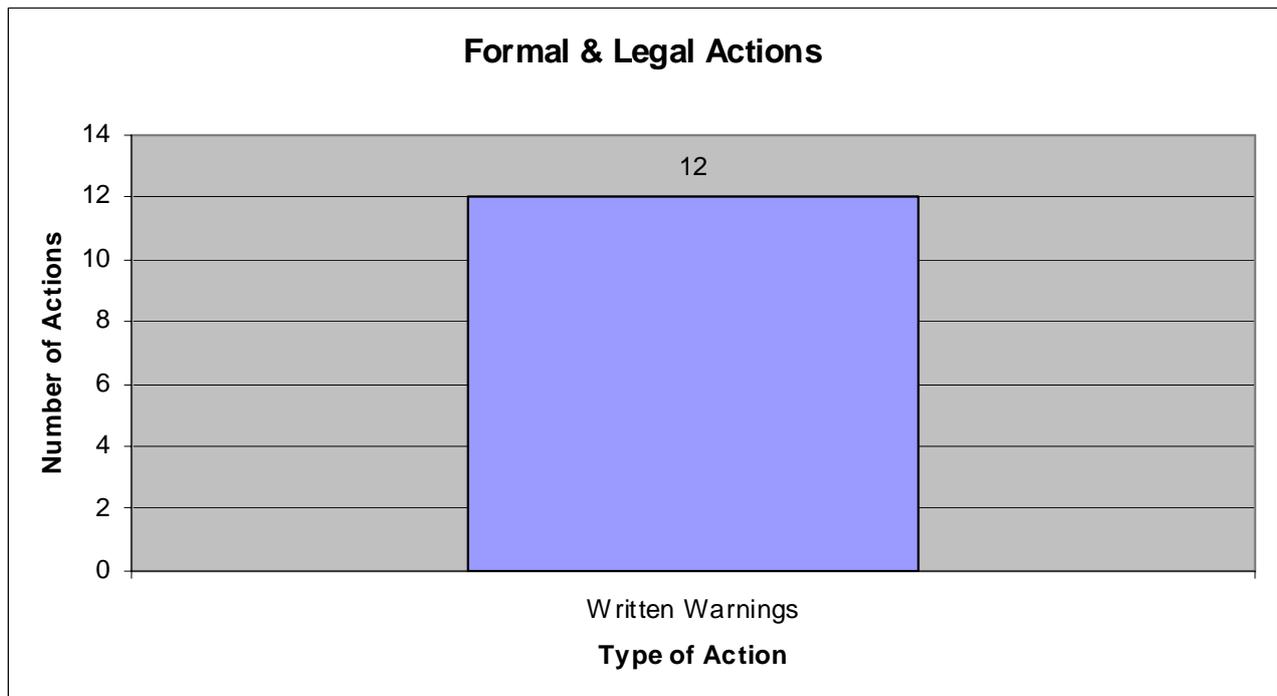
There were 87 new cases opened in the West Management Area during October 2009 – December 2009. They are broken down as follows: -



This can be compared with the same period last year, during which 42 new cases were opened.

Formal & Legal Actions

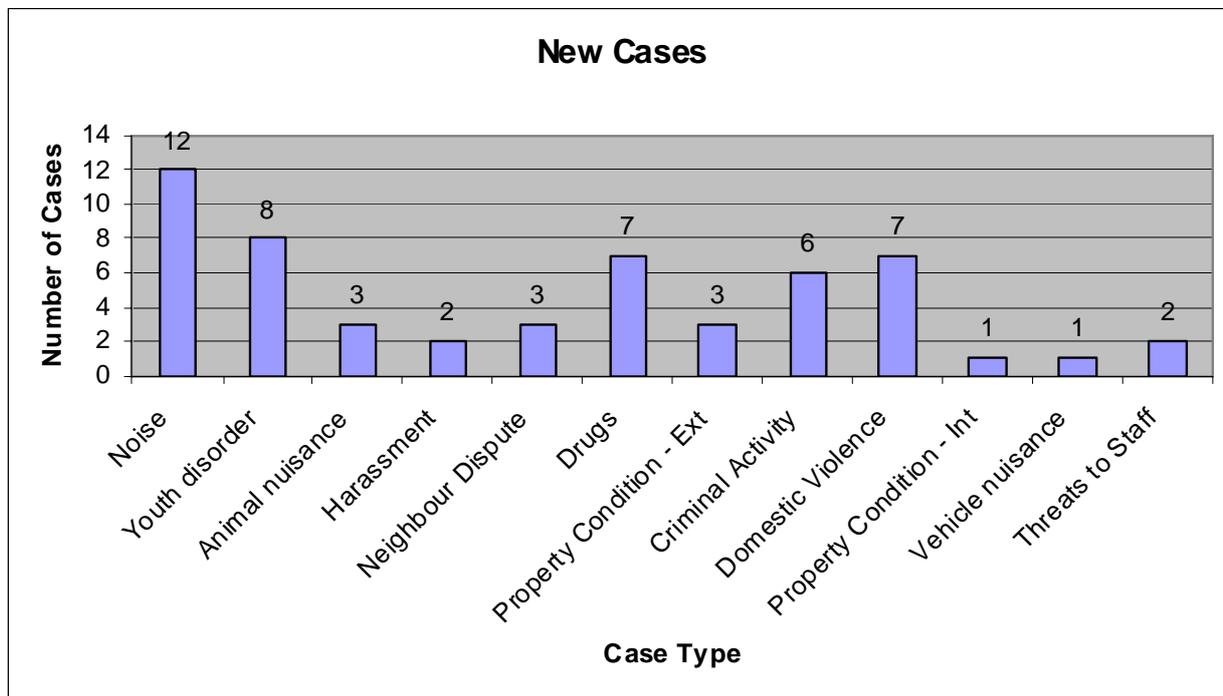
There were 12 formal or legal actions taken overall by NRT and the Local offices during this period.



During the same period last year 17 formal or legal actions were taken by the Local Housing offices and NRT.

Inner West

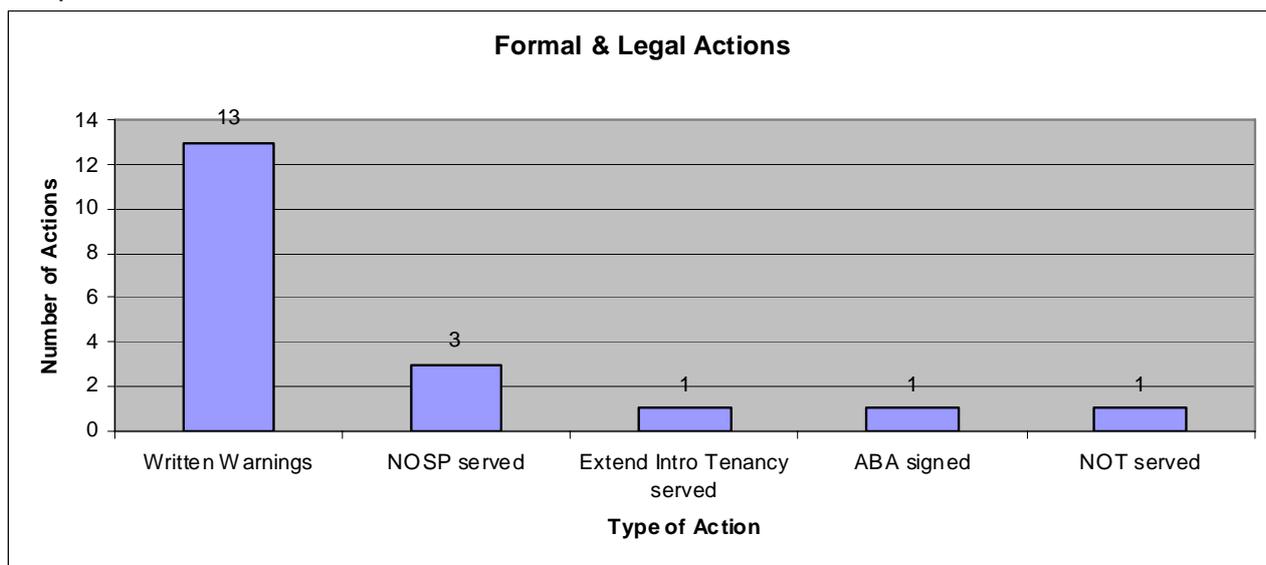
There were 58 new cases opened in the Inner West Management Area during October 2009 – December 2009.



This can be compared with the same period last year, during which 53 new cases were opened.

Formal & Legal Actions

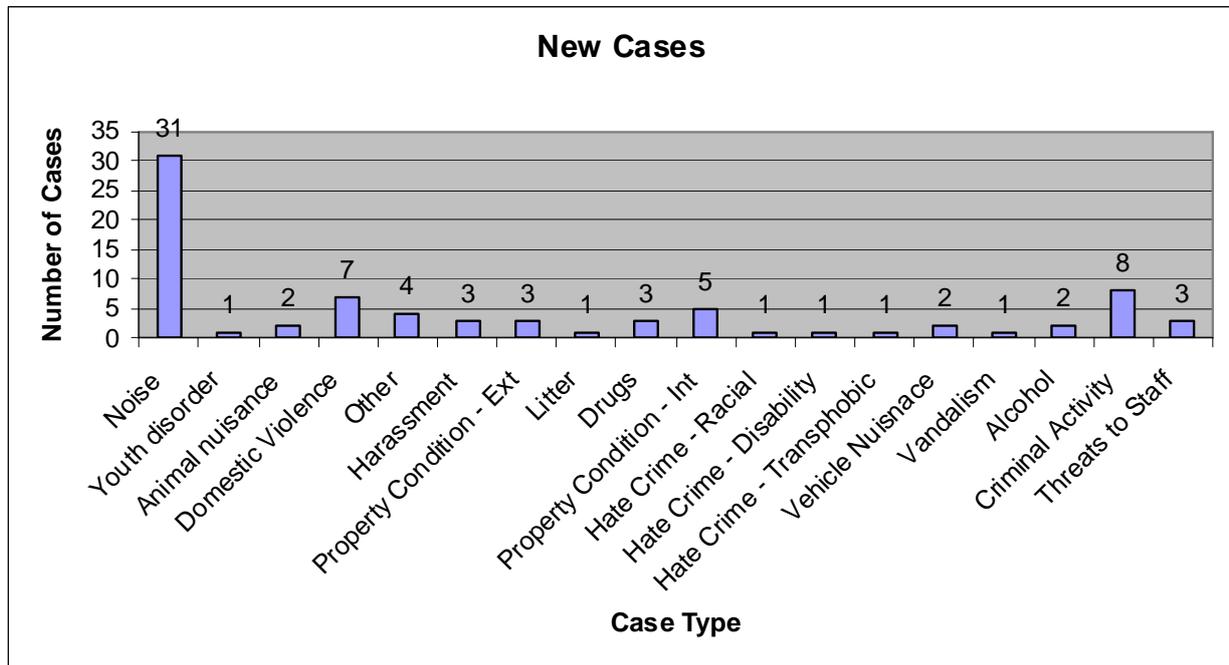
There were 19 formal or legal actions taken overall by NRT and the Local offices during this period.



During the same period last year 19 formal or legal actions were taken by the Local Housing Offices and NRT.

Central

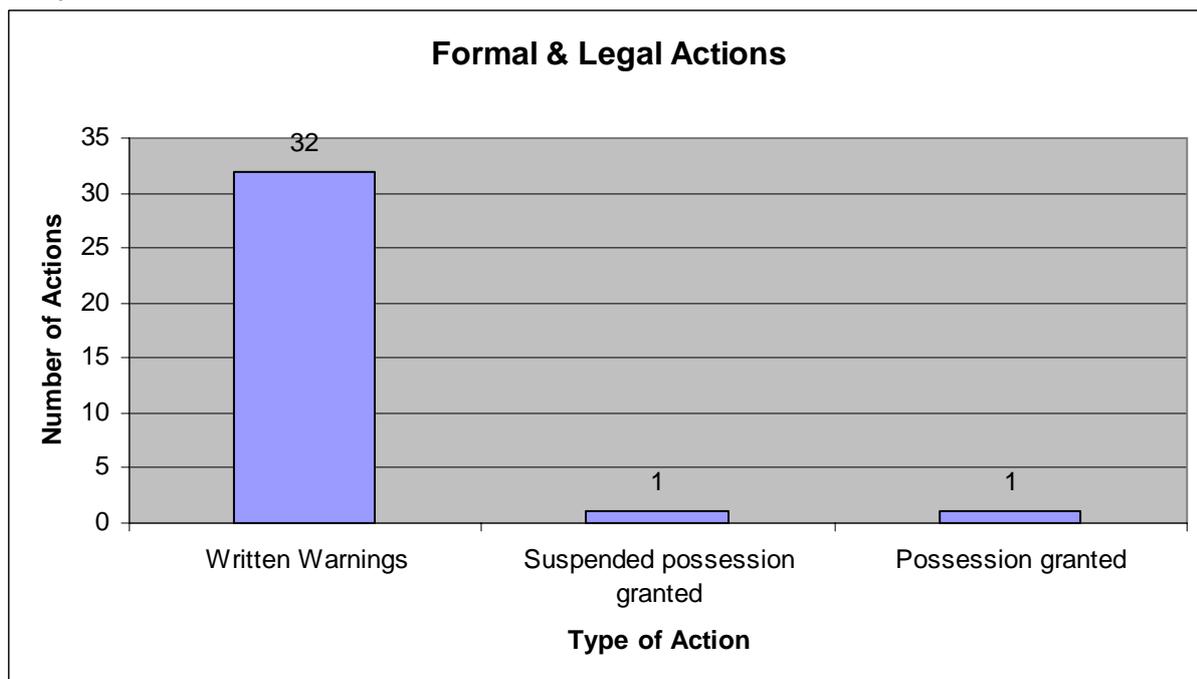
There were 79 new cases opened in the Central Management Area during October 2009 – December 2009. They are broken down as follows: -



This can be compared with the same period last year, during which 59 new cases were opened.

Formal & Legal Actions

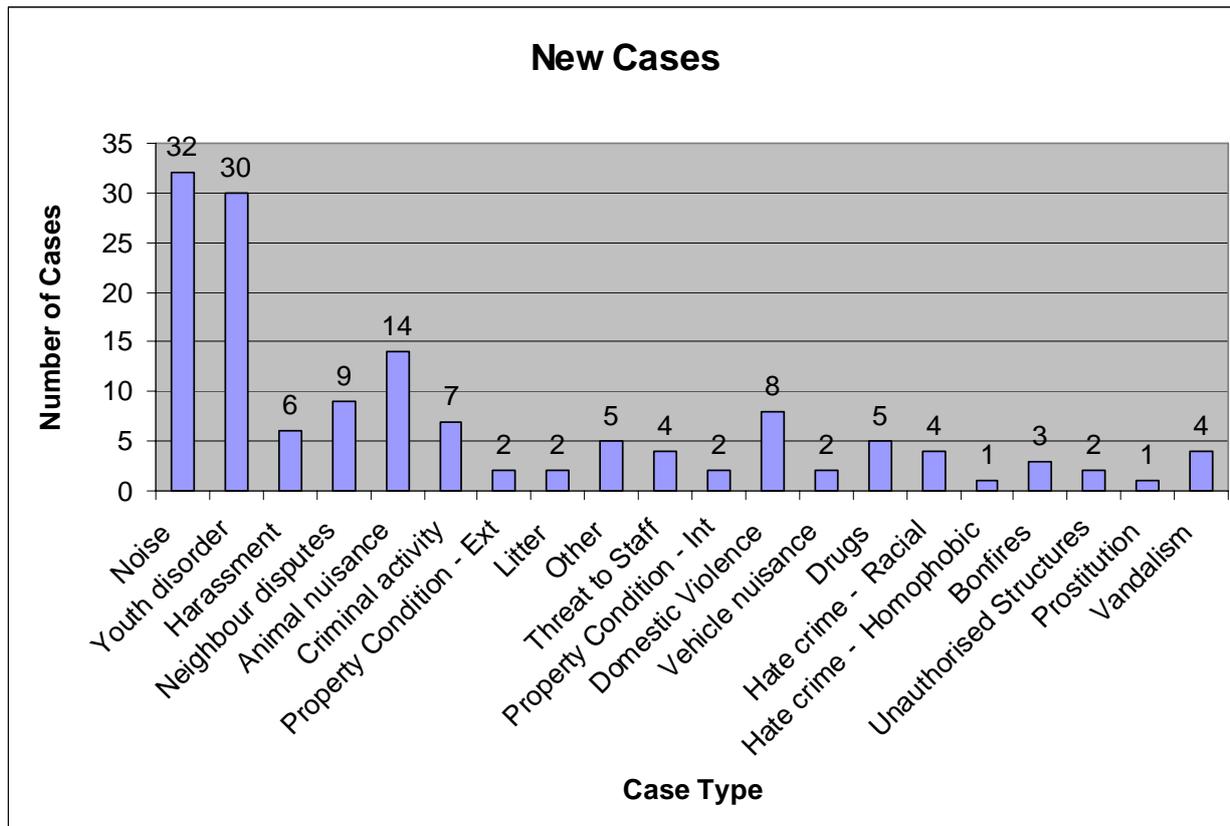
There were 34 formal or legal actions taken overall by NRT and the Local offices during this period



During the same period last year 38 legal actions were taken by the Local Housing Offices and NRT.

South

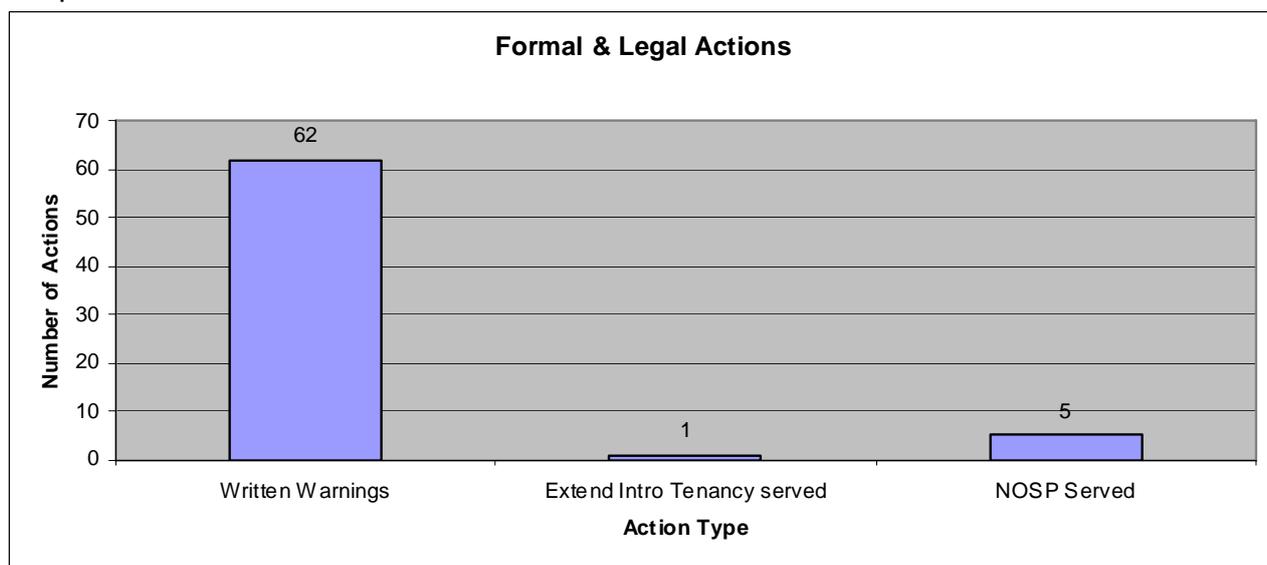
There were 143 new cases opened in the South Management Area during October 2009 – December 2009. They are broken down as follows: -



This can be compared with the same period last year, during which 83 new cases were opened.

Formal & Legal Actions

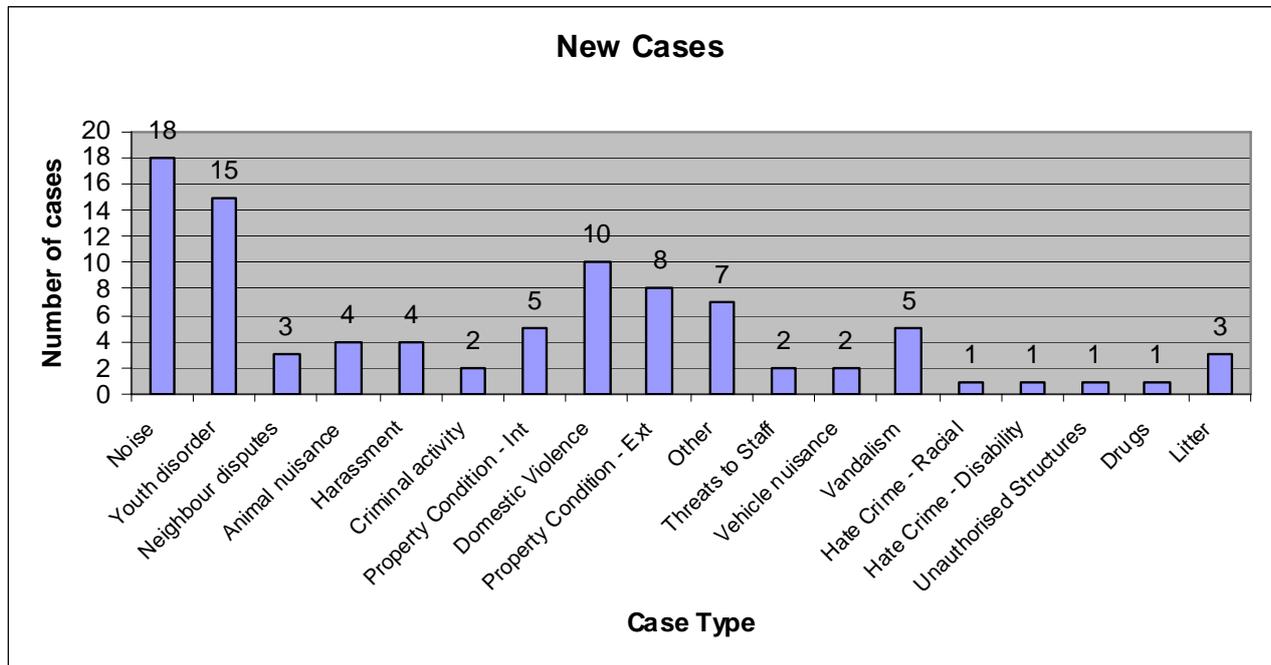
There were 68 formal or legal actions taken overall by NRT and the Local offices during this period.



During the same period last year 61 formal or legal actions were taken by the Local Housing Offices and NRT.

East

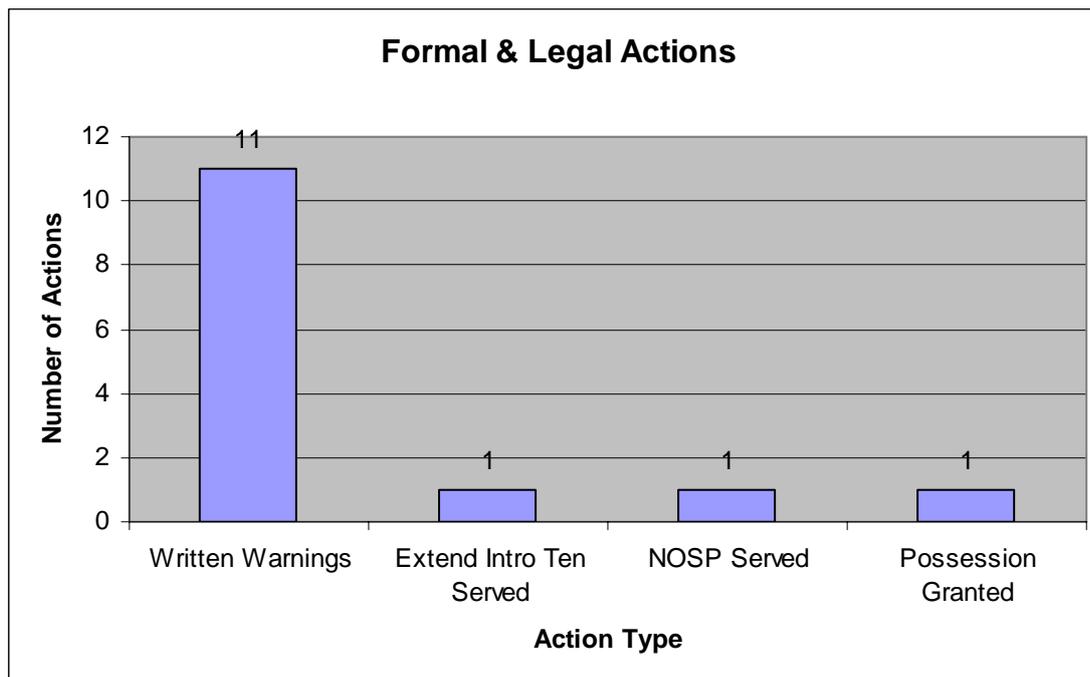
There were 92 new cases opened in the East Management Area during October 2009 – December 2009. They are broken down as follows: -



This can be compared with the same period last year, during which 86 new cases were opened.

Formal & Legal Actions

There were 14 formal or legal actions taken overall by NRT and the Local offices during this period.



During the same period last year 38 formal or legal actions were taken by the Local Housing Offices and NRT.

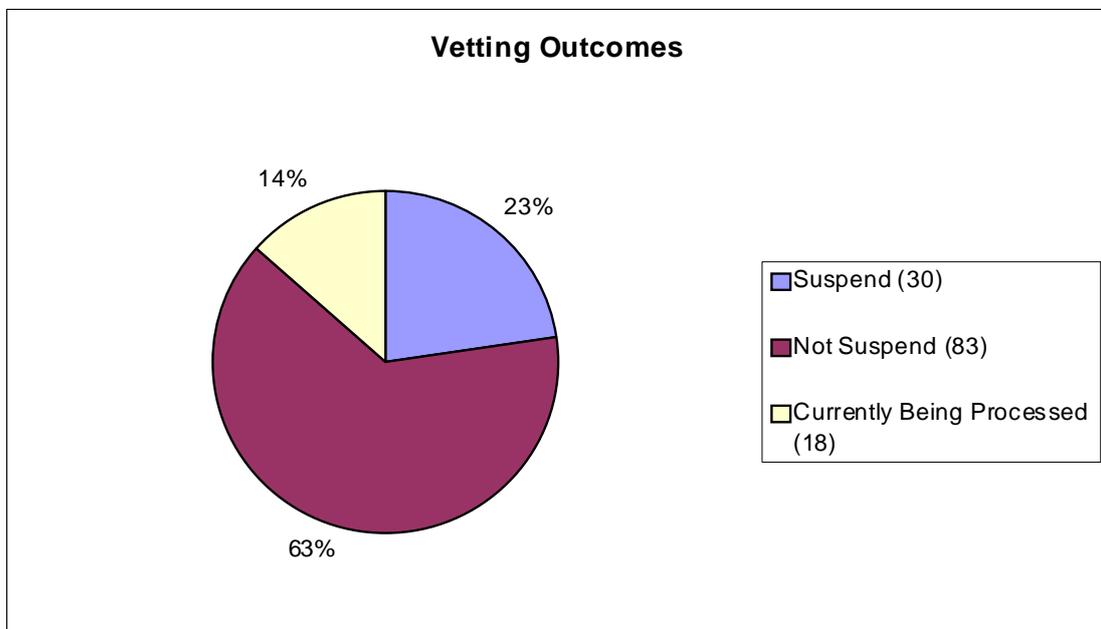
Appendix 7

Vettings and Suspensions

During October 09 – December 2009 there have been 131 police checks carried out. These were requested by the following sources.

Source	Number requested
Homechoice	98
Homeless	25
Supported Tenancies	8
Total	131

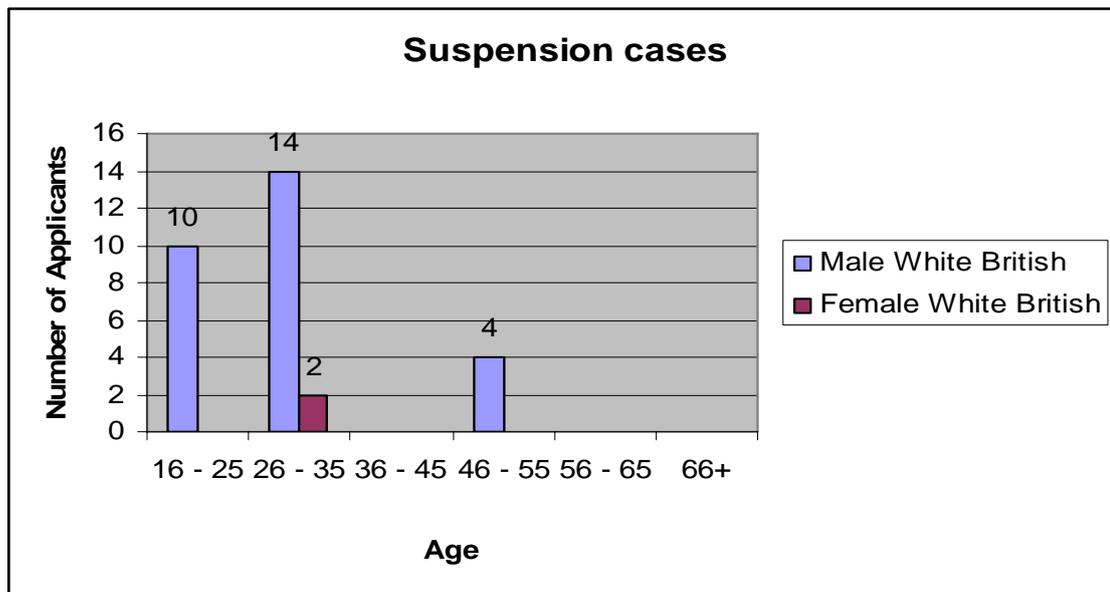
Of the 131 vettings received between October 2009 – December 2009 103 were in relation to male applicants and 28 were female applicants. The outcomes were as follows:



Of the 30 applicants put forward for possible suspension 28 (93%) were male and 2 (7%) were female.

Of the 83 applicants who were insufficient to suspend 62 (75%) were male and 21 (25%) were female

The possible suspension cases can be further broken down by age, gender and ethnicity:





Report to Customers and Communities Committee

20 January 2010

Title: Tenancy and Estate Management Strategy 2009/10 - Update

Report of: Director of Housing Management

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on progress against the tenancy and estate management strategy and action plan.

Background

2. The Diversity and Access Committee received a report on 29 July 2009 which outlined the development of the strategy and action plan. The strategy was developed to ensure we continue to deliver excellent tenancy and estate management services, improving the quality of our estates, for the benefit of all customers.
3. The strategy sets out clear aims and objectives linked to customer priorities and feedback from the audit commission inspections. The strategy and action plan was developed with customer involvement including the Tenancy and Estate Management service improvement group.
4. This report provides Committee with a six monthly progress update on the action plan. There are 15 key objectives identified within the strategy action plan. Key actions and outcomes are highlighted below.

Progress against objectives

Objective 1 - Ensure high quality and consistent Tenancy and Estate Management services are provided to customers across the borough

5. We have:
 - Ensured we are visible and proactive on our estates, undertaking 453 of the 457 (99.1%) advertised Estate Tours, in this period. (297) 65% of these Estate Tours were attended by customers, which is below the target of 80% but has improved from 57% in 2008/09 to 65% in September 2009.
 - Provided feedback to customers on performance with Estate Tours, Anti-social behaviour, Neighbourhood Wardens Service and Pest Control service standards.

- Held a workshop with customers and partners as part of our aim to achieve the cleaner safer greener quality mark by March 2010. Appendix 1 details the progress we have made towards this accreditation to date.

Objective 2 - With customers review and update the Grounds Maintenance Service Agreement

6. We have:

- In partnership with Local Environmental Services (LES) attended the annual sheltered scheme meetings and Tenancy and Estate Management Service Improvement Groups to update customers about the service standards for grounds maintenance and provide feedback on performance.
- Reviewed the Grounds Maintenance service agreement for 2009/10 with the involvement of customers.
- Met quarterly with LES to manage performance against the grounds maintenance service agreement, including the management of budgets for tree work, fixed play and responsive grounds maintenance.
- Included feedback from the annual satisfaction survey as part the quarterly Grounds Maintenance performance meetings with LES and provided feedback to individual customers who expressed dissatisfaction.
- In partnership with LES we submitted an application to Keep Britain Tidy for the Best Supporting Authority Award for the clean up events, reaching the final three places. Phil Barton, Chief Executive from Keep Britain Tidy commented on the application:

'The Outstanding achievements of your organisation have not gone unnoticed. We have been so impressed with your efforts that you reached the final three out of thousands of entries. Although your organisation just missed out being the winner of this year's award, we want to heartily commend you on your exceptional efforts. Well done and keep up the good work'

- Involved customers in the monitoring of grounds maintenance standards through an inspection of estates, enabling customers to compare estates across neighbourhoods. This will help prepare tenants to become involved in the quarterly monitoring meetings with LES.

Objective 3 - With customers review the effectiveness and efficiencies of the Estate Tour programme

7. We have:

- Identified the costs and levels of involvement in estate tours. Whilst the cost of the additional promotional work associated with estate tours is high, this has not resulted in sustained increases in customer involvement. The number of tenants getting involved has remained at 57% over the last two years. This has risen to 65% by September 2009, but this is a general seasonal trend with higher involvement in the summer months.
- Consulted customers (who have attended estate tours) on the frequency of estate tours which indicated that the majority of customers were supportive of a review of the estate tour programme.
- Updated our website so that customers can now report estate issues on line – 16 reports have been received through the website.

- Held a range of customer and staff involvement workshops to develop our approach to enhancing estate tours (see Appendix 2) by March 2010.

Objective 4 - Develop benchmarking activity and external learning for estate management services to ensure continuous improvement

8. We have:

- In partnership with LES submitted benchmarking data as part of the Housemark benchmarking club.
- Attended practitioner estate services club meeting to learn and share best practice. This has helped inform our approach to estate tours, accreditation and peer review.
- Used benchmarking data to evaluate the cost and quality of grounds maintenance and estate services, including caretaking and cleaning services. Whilst the costs of grounds maintenance and estate services is high compared to organisations in our peer group, performance on customer satisfaction is in the top quartile.

Objective 5 - Implement phase 2 of the Customer Contact Visit programme

9. We have:

- Used customer profile information to develop a two year programme to visit over 2000 tenants, who are over 70 years old living in houses and maisonettes and over 75 years old in flats.
- Completed 385 visits by September 2009, which resulted in 132 referrals being made to various agencies and services, including: the garden service; requests for repairs; installation of handrails; requests for adaptations; referrals for personal support. The referral outcomes are supporting tenancy sustainability and helping older residents to live independently in their homes.
- Delivered staff training on updated customer contact procedures.
- Implemented quality assessment monitoring on customers contact visits as part of the performance management framework.

Objective 6 - Using a range of partnership approaches and associated budgets develop estate sustainability schemes

10. We have:

- Worked in partnership with the council and customers to complete 12 Neighbourhood Pride projects so far this year across the borough. Some examples of schemes delivered include: clean up days held across various neighbourhoods, improvements to flower beds, shrubs and fencing, redesigning bin stores and improvements to a seating area.
- Developed and completed seven Design out Crime schemes across the borough to support estate sustainability and ensuring people feel safe in their home and on their estate. A further 10 schemes are currently in development and scheduled to be complete by the year end. Some examples of schemes completed so far include: erecting fencing to help reduce youths congregating and reducing fear of crime, providing locks to

letter boxes, and removing a low level wall to prevent and deter youths from congregating inappropriately.

- We have worked with the community and partners in six community clean up days, removing over 70 tonnes of rubbish from estates.

Objective 7 – Deliver on the Audit Commission Inspection recommendation – ensure customers and neighbours keep their gardens tidy and clear of bulky waste and rubbish

11. We have:

- Undertook external learning and identified best practice on managing gardens and bulky waste.
- Reviewed and updated our procedures for managing gardens and bulky waste with the tenancy and estate management service improvement group.
- Worked with LES to improve reporting and information to residents on collections for bulky waste.
- Updated our website information on bulky waste collections to ensure it is clear and accessible for customers.
- Developed a monitoring system for capturing overgrown garden and bulky waste in gardens, enabling us to establish baseline data during 09/10 and capture trends. This will enable us to assess if the new procedures are making a positive difference. As at the end of quarter 2 we have successfully resolved 435 garden cases; the average time taken for us to resolve these cases is 6.3 weeks. We currently have 436 open garden cases across the borough.

Objective 8 - Undertake a review of Local Lettings plans in consultation with customers

12. We have:

- Reviewed the effectiveness of local lettings plans for West Acres, Emmaville, Regent Court and Redheugh and Eslington Courts. The outcomes of these Local lettings plans have been reported to the Board, who recommended continuation.

Objective 9 - Review the Tenancy and Estate Management procedures to ensure they are effective and up to date

13. We have:

- Implemented a programme, agreed with the Tenancy and Estate Management service improvement group, to ensure all procedures including frequently asked questions for customers are reviewed over the next two years.
- Established a working group to monitor the implementation of updated procedures to ensure they improve customer service.
- Implemented Safeguarding Children policy and procedures, supported by a comprehensive staff training programme (reported to Audit & Resources committee in December 2009).

Objective 10 – Improve the reporting on Tenancy and Estate Management performance

14. We have:

- Enhanced the reporting of performance of key areas of Tenancy & Estate Management Services to ensure continuous improvement, with the involvement of the SIG.
- Improved the performance management framework to ensure further quality checks are carried out on key areas of customer service.

Objective 11 – Involve customers in the development and monitoring of Tenancy and Estate Management services

15. We have:

- With customers agreed the merger of the Estate management and Tenancy management SIG's.
- We have developed and agreed with customers a work programme for 2009/10 for Tenancy & Estate Management services. Some of the key work undertaken has been:
 - Reviewing the Estate Tour performance and developing our approach to enhancing the estate tour programme.
 - Monitoring of grounds maintenance standards across the borough through the bus tour & estate tours.
 - Providing quarterly feedback to customers on services and local performance information through the quarterly tenants newspaper and the six-monthly 'Here and Now' newspaper.

Objective 12 – Work in partnership with neighbourhood management on the best value review of neighbourhood services and deliver on the action plan

16. We have:

- Worked in partnership with the Council and other agencies to develop neighbourhood action plans in the South and Inner West areas, to improve services to the community. These will be monitored by the Council's partnership meetings known as the Area Forums.

Objective 13 – Develop and implement estate action plans

17. We have:

- Agreed a programme of estate action plans for 2009/10.
- Evaluated the achievements and impact of the action plans, showing the key outcomes for 2008/09 and the half yearly performance for 2009/10 A summary evaluation report is attached at Appendix 3 and a presentation on the key outcomes will be given at the meeting.

Objective 14 – Improve coordination of services to multi-storey blocks

18. We have:

- Established a cross service multi-storey working group to ensure joined up services are delivered to customers in high rise blocks.

Objective 15 – Improve the provision and coordination of tenancy support for vulnerable customers

19. We have:

- Worked in partnership with the council's housing services to monitor supported tenancies to improve sustainability and are currently reviewing the service agreement.

Next steps

20. Progress against the action plan will be discussed at the next Tenancy and Estate Management SIG, where we will also seek their views on the key priorities in reviewing objectives for 2010/11. Committee will receive a further report in July 2010 to update them on year end (2009/10) progress.

Link to values

21. Tenancy and Estate Management Activity links to the Company's vision and the following values: -

- Being a listening and learning organisation
- Being honest, accountable and transparent
- Being customer focused, innovative and professional

Risk Management Implications

22. Customers have told us that having a clean and well maintained environment is important to them. Should the housing company fail to deliver effective tenancy and estate management services there would be a risk of increasing dissatisfaction from residents and a decline in the appearance of our estates.

23. The strategy enables us to focus on key areas that are identified under the future proposed standards under the Tenant Services Authority.

Financial Implications

24. The Director of Finance confirms that there are no additional costs arising as a result of this report. Activity associated with the accreditation, Neighbourhood Pride schemes and Designing out Crime schemes have been already been identified within relevant budgets for 09/10.

Equality and Diversity Implications

25. The following equalities and diversity implications have been considered in designing and delivering the tenancy and estate management strategy:

- Continually review and monitor our services to ensure that they do not discriminate against anyone, identify barriers to access, and assess where improvements can be made.

- Ensure that we include, consult and encourage participation from all residents on estates, where appropriate, in decisions that we make.

Value for Money Implications

26. The theme of VFM runs throughout the strategy in terms of developing and providing services that customers want and need. By improving service delivery, we will effectively manage tenancies and neighbourhoods, to ensure the long term sustainability of homes and communities.

Consultation carried out

27. The Tenancy and Estate Management and Older Persons Service Improvement Groups have been consulted on a range of issues at meetings held between April 2009 and November 2009. Customers have also been involved in inspecting estate tours and helping us to enhance the estate tour programme.

Recommendations

28. The views of the committee are sought on: -
 - Whether the committee is satisfied with the progress against the tenancy and estate management strategy action plan.
 - Whether the committee is satisfied with the impact on customers to date.
 - On the work being undertaken to develop Estate Grading.

Keep Britain Tidy - Cleaner Safer Greener Quality Mark

Keep Britain Tidy are the awarding body for the ***Cleaner Safer Greener (CSG) Quality Mark***.

This Quality Mark has been developed as an external assessment tool for use by housing providers and is designed to support the provision of cleaner, safer and greener communities.

The Quality Mark can be sought for at three levels,

- 1: Initiator
- 2: Performer
- 3: Exemplar

Exemplar is the highest level and involves participating organisations to demonstrate that the specific neighbourhoods going for the award, are a place where the Housing provider and its partners are achieving the residents' vision for a cleaner, safer and greener environment, which is respected by those who live, work and visit the neighbourhood.

For Exemplar level it must also be evidenced that a high performing partnership is in place which seeks to sustain and continually improve the quality of life within the neighbourhood through a demonstrable track record of innovation and best practice. This will require the partnership to carry out work and provide evidence around five key areas of:

- 1: Vision and Values
- 2: Strategic Planning
- 3: Partnership
- 4: Resident Involvement
- 5: Key performance areas

In addition to the five key areas, partnerships applying for the Exemplar level, must demonstrate activities and evidence of working to themes around, safer communities, grounds maintenance, environmental issues, good citizenship, resident involvement and significant multi-agency working and partnerships.

Position Statement and key steps for applying

There are five key steps to applying for the Quality Mark and updates against those steps that the partnership has completed are as follows;

Registration:

A partnership was established in March 2009 between Gateshead Council and The Gateshead Housing Company to apply to seek the accreditation in the Wrekenton Communities Matter area and for the Springwell, Seven Stars and Beacon Lough East estates.

Running a 'How To' Workshop:

ENCAMS have facilitated the 'How To' workshop with partner agencies and residents in the area and visited Springwell, Seven stars and Beacon Lough estates on the 1 July 2009. The workshop was attended by partners and provided practical advice and support in order to identify what level to apply for.

The partnership applied for the Exemplar level in the Wrekenton Communities Matter area which includes: Beacon Lough East, Seven Stars and Springwell estates. The Quality Mark work will support the existing Neighbourhood Agreements and the well established multi-agency partnership activity underway.

The Gateshead Housing Company have conducted external learning and visited Brent Housing Partnership, who has achieved the Exemplar level Quality Mark. The partnership has agreed that activity will be co-ordinated through The Wrekenton Community Partnership.

Completing and submitting the Workbook:

Work is well underway to provide the necessary evidence to complete the Exemplar workbook and criteria. Submission of the fully completed workbook will be the end of January 2010 in which an onsite inspection date will then be set.

Neighbourhood plan:

Part of the Cleaner Safer Greener accreditation work involves the development of a Neighbourhood plan. The plan will build upon the existing Neighbourhood Charter that is currently in place for Beacon Lough East, Seven Stars and Springwell estates. Local priorities have been identified through holding community focus groups, speaking to partners and analysing household surveys that were conducted on the estates.

A multi-disciplinary meeting was facilitated on the 16 December, in which partners populated a SMART action plan with activities and services that will work towards addressing the priorities of the three estates.

The plan will then be agreed and taken to Wrekenton Community partnership for implementation and monitoring of the Neighbourhood plan.

Costs

The cost for the accreditation is £1,995, half of which is being met by the council.

Benefits to the South Neighbourhood area, The Gateshead Housing Company and Gateshead Council

The Quality Mark will benefit directly the Wrekenton Community Partnership and the Neighbourhood Agreement work underway in the Beacon Lough, Seven Stars and Springwell areas. It will also benefit the wider community and partnership by establishing a framework and a learning mechanism that can be applied elsewhere in the borough.

Some of the identified benefits from the Quality Mark are as follows;

- It demonstrates quality of service to stakeholders, partners and neighbourhoods
- It provides a structure in which the partners will achieve recognition for working towards improving the quality of neighbourhoods
- It builds credibility and opportunities for funding support
- It promotes innovation and good practice amongst peers

- It gives the partnership an opportunity to review current practices against recognised benchmark
- It helps the partnership identify and implement improvement actions
- It supports and strengthens tenant and resident engagement

Enhancing Estate Tours

Making sure that estates are clean and well maintained is a priority for customers.

Well maintained estates have been identified by tenants as a priority both locally in Gateshead and nationally within the TSA National conversation.

The move to new regulatory powers and processes from the Audit Commission to TSA (April 2010), places an even higher emphasis on Landlords to continually drive improvement and improve the way housing management services are delivered to customers particularly focussed on accountability and meaningful customer involvement.

It is also a value that the Company has and strives to deliver as part of our housing management function.

Our Tenancy and Estate Management Strategy endorsed by the Diversity and Access Committee in July 2009 highlights our actions and intended outcomes to ensure we continue to improve estate management working and at the same time work with customers to maximise involvement and accountability.

The development of Estate Grading supports work already underway around our commitment to achieve the Cleaner Safer Greener accreditation with Keep Britain Tidy, in the South neighbourhood during 2009/10.

The 2010 – 2011 estate tour programme will see the introduction of a grading element to each estate tour, which will allow customers to make comparisons, benchmark estate appearance and help identify areas for improvement. This is a structured way for us to work with and involve customers and find out what really matters to them.

Estate grading is a mechanism to measure and monitor standards of services delivered on our estates, focussed around the cleaner, safer, greener agenda. This is a joint approach between employees, partners and customers.

Furthermore following comprehensive consultation with customers, colleagues from Local Environmental Services (LES), local Members and internal stakeholders, the frequency for the 2010 programme for estate tours with grading on every estate; will happen quarterly as a minimum.

In addition to the quarterly Estate Tour we will also be doing the following:

- Monthly cleaning inspections of multi-storey block
- Drop in sessions at sheltered schemes with scheme/estate checks
- Quarterly performance meetings with LES
- Introducing customer involvement at the quarterly performance meetings with LES. We aim to start this in one neighbourhood in January 2010 and then have this take place with all 5 neighbourhoods from May 2010
- Providing flexibility to increase the frequency of an estate tour on estates should the need be identified using the Estate Matrix approach. That way a few estates may have estate tours more frequently than quarterly
- Development of an annual technical inspection of estates (in development for 10/11)

Significant achievements and developments that have been made so far include:

- Undertaking external learning /good practice sharing on estate tours and grading - visiting other organisations who operate Estate Grading in both London and the North East
- Facilitated a comprehensive customer involvement programme with tenants and leaseholders currently involved in estate tours and other customers throughout the Borough over a two week consultation programme, plus consultation with Service Improvement Groups, road shows, community clean up events and neighbourhood based customer focus groups. This was followed up with a second wave of consultation to every single active customer who are currently involved in estates tours through postal consultation and face to face when attending estate tours
- Involved staff and partners including LES through a working group
- Developed criteria to be measured on the estate tours following feedback from customer consultation
- We have undertaken initial testing of the grading descriptions with customers and in addition we invited North Tyneside Homes to undertake estate tours here in Gateshead to assess the estate tour service standards, processes and grading.
- Following customer consultation and it has been agreed to introduce three different grades of Gold, Silver and Bronze.

The full new enhanced estate programme will be implemented from April 2010, the next steps required to achieve this are:

- Piloting the enhanced tours with staff and customers during January and February 2010
- The enhanced estate tour procedure and process to be agreed and rolled out to employees through training and briefing during late February and March 2010
- Developing options for the ways the Company will feedback the outcomes of enhanced Estate tours to customers/stakeholders through newsletters and website, as well as improving the Estate Tour service standards with customer involvement.
- Develop a photo book to support the grading of estates, which will provide the descriptions and criteria for the estate elements
- Publicising the new programme for 2010/11

Benefits

The proposed benefits of adding estate grading to the current estate tour programme are as follows;

- measure and monitor outcomes consistently and enables us to create a benchmark
- be accountable to customers
- involve customers in performance management of their estate focussed on cleansing and grounds maintenance
- develop benchmarking that enables a planned response to improving estates
- effectively monitor the Service Agreements for cleansing and grounds maintenance
- enable good practice sharing between services and neighbourhoods
- further develops and strengthen partnership working
- ensure there are meaningful outcomes for all stakeholders in terms of driving improvements and better estates

- bring added value to Estate Tours through joint working across services and with partners around cleanliness and grounds maintenance
- enables us to inform customers how their estate is in terms of cleanliness and grounds maintenance standards and importantly what actions are being taken to make further improvements

Estate Action Plans Summary

Background - The Estate Matrix

The Estate Matrix approach was launched in 2007 and enabled us to look at a number of factors around each estate:

- Turnover of tenancies
- Tenancies less than 3 years
- Percentage of void stock
- Average weeks void
- Numbers of anti-social behaviour cases
- Average rent arrears per tenancy

The estate performance is measured against the borough average and then traffic lighted against these. However the matrix is intended to be used as a 'can opener' to indicate where there maybe issues around the sustainability in a particular area. The local knowledge of staff and customers compliments the estate matrix in identifying particular areas of concern or explaining reasons for performances that fall below the borough average.

Area Housing Managers lead work with other services, partners and customers to identify and understand key causes and then develop solutions to address and improve the sustainability on these estates. Where there are a range of issues to be addressed this can result in the development of an Estate Action Plan.

Since the introduction of the Estate Matrix, the number of estates (144 in total) that have two or more 'reds' in relation to performance, reduced from 26 estates in April 2008 to 21 estates by the end of March 2009.

The September 2009 Estate Matrix introduced two new factors for

- the average repair cost per property
- the average void cost per property

By September 2009, there were 32 estates with two or more reds, however this does not necessitate the need for an Estate Action Plan as there maybe other factors that explain why performance is well above average. Of the 32 estates

- nine have a current estate action plan in place (detailed below)
- five are undergoing option appraisals by the sheltered housing review
- four are part of redevelopment areas, such as Kibblesworth and Ravensworth Road
- the remaining 14 estates will be monitored through the Forward Planning meetings in each neighbourhood, to identify any targeted work needed to improve performance (these are detailed on the last page of this report)

Estate Action Planning

In 2008/09, 13 Estate Action Plans were developed

West:	Bleach Green
Inner West:	Clasper Village and Redheugh & Eslington
Central:	Chandless and Chandless multi storey blocks, St Cuthberts Court, Warwick Court, St James' Village, Sunderland Road
South:	Wrekenton multi storey blocks
East:	Old Fold, Nest Estate, High Lanes

Due to the significant improvements and the completion of the actions identified in 2008/9, the Estate Action Plans on the following estates were not continued for 2009/10 but performance will continue to be monitored. Outcomes on these plans are detailed later in this report.

- St James Village
- Sunderland Road
- Old Fold
- Nest estate
- High Lanes

In 2009/10 one new Estate Action Plan was developed for Wellington Street in the East neighbourhood

Improving Sustainability of Estates

Other actions taken to improve the sustainability of estates

- Support is given to new tenants through tailored sign-ups, new tenancy visits from rent and income teams, to Home Welcome visits – contributing to improved sustainability
- Proactive partnership approach to delivering effective ASB management (key customer priority)
- Working with tenants to identify sustainability works through local task groups to compliment decent homes work. Around £12m is being invested in sustainability works up to 2011/12.
- Promotional work through HomeChoice to advertise specific estates and properties, such as Older Persons sheltered accommodation. The introduction of multiple viewings has helped reduce refusal rates.
- Developed Local Lettings Plans on a number of estates with customer involvement
- In partnership with Neighbourhood Management, Local Environmental Services (LES) and customers, we are investing £145,000 in 2009/10 in Neighbourhood Pride schemes and £50,000 in designing out crime schemes to improve local environments.
- With tenants we have carried out a number of clean up days on estates as well as bi-monthly estate tours. A number of junior estate tours with local school children have improved partnership working with schools.
- In partnership with LES we have developed a comprehensive service level agreement for grounds maintenance, leading to improved and consistent appearances of estates (key customer priority).

Forward Planning Neighbourhood meetings

The performance on the following estates (showing two or more reds) will be monitored by the Forward Planning meetings, who will agree any necessary actions to improve performance.

Central

- Blue Quarries
- Carr Hill
- East Street
- Marian Court
- St James Village

Inner West

- Dunston Hill
- Eslington Park
- Rose Milling
- Swalwell

East

- Ridley Terrace

- Stoneygate
- William Pitt

South

- Chopwell Gardens
- Lyndhurst South

Next steps

A year end progress report will be provided to Customers and Communities Committee by July 2010.



Report to the Customers and Communities Committee

20 January 2010

Title: Involvement Week – Opportunity Knocks

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an evaluation of the company's Involvement Week 'Opportunity Knocks' which took place between 19 and 25 October 2009.

Background

2. The committee received a report in July 2009 about the plans to hold an Involvement Week, 'Opportunity Knocks' in October 2009.
3. The week was proposed in response to results in the 2009 Annual Survey which found a high proportion of people had responded 'don't know/no opinion' when asked how satisfied they were with the opportunities to get involved.
4. The aim of the week was to raise awareness of involvement opportunities across Gateshead through showcasing the variety of opportunities currently available for people to be involved in decision making.
5. In previous years, an annual tenants' conference had been held, which although successful, offered a limited number of spaces for people to attend and caused some restrictions based on the time and location of the events.
6. Following an evaluation of the 2008 tenants' conference, it was anticipated that holding an involvement week would provide better value for money than the traditional method, whilst reaching a much wider audience.

Summary

7. A steering group of lead officers across the company was set up and led by the Involvement Team to progress the idea of an Involvement Week. Early on in this group, it was established that as many activities as possible would be organised for this week to showcase the many opportunities that are available to customers to get involved in.
8. Over 70 activities were organised for the week and co-ordinated by the Involvement Team. These were promoted via postcards to tenants, on our website and in our company newspaper.

9. A short survey entitled 'The BIG questions' was sent to all tenants prior to Involvement Week with the newspaper, and distributed at events in the lead up, to gain feedback from our customers on key areas of the company.
10. Partnership working also took place during this week with organisations including Newcastle Eagles basketball team, FHM, LES, Morrison, GVOC, B&Q, the Fire Service, the Police and Gateshead Council.
11. A full evaluation has been produced about the week, which can be found in the Appendix to this report.

Key Outcomes

12. The key outcomes from Involvement Week were as follows: -
 - Partnership working with Newcastle Eagles basketball team and schools in the West and Inner West. This led to many young people getting involved a wordsearch competition related to involvement opportunities and winning tickets to take part in a pre-match clinic and watch the match on 25 October 2009
 - Cleaner estates and greater environmental awareness as a result of clean up days and environmental work with schools.
 - Customers signing up to Moving Forward customer training courses
 - Over 700 BIG questions returned, giving feedback on key areas of the company
 - Increased numbers of customers on Service Improvement Groups
 - Increased awareness of what an involvement opportunity is.

Link to values

13. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
 - Being a listening and learning organisation
 - Embracing equality.

Impact on tenants

14. By holding various events at different times and venues during one week, customers have a greater opportunity to get involved and help shape services.
15. Customer feedback from the BIG questions helps us see where performance has improved and where we need to develop or improve services in accordance with what our customers want.
16. These results show that the majority of customers who completed the BIG questions feel that overall the company has made a lot of progress across services. This is a very positive result for the company for a half year review and helps us get a feel for what customers feel about our services and highlights where we need to focus some more resources in the future.

17. Where customers have made specific comments, this information is being collated and the Involvement Team will work with the service lead around addressing the issues raised.

Risk Management Implications

18. Failure to engage with customers was identified as a key strategic risk for the Company.
19. Involving customers and the wider community in decisions that impact on them is our legal responsibility and something that is encouraged by the Audit Commission and Department of Communities and Local Government and more recently the Tenant Services Authority.

Financial Implications

20. The Director of Finance confirms that a budget is available to support customer involvement and resources have been made available to support the activities outlined in this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

21. The company is committed to involving people from diverse communities to ensure everyone's views, needs and aspirations are considered in the decision making process.
22. Support is available to assist people with additional needs to access involvement opportunities and this was provided during the week.
23. Every effort is made to ensure we do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any individual or group and to provide equal access to this service.

Value for Money Implications

24. By holding an Involvement week of events in communities across Gateshead rather than one high profile event, it allows more customers to get involved and keep costs for transport at a minimum. Last year we spent £235 on transport whereas this year we spent £91.
25. As a result, the Involvement week worked out at approximately £3 per person whereas the 2008 conference was £125 per person, which demonstrates excellent value for money in terms of costs.

Consultation carried out

26. Involvement Week was a regular agenda item for the Involvement Service Improvement Group since May 2009 and members contributed effectively to the planning of the week.
27. A customer from the Involvement SIG was also a member of the Steering Group and helped to identify activities that could take place as part of the week.

28. Tenants and Residents Groups were also made aware of the event and encouraged to carry out some activity within the week which officers of the company would support.

Recommendation

29. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the impact on customers to date.



Involvement Week Evaluation

Introduction

The Gateshead Housing Company has held annual tenants' conferences for four years running, since it was established in 2004. Following the conference in 2008 at the Sage in Gateshead it was agreed to try a new approach to engaging customers at an annual event by holding a full week of activities throughout communities in Gateshead, making us more accessible to our customers.

Aim

To hold a full week of community activities, raising awareness among customers about involvement opportunities within the housing company.

Objectives

There were several objectives to be achieved as a result of this week which included;

- Increasing satisfaction levels of customers
- Increasing employee awareness of customer priorities
- Increasing awareness among customers of the services available to them
- Increasing the number of customers involved with the company
- Increasing and updating customer profile information of customers
- Receiving feedback on some 'big' questions about our services.

Background

The 2008 conference was a full day event and cost £10,000 with 80 customers attending, due to restrictions with venue capacity. It was felt that this prevented many other customers from being able to attend due to other commitments such as work and childcare. Therefore in 2009 we suggested doing something different to make the event accessible to more customers and provide better value for money.

By holding a full week of community engagement activities it was aimed to provide an opportunity to contact more customers and focus in communities



rather than a large central venue. Customers could come along to one or more events that were taking place which fit in with their schedules.

It was agreed to hold the week during 19th – 25th October 2009 in order to avoid the school holidays and encourage involvement of schools across Gateshead.

Planning and Promotion

A steering group of lead officers was established from various services to meet on a regular basis. The group comprised of the following officers;

- Jennifer Aston – HR and Admin Manager
- Ian Clarkin – Communications Manager
- Louise Taylor – Involvement Officer
- Helen Watson – Involvement Officer
- Julie McCartney – Principal Housing Services Manager
- Andrea Foreman – Tenant Liaison Manager
- Sam Devlin – Customer Service Development Manager
- Ruth Rogerson – Service Improvement Officer
- Martin Poulter – Operational Support Manager
- John Stephen – Lettings Officer.

The group was initially briefed on the aims of the week, and established that actual activities would be organised and managed by their service but the overall programme of events would be facilitated by the Involvement team. Lead officers were encouraged to arrange activities during this week, and to include events that had already been organised, as part of this week. It was intended to hold as many activities as possible during this week to showcase the range of involvement opportunities available.

The steering group regularly fed back on the progress they were making with the organisation of activities and encouraged volunteers from their services to help out with events during this week. It was hoped that by volunteering to help out with activities different to what they do day to day, this would also give employees an opportunity to see what other services do and appreciate the work of their colleagues.

A plan of activities was compiled for each day of the week, and these were colour coded in terms of neighbourhood. This plan was published in the company newspaper and available on our website. Customers received this newspaper approximately 1-2 weeks before the event. Prior to this being available, postcards were also sent out to all customers to raise awareness of the planned week. Over 70 activities were planned to take place during this week.



Findings

Feedback has shown that approximately 1700 customers either attended events or responded to the Big Questions during the week. Over 60 employees volunteered to help with events during the week, some of who took part in more than one activity and there were also 6 board members who took part in activities across the week.

The following partners were involved in the week:

- Gateshead Council
- GVOG
- Morrison, FHM and LES
- B&Q
- Police and Fire Service
- Newcastle Eagles
- Neighbourhood Wardens
- EDF Energy
- Clasper Village EMB
- Parkhead School
- Dunston Hill
- Dunston Riverside
- Clover Hill Primary
- Fellside Primary
- Whickham Parochial
- Front Street Primary
- Greenside Primary
- Carr Hill School
- Barley Mow Primary School

All employees that attended an event were asked to complete an impact assessment form, which asked them to provide information about;

- What the activity was
- When it took place
- Where it took place
- A brief description of the activity
- How many customers were involved
- How many employees were involved
- What it cost
- What the outcome of the activity was
- Whether any follow up activities are planned.

This information was compiled and some of it is broken down in the following tables. An explanation of what each event was can also be found below.



Type of activity	Number of events
Involvement road show	15
Drop-in session	8
Coffee morning	7
Estate tour	20
Housing Swapshop	5
BME surgery	2
HR session	3
Choices event	3
Clean up days and environmental activities	5
Councillor surgery	1
SIG	2
Open day	1
Training courses	2
Total	73

The following list explains what was involved in each event;

- **Involvement Roadshow** – a stand was set up in various locations such as libraries, college buildings and housing offices with pop ups asking the BIG questions and various literature on involvement methods within the company. There were also officers from the Council consulting on their Vision 2030



Lisa Wilkinson with a customer at the Civic Involvement Roadshow

- **Drop in session** – customers could call in at any point during the times of these sessions to discuss housing related queries. One session was specifically for leaseholders
- **Coffee morning** – coffee mornings were promoted on estates for customers to call in and have an informal chat with officers about housing related queries
- **Estate tours** – estate tours were held across several estates in Gateshead where customers could meet their estate officer and walk around the estate highlighting particular areas that perhaps need improving or look positive for the area. A number of these included residents, officers from other services in the company such as Decent Homes, HomeRepairs etc and local schools.
- **Housing swap shop** – a Customer Service Officer was present in each housing office to train customers who called in, on the new housing exchange service that the HomeChoice service is introducing



- **BME surgery** – two surgeries were held during this week at Bensham Grove Community Centre whereby one had a particular focus on advice around the application and appointments processes of the company from officers in our HR team, and the second was for customers with general housing queries
- **HR session** – officers from the HR service attended some Sure Start centres offering parents advice around the application and appointments procedures in the company
- **Choices events** – Decent Homes held events in areas where customers were due to get improvement work done to their properties and they were able to make their choices on products such as kitchens and bathrooms
- **Clean up events** – four clean up events were organised, where customers were encouraged to tidy up their homes and estates by removing unwanted rubbish, with the help of company employees and partners. These events were also linked into the Big Tidy Up National Campaign which is working to free Britain from litter and improve our local environments.
- **Councillor surgery** – a surgery is held on a regular basis where customers can drop in and raise any issues they may have with their local councillor and one of our officers also attended to take any particular housing related queries
- **SIG** – Customer Service and Decent Homes both held their SIG during this week which is a customer meeting where they are involved in decision making for the company
- **Open day** – an open day was held by the Estate Management Board in Clasper Village, Teams where we were able to attend and promote the company's involvement opportunities and respond to any housing queries
- **Training courses** – two courses from the Moving Forward programme were held during the week, one of them was additional to the schedule in the programme due to demand for the healthy living courses.



BME surgery

As part of the peer mystery shopping exercise that was being planned, a training session was held at Keelman House, with customers and officers from Gateshead and neighbouring ALMOs who are involved in the peer group activity.

It was agreed by the Peer Group to schedule this exercise at TGHC head to coincide with Involvement week



Overall there was a relatively even spread of activities across each area (see table below). Events took place in all neighbourhoods in Gateshead and can be broken down as follows:

Area	No. of events
East	12
West	15
Inner west	12
South	13
Central	20
Total	72

Please note that one event, a B&Q course took place outside of Gateshead, being held at the Scotswood Road branch.

The following tables show the type of events that took place in each area, and how many.

East	
Involvement Roadshow	2
Choices event	3
Clean up day	1
Housing Swap shop	1
Drop-in session	2
Coffee morning	1
Estate tour	1
Help with employment	1
Training course	0
Total	12

South	
Involvement Roadshow	2
Choices event	0
Clean up day	1
Housing Swap shop	1
Drop-in session	3
Coffee morning	2
Estate tour	3
Help with employment	0
Training course	0
Councillor surgery	1
Total	13

Below: Carr Hill clean up



Below: Old Fold clean up





Inner West		West	
Involvement Roadshow	4	Involvement Roadshow	2
Choices event	0	Choices event	0
Clean up day	0	Clean up day	1
Housing Swap shop	1	Housing Swap shop	1
Drop-in session	1	Drop-in session	2
Coffee morning	1	Coffee morning	3
Estate tour	3	Estate tour	3
Help with employment	0	Help with employment	2
Training course	0	Training course	1
SIG	1	Total	15
Open day	1		
Total	12		

Central	
Involvement Roadshow	5
Choices event	0
Clean up day	1
Housing Swap shop	1
Drop-in session	1
Coffee morning	0
Estate tour	10
Help with employment	0
Training course	0
Councillor surgery	0
BME surgery	2
Total	20

Other: B&Q decorating course - Scotswood



Rowlands Gill Estate Tour

At the Annual Tenants' Conference in 2008, approximately 80 customers attended and it cost approximately £10,000. During the Involvement week approximately 1700 customers were involved, which includes both customers who returned a completed survey and who were at an actual event. The budget was approximately £5000. Items within this budget include;

- printing of BIG questions
- transport
- venue hire
- postcards
- basketball project.

Additional costs incurred as a result of the Involvement week include staff time and mileage costs.



Therefore this works out at an average of £125 per person in the 2008 conference and £3 per person for the Involvement week, which demonstrates excellent value for money. This cost has been able to remain low as some events have been funded through existing budgets, for example, clean up days are already accounted for during the year.

BIG questions summary

One of the objectives of the week was to receive feedback from customers about our services. It was agreed that we just wanted to ask a few quick questions rather than a long survey, to capture customers' thoughts and give us a half year summary since the annual survey.

Six questions were agreed to ask customers about the progress we've made in key areas across the company and they were offered the chance to win £250 vouchers if they returned it by the deadline. The questions focussed on the following themes;

- HomeRepairs
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Opportunities to improve services
- Investing in homes and on estates
- Meeting customers' different needs
- Getting housing queries answered first time.

We received over 700 completed BIG questions both through the post from customers who may not have been able to attend any of the organised sessions, and from customers who attended events during the week.



Lisa Wilkinson and customer at an Involvement Roadshow, Civic Centre



Involvement Roadshow Felling Office, Board member Valerie Hodge and Three Rivers tenant Susan Dodds



		Lot of progress	Some progress	No progress	No answer	Total
1	How much progress has The Gateshead Housing Company made in improving its HomeRepairs service?	395	260	68	5	728
2	How much progress has it made in protecting residents from crime and anti-social behaviour?	271	353	88	16	728
3	How much progress has it made in giving customers opportunities to help improve services?	343	305	64	16	728
4	How much progress has it made in investing in homes and on estates?	320	230	63	115	728
5	How much progress has it made in meeting customers' many different needs?	270	360	76	22	728
6	How much progress has it made in getting housing queries answered first time?	309	222	77	120	728
Total		1908	1730	436	294	

These results show that the majority of customers who completed the BIG questions feel that overall the company has made a lot of progress across services. This is a very positive result for the company for a half year review and helps us get a feel for what customers feel about our services and highlights where we need to focus some more resources in the future.

Despite large numbers of positive feedback received, we cannot ignore those responses of 'no progress'. We are currently addressing any negative comments made by customers by breaking it down into service area and approaching lead officers. The Involvement team will monitor the action taken to address these issues.

Outcomes

There were several outcomes and follow up activities from this week including;



- Children learning the importance of maintaining a clean environment
- Introducing 'No dog-fouling' signs around some estates
- Customers received advice around the HomeXchange scheme
- Weed control identified by customers on estate tours and addressed by Local Environmental Services
- Feedback from customers about the proposed play area in the Teams to go towards final plan
- Customers signed up to customer training courses and other involvement activities
- Information fed into the Estate Grading procedure which is currently being developed and will be launched in April 2010, following consultations with customers
- Customers signing up to the capacity building Dealing with stress course having attended the Relax for life course
- Increased awareness of what an involvement opportunity is.

Some of the follow up activities that have been identified by employees as a result of work they carried out during this week include;

- Estate tours to be carried out with schools to plant shrubs and trees, and to put up no dog-fouling signs
- Customers invited to attend future estate tours
- Customer top priorities re-addressed in line with consultations to be fed into the revised Vision 2030
- Further promotion of involvement opportunities within the company.

Feedback from Involvement week was presented to the Involvement SIG and the group felt that the week was a really positive step forward for the company in engaging tenants on a wider scale and promoting awareness of involvement opportunities.

Customers felt there was a good spread of activities across Gateshead during the week, and it was good to reach out to more rural areas such as Chopwell. It was felt however, that it would have been better to have held such a week in the summertime where the weather should be better, hence encourage more attendance at events. A more targeted approach was suggested for the next time and wider promotion, such as posters in housing offices and leaflets distributed when customers pay rent at the offices.



In view of the value for money savings made this year, customers were keen to hold a similar event to this next year, taking into account the above suggestions, rather than an annual conference similar to 2008.

As a result of the week many customers have developed their skills and capacity by getting involved in activities and signing up to future activities including, capacity building courses, Service Improvement Groups, to receive information about the company and take part in surveys, made a significant impact on their estates via clean up days, attended and will be invited to future estate tours.



Barley Mow clean up

Newcastle Eagles project

As part of Involvement week we worked in partnership with Newcastle Eagles basketball team. As one of our hard to reach groups is young people, it was felt that by establishing a project with this organisation would be an excellent method of engaging with this community group.

The package included the following provisions from Newcastle Eagles;

- Use of up to 300 tickets to the game, including 100 places on a pre-match clinic on the court 2 hours before the game, hosted by Eagles community coaches
- Prizes for clinic Most Valuable Players (MVP)
- Use of Eagles players and community staff to help promote the project in identified schools
- The option to upgrade one winning family to courtside and corporate access to meet players after the game and have a team photo on court
- The option to have a prize for match night mascot
- Display company involvement opportunities in the arena foyer on the night
- An additional 8 courtside tickets and corporate access for TGHC management and staff
- Promotional article in match programme
- Generation of press linked to the clinic.



Winners from the pre-match clinic with Involvement Officers, Helen Watson and Louise Taylor and Eagles player Reggie Jackson

A word search focussing on involvement opportunities was distributed to selected schools in the west and inner west of Gateshead as it was



highlighted that these areas have had less involvement with the company recently and this may have been due to a lack of awareness of involvement opportunities with the company. A total of 84 word searches were returned, displaying another successful method of promoting involvement opportunities to customers and their families.

As a result of this successful project, Newcastle Eagles are keen to work with the company on further projects to build relationships and empower the communities within Gateshead.

Conclusions

The Involvement week was very successful, reaching out to 1700 customers including those who attended actual events and who completed and returned the BIG questions. This is a much more positive result compared with last year's conference where we were only able to reach 80 attended.

It was felt that holding a full week of involvement activities rather than a one day conference was better for various reasons including, visiting communities rather than customers coming to us, hence more convenient to them and a more comfortable environment, employees and customers getting to see how different communities engage with each other, contacting many customers at one time and getting their feedback about different aspects of the company and overall improved value for money.

Learning for future events

Based on the above findings it is recommended that the company continues to focus their annual involvement events around a similar concept in 2010 due to the amount of customers that can be reached and the excellent value for money savings. However, there were suggestions made by customers which have helped us learn for future events of this nature and encourage more take up, and are listed below;

- wider promotion in local offices with posters and leaflet distribution when customers pay their rent
- holding it during the summer
- have a theme for the week
- consider some weekend activity



Children at the Newcastle Eagles pre-match clinic



- work closer with schools and try to incorporate activities into the curriculum by getting involved early
- more promotion to increase involvement of all employees.



Report to the Customers and Communities Committee

20 January 2010

Title: Customer Involvement Activity - Update

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on the customer involvement activity across the company for the period 1 October to 31 December 2009.

Background

2. The Customers and Communities Committee has requested a quarterly update of involvement activity across the company.

Summary

3. During the three month period, 1 October – 31 December 2009, over 141 involvement activities took place. These included Moving Forward customer training courses, BME surgeries, Estate Tours, Service Improvement Groups, workshops, Decent Homes Choices events, drop in sessions, clean up days and an Involvement Week.
4. Activities took place at a variety of locations across Gateshead on various days of the week, at different times of the day. The Involvement Team, Service Improvement Group leads and other officers continue to target under represented groups to make involvement representative of the wider community.
5. Customers have been involved in our involvement activities on over 3500 occasions although some may have been involved in more than one activity.
6. Appendix 1 to this report shows a summary of activities undertaken in this period and demonstrates the variety of ways customers have been able to get involved.
7. A breakdown of the type of involvement, number of customers involved, dates of involvement and the outcomes resulting from the activity is provided at Appendix 2 to this report.

Key Outcomes

8. There have been a number of key outcomes from customer involvement during this period including the following: -
 - Customer Involvement week held to promote opportunities to get involved with the company which led to more customers joining SIGs, attending estate tours and signing up to courses (a full report of this week is also going to this committee)
 - Peer mystery shopping exercise undertaken with customers from neighbouring ALMOs around customer care, appearance and information on display in housing offices
 - Contributed towards the 11 million takeover day at a Youth Council Power breakfast
 - Four clean up events taking place across Gateshead, resulting in greater awareness of the importance of maintaining a clean environment
 - Involvement of younger people from the West and Inner West of the borough taking part in a pre-match clinic with the Newcastle Eagles basketball team, being educated on why it's important to be fit and active.

Link to values

9. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
 - Being a listening and learning organisation.

Impact on tenants

10. We have worked extensively with tenants, leaseholders and the wider community during this period, to get views and opinions to identify priorities to inform services.
11. Following the involvement activity detailed in appendix 2, a number of changes to services and decisions have been made to reflect the needs and priorities of people who receive our services.

Risk Management Implications

12. Failure to engage with customers was identified as a key strategic risk for the company.
13. Involving customers and the wider community in decisions that impact on them is our legal responsibility and something that is encouraged by the Audit Commission and Department of Communities and Local Government and more recently the Tenant Services Authority.

Financial Implications

14. The Director of Finance confirms that a budget is available to support customer involvement and resources have been made available to support the activities outlined in this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The Involvement Team is committed to involving people from diverse communities to ensure everyone's views, needs and aspirations are considered in the decision making process. This helps to ensure involvement outcomes are representative of the communities we serve.
16. Support is available to assist people with additional needs to access involvement opportunities and this is regularly promoted.
17. Every effort is made to ensure we do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any individual or group and to provide equal access to this service.

Value for Money Implications

18. The involvement of tenants and the wider community can result in value for money savings as service managers can gain an insight into what tenants want and need. This can result in resolving the issues first time and delivering something that works for all parties.

Consultation Carried Out

19. The Involvement Service Improvement Group is regularly updated with the progress of involvement across all services and the outcomes which result.

Recommendation

20. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the impact on customers to date.

Appendix 1

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Choices Events	7	361
Drop In Sessions	28	752
Events	8	1544
Focus Groups	6	54
Forums	3	45
Service Improvement Groups	12	107
Surgeries	3	28
Training Courses	9	93
Work Shop	2	40
Other	63	650
Total	141	3674

Appendix 2

Business Support:

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Helen Watson	1000	Event	NHS Health Summit	Consultation took place with our LGBT customers around their housing needs. We also promoted the various involvement opportunities with the company and were seen as being positive about the LGBT community.	06/10/2009
Helen Watson	10	Training Course	Healthy for life! Fit for life	Customers learnt useful tips on how to maintain good health by being physically active including, information and advice on becoming more active and a range of fitness tests such as blood pressure and lung function.	06/10/2009
Neil Bouch / Michael Brown	2	Interview	Interview with companies tendering to develop the new Independent Tenant and Residents structure.	Two members of Service Improvement Groups took part in the tendering process to develop a new Independent Tenant and Residents Structure. Customers were able to have a direct role in scrutinising the tender documents, interviewing the people who submitted a tender and appointing a contractor.	13/10/2009
Ruth Rogerson	1	Other	Customer Assessment of Housing Office reception area	Customer Assessment undertaken of Blaydon Housing Office. This was to ensure Reception met customer standard which was agreed on Customer Service Improvement Group.	19/10/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Helen Watson	6	Surgery	Women's BME group	Attended this surgery with staff from HR where we could explain the process for applying for a job with TGHC and highlight the benefits of working for the company and us being an equal opportunities employer. This has helped reduce assumptions that had previously been made by members of the BME community around applications for jobs.	19/10/2009
Louise Taylor	50	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Civic Centre	Customers across Gateshead learnt about the many involvement opportunities within the company and took information including Guide to Getting Involved and Moving Forward programme, increasing potential of getting involved in the future.	19/10/2009
Louise Taylor	32	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Felling housing office	Raised awareness of involvement opportunities to customers and encouraged attendance at meetings and courses.	19/10/2009
Helen Watson	20	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Leam Lane housing office	Raised awareness of involvement opportunities within the company to our customers and some customers signed up to involvement activities including courses.	19/10/2009
Ruth Rogerson	1	Other	Customer Assessment of housing office reception area	Customer Assessment undertaken of Dunston Housing Office. This was to ensure Reception met customer standard which was agreed by Customer Service Improvement Group.	20/10/2009
Helen Watson	13	Training Course	B&Q Decorating	Customers were able to learn decorating skills and techniques to carry out work in their home. This is a popular course in the Moving Forward Customer Training.	20/10/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Helen Watson	20	Training Course	Peer Mystery Shopping training	Customers and staff from other ALMOs attended the training session at TGHC as part of Involvement Week. The group agreed the mystery shopping procedure and who would be conducting the exercises for which ALMO. Agreed to meet once the exercises have taken place.	20/10/2009
Helen Watson	30	Drop In Session	Coffee morning at Chopwell Community Centre	Customers learnt about the involvement opportunities with the company and signed up to various courses to help develop their skills and knowledge.	20/10/2009
Louise Taylor	4	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Wrekenton library	Raised awareness of Involvement opportunities and took customer queries about their estate.	20/10/2009
Louise Taylor	30	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Birtley housing office	Raised awareness of involvement opportunities within the company. Customer re-joined the HomeChoice scheme.	20/10/2009
Ruth Rogerson	3	Service Improvement Group	Customer Service Improvement Group	Discussion of gardening service. Feedback given to customers about recent reception assessments. Discussion with customers about company service standards - how they would like them to be presented etc	21/10/2009
Helen Watson	7	Training Course	Healthy for life! Relax for life	Customers learnt tips on how to manage stress, recognise your personal stress triggers and practical relaxation techniques. This is one part of the Healthy for life! Courses.	21/10/2009
Louise Taylor	50	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Gateshead College Baltic Campus	More young people and potential tenants are aware of the involvement opportunities available with the company and increased likelihood of them getting involved.	21/10/2009
Helen Watson	10	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Rowlands Gill library	Promoted involvement opportunities in the company to customers and took queries around decent homes work.	21/10/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Helen Watson	20	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Blaydon housing office	Raised awareness of Involvement opportunities to customers and received interest in joining SIGs and attending courses.	21/10/2009
Helen Watson	10	Surgery	BME Housing Surgery	BME surgery is attended by an Involvement Officer to act as a point of contact for customers who have queries around housing or their estates. An ongoing query was raised around housing allocations in Bensham. Was also asked by a member if we could use her interpretation service for Farsi language if we ever need it.	21/10/2009
Helen Watson	50	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Gateshead Civic Centre	Promoted opportunities to get involved with the company and customers had the opportunity to meet Board member Richard Armitage.	22/10/2009
Helen Watson	20	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Dunston Housing Office	Promoted opportunities to get involved to customers and some signed up to capacity building courses, dealing with stress and confidence building, after training need identified.	23/10/2009
Louise Taylor	20	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Gateshead College Construction campus	Promoted involvement opportunities with the company to young people and potential tenants. Lots of interest generated in the B&Q courses.	23/10/2009
Helen Watson	10	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Whickham library	Promoted The Gateshead Housing Company and opportunities to get involved. Raised awareness of free courses available to non-tenants.	23/10/2009
Helen Watson	30	Drop In Session	Involvement roadshow at Gateshead Civic Centre	Raised awareness of Involvement opportunities in the company and took housing related queries from customers and raised them with relevant service for action.	23/10/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Helen Watson	50	Event	Youth Council Power Breakfast	Helped contribute towards 11 Million Takeover day, a national event organised by the Children's Commissioner for England. Children and young people have a chance to work alongside adults and get involved in decision-making. It also gave us an opportunity to find out about issues young people face in Gateshead.	04/11/2009
Helen Watson	6	Training Course	HomeChoice Moving Forward customer training course	An informative session for existing tenants and potential tenants to find out more about the HomeChoice service including how it works, what the banding system is and information about HomeXchange.	04/11/2009
Helen Watson	2	Mystery Shopping	Peer Mystery Shopping	Customers were involved in mystery shopping three South Tyneside Homes reception areas as part of an exercise with other ALMOs. A follow up meeting is on 23rd November to feedback from this session.	06/11/2009
Helen Watson	11	Forum	Disabled Persons' Housing Forum	A mini service review of the Anti-Social Behaviour team was carried out where customers were involved in identifying any potential areas for improvement around access to the service. Some consultation was also carried out around Vision 2030 from Michael Brown, Gateshead Council.	11/11/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Helen Watson	4	Forum	BME Housing Forum	Customers saw a presentation by Michael Laing, Director of Adult Care at Gateshead Council about Vision 2030 and had the opportunity to contribute towards the review. A mini service review on the ASB service was also conducted, led by Shirley Goody, looking at accessibility issues to the service for BME customers. In general customers felt it was very accessible but if they encountered a service different to what was illustrated they would inform us. Some customers signed up to capacity building courses. A new attendee also made use of the childcare reimbursement facility.	16/11/2009
Helen Watson	5	Training Course	Healthy for life! Eat for life course	Customers got advice on maintaining a healthy weight and balanced diet including hints and tips on your '5 a day' and guidance on food labelling.	18/11/2009
Helen Watson	7	Service Improvement Group	Involvement Service Improvement Group	The group discussed Involvement week and how we could improve on future events, also started the service planning process looking at our achievements over the past year. The group was presented with involvement database profile information for discussion.	19/11/2009
Helen Watson	12	Training Course	Inspecting our services (mystery shopping)	Customers attended this capacity building course to learn about the reasons for mystery shopping and to develop skills to carry out mystery shopping exercises for the company.	20/11/2009
Helen Watson	11	Training Course	Dealing with stress	Customers attended this capacity building course to help them recognise the first signs of stress and get handy tips on managing stress day-to-day effectively. Some customers signed up to further courses and took information about other involvement activities.	27/11/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Helen Watson	7	Mystery Shopping	Peer Mystery Shopping meeting	Customers and officers took part in a review meeting of the mystery shopping activity that took place in November. It was agreed that the lead officer would distribute surveys that link with the offices inspected, to help with action areas. A further meeting will be held in the new year to plan further shops and feedback progress made.	30/11/2009
Helen Watson	9	Training Course	B&Q flooring course	Customers attended this practical session and learnt how to lay flooring and what flooring is suitable for different rooms.	08/12/2009
Helen Watson	12	Surgery	BME housing surgery	Customers raised specific queries they have around housing issues for adapted property and officer made links with new partners.	09/12/2009
Helen Watson	2	Mystery Shopping	Involvement SIG Mystery Shopping	Customers carried out telephone mystery shopping exercise for the Involvement SIG, testing employees' knowledge of the Involvement service and whether correct information was given. Training needs identified in increasing awareness of Involvement opportunities among employees.	16/12/2009

Finance and ICT

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Eric Jubb	3	Service Improvement Group	Value for Money and Environmental Management Service Improvement Group	Repairs review was signed off. VFM Suggestion scheme was discussed AS came to talk to the group on Decent homes provision of fires. EJ discussed the short notice inspection.	11/11/2009

HR and Admin

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Denise Burlison	10	Drop In Session	Attended Highfield Children's Centre to give advice on recruitment and completing job applications.	Limited success. HR team attended to offer advice but limited interest. To consider attending job centres in the future.	19/10/2009
Jennifer Aston / Rachel Embleton	15	Drop In Session	Drop in session at the BME Women's Group as part of the involvement week.	Discussed what it is like to work for the company, barriers to employment and how to overcome them, discussed the application form and the opportunities and Work-life balance arrangements. Increased transparency about our recruitment procedures.	19/10/2009
Denise Burlison	12	Drop In Session	Attended Blaydon's Children Centre to give advice on recruitment and completing application forms.	Limited success due to the set up of the session. To consider attending job centres in the future.	20/10/2009

Housing Management

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Michelle Cherrett	400	Event	Older Persons Festival Launch at Felling Social Club	Opening address by the Mayor Councillor John Eagle Adoption of annual report Adoption of audited accounts	01/10/2009
Joanne Raistrick	1	Other	Resident attended the Estate Tour with the Housing Officer	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	13/10/2009
Tracy Wilkinson	1	Other	Resident involved in the Estate tour	Issues picked up by customer around issues on their estate and are currently being addressed.	14/10/2009
Rebecca Weightman	1	Other	Resident involved in the Warwick court estate tour	Issues picked up by customer around issues on their estate and are currently being addressed.	15/10/2009
Tracy Wilkinson	1	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at Marian Ct	Feedback was sent to residents to residents in relation to repairs that had been noted on the tour and issues surrounding grounds maintenance problems. Repairs were raised with Home repairs and grounds maintenance issues were raised with LES.	15/10/2009
Tracy Wilkinson	1	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at St Cuthbert's Court	Feedback was sent to residents in relation to repairs that had been noted on the tour and issues surrounding grounds maintenance problems.	15/10/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Joyce Scott	8	Drop In Session	Opportunity Knocks Drop In at Greenfields Communal Hall. To discuss any issues on the estate and speak to Repairs Team.	Information passed to Repairs Team regarding outstanding complaint. Information given about pathway beside estate.	19/10/2009
Emma Haley	1	Drop In Session	HOMEEXCHANGE - Awareness Drop in session at Whickham library during involvement week, 1 resident attended	Customer was given advice and application on become a member of the HomeExchange scheme	19/10/2009
Tracy Wilkinson	1	Other	Adelaide Court Estate Tour resident involved	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	20/10/2009
Tracy Wilkinson	1	Other	Estate Tour of Melbourne Court local resident involved	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	20/10/2009
Glen Thompson	1	Other	local resident involved in the estate tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	20/10/2009
Glen Thompson	1	Other	Resident involved in the local estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	20/10/2009
Kevin Roberts	10	Event	Clean Up Day on Old Fold Estate attended by TGHC, residents and LES. Skips were provided on the estate for tenants to dispose of unwanted items and LES carried out minor environmental works on the estate.	A cleaner tidier estate.	20/10/2009
Glen Thompson	1	Other	Local Resident involved in the Estate Tour for Peareth Court	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	20/10/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Hazel Forster	50	Other	Clean Up day - Parkhead Estate	Skips provided across estate for residents to dispose of unwanted items. Partners present on estate to offer information, advice and support to customers. Schools took part in an estate tour as part of the day to identify issues important to them.	20/10/2009
Ian Burton	1	Other	Estate Tour of Lower Teams Estate during involvement weeks with board member Jjm Willis	Highlighted several breaches of tenancy and potential improvements of the Grounds Maintenance Agreement. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	20/10/2009
Ian Burton	3	Other	Estate Tour of Eslington Park with three customers	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	21/10/2009
Ian Burton	6	Drop In Session	Open Day event at Clasper village EMB building to discuss the potential new proposals of the Multi Usage Games Area at Wilberforce Walk, 6 customers attended	Customers were able to discuss concerns regarding the proposals of the MUGA which may be fitted in the area.	21/10/2009
Charlie Mein	25	Other	Clean up day on the Carr Hill Estate	Cleaner gardens and environment, we engaged with the local junior school who carried out a junior estate tour. A further tour to be carried out in January 2010 when feedback will be given. 14.5 tonnes of rubbish was removed from the estate, Also linked the clean up day with the Tyne and Wear Fire service to promote Bonfire night safety issues which proved to be a big success along with the clean up day.	21/10/2009
Rebecca Weightman	1	Other	Resident involved in the Regent Court Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	22/10/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Ian Burton	2	Other	Estate Tour of Holmeside Estate	Issues picked up with weed control on the estate that are being addressed by LES. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	22/10/2009
Ian Burton	11	Other	Children's estate tour involving 11 children from Dunston Hill Primary School tour was on the Dunston Hill and Holmeside estates of Dunston Officers from LES, TGHC, Gateshead Council and Bill Patterson (Board member) were present	School children carried out a tour of the estates highlighting any areas that could be improved with potential tree planting or bulb planting.	22/10/2009
Karen Dowens	71	Drop In Sessions	Consultation event – Millennium Centre – update on next steps , opportunity for questions. Including meeting the new builders and view plans for estate and home layouts	Feedback surveys completed with all residents to help produce the next set of FAQ's.	24/10/2009
Ray McKenry	2	Other	Eslington Park Estate Tour	Residents able to discuss issues on the estate with estate officer. Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	26/10/2009
Christine Potts	2	Drop In Session	Bensham Court	Residents concerned that the communal internet funded by the residents committee is due to expire. Informed tenants that they will soon benefit from free internet access provided by TGHC (which forms part of a borough wide programme for sheltered schemes).	27/10/2009
Lesley Pickup	1	Other	Estate tour of Byermoor	Issues identified on the estate relating to ground maintenance and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	27/10/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Ray McKenry	1	Other	Victoria Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	27/10/2009
David McCracken	1	Other	Derwentwater Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	27/10/2009
Trish Slater	1	Other	Ravensworth Road Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	28/10/2009
Ray McKenry	1	Other	Redheugh Court Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	28/10/2009
David McCracken	1	Other	Estate Tour of Clasper Village	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	03/11/2009
Rebecca Weightman	35	Other	Residents meeting held for Regent Court residents discussing the following: Car parking New Windows refurbishment of the block Repairs	Housing officers involved in discussion with residents. Issues taken away and feedback to be provided to the group.	10/11/2009
Trish Slater	1	Other	Dunston Park Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	10/11/2009
James Moody	7	Focus Group	Consulting on Enhancing Estate Tours	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a min.	11/11/2009
Rebecca Weightman	2	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at Florence Avenue	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	12/11/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Sean Hughes	1	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at Centurian Way	Garden rubbish, graffiti, grass reseeding & litter pick required, Virgin Media stations damaged. Action taken to address issues identified. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	12/11/2009
Michelle Cherrett	15	Service Improvement Group	Older Persons Service Improvement Group	Customers were given the opportunity to meet staff from the Repairs team and ask questions about the service. The Repairs team explained to customers about their role and how to contact them. Customers also expressed their opinions on the annual satisfaction questionnaires once the job is completed.	13/11/2009
James Moody	7	Focus Group	Consultation on enhancing Estate Tours	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a min.	16/11/2009
Richard Finlow	20	Other	Residents Meeting - East Street Flats	Senior Health and Safety Advisor advised tenants of proposed DDA work, ie door entry system, improvements to main entrances, car park disabled bays. Residents were advised that communal windows are to be renewed and the company is still looking into renewing the remainder of the windows. Work due to start in March 2010. Residents advised of improvements to be made to roof. Work due to start March 2010. Discussed proposed car permit system. Residents were advised that a survey is to be carried out providing information for residents as well as an opportunity to vote whether they wish to have the system.	16/11/2009
Tracy Wilkinson	1	Other	Local resident involved in the estate Tour of Brisbane Court	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	17/11/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Sean Hughes	1	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at Blue quarries	Feedback given to residents attending. Garden rubbish, graffiti, grass reseeding & litter pick required, Virgin Media stations damaged.	17/11/2009
Trish Slater	1	Other	Dunston Road Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	17/11/2009
David McCracken	1	Other	Rose Milling Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	17/11/2009
Ian Burton	15	Other	Bulb and tree planting on the Dunston hill estate with children from Dunston hill primary school	Children planted bulbs on the estate as a follow up to their initial tour in October 2009, residents see more flowers and improves the estates appearance	17/11/2009
Joanne Raistrick	30	Other	Residents meeting held for the Argyle Estate Gateshead items discussed Garages and repairs	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	18/11/2009
Haley Wharton	8	Drop In Session	Birtley Villas drop in session	Customers raised issues including unit door broken in kitchen and emergency light outside not working. Repairs, LES and Health and Safety have been notified and feedback will be given to customers.	18/11/2009
Rebecca Weightman	1	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at Deckham	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	19/11/2009
Haley Wharton	2	Drop In Session	Kays Cottages	Customers reported Issues about repairs needed which has been reported to HomeRepairs. Some issues regarding trees and grass growing in between pavement slabs also reported. Feedback on outcomes to be reported to customers.	19/11/2009
Heather Skipper	1	Other	Estate Tour - Whickham North	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	19/11/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Gary Lancaster	1	Other	Racecourse estate tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	19/11/2009
James Moody	8	Other	Consulting with customers on enhancing estate tours during a community clean up at Parkhead	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a minimum.	20/11/2009
James Moody	5	Service Improvement Group	Special SIG for Housing management on consultation for enhancing estate tours	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a minimum.	21/11/2009
James Moody	17	Other	Consulting with customers on enhancing estate tours during a community clean up event at Carr Hill	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a minimum.	21/11/2009
James Moody	6	Focus Group	Consultation on Enhancing Estate Tours	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a minimum.	22/11/2009
James Moody	12	Focus Group	Consultation held with customers on enhancing estate tours	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a minimum.	22/11/2009
James Moody	8	Other	Consultation with customers on enhancing estate tours during a community clean up event at Barley Mow	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a minimum.	22/11/2009
James Moody	12	Focus Group	Consultation on Enhancing Estate Tours	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a minimum.	23/11/2009
James Moody	5	Other	Consultation with customers on enhancing estate tours during a community clean up event	Customers views fed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a minimum.	23/11/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Lesley Pickup	1	Other	Estate Tour of Rectory Glebe with one residents	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	23/11/2009
Darren Wilson	15	Service Improvement Group	Anti Social Behaviour Service Improvement Group	Lettings and property allocations explained to tenants. Value for Money officer attended to raise awareness of VFM issues for the company.	24/11/2009
Steven Kelly	70	Consultation	<p>Kibblesworth Development Consultation held on 24-11-09 at the Millennium Centre in Kibblesworth to discuss the plans for the new development.</p> <p>Present at the consultation were officers from The Gateshead Housing Company and Frank Haslam Milan - the builder,</p>	<p>TGHC were able to gain feedback on residents' preferences, concerns and other comments and also feedback information on the development which is due to commence in March 2010 and last approximately 3 years.</p> <p>From the queries raised at the event, The Gateshead Housing Company can update the Frequently Asked Questions prior to the next consultation event.</p> <p>Feedback has been shared with various officers from The Gateshead Housing Company and a report with information gathered has been produced and given to local councillors for information.</p>	24/11/2009
Sean Hughes	1	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at Carr Hill	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes, including overgrown gardens, rubbish in gardens, graffiti in area, dog fouling, missing fencing and litter picking required. Tenants with vehicles needing hardstand/dropped kerb.	24/11/2009
Lesley Pickup	1	Other	Sunniside Estate tour	Estate tour with one residents picking up issues of grounds maintenance on the estate. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	24/11/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Gary Lancaster	1	Other	Estate Tour of Coach Road Green	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	24/11/2009
Glen Thompson	1	Other	Local resident involved in the St Marys ET	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	25/11/2009
Ray McKenry	1	Other	Redheugh Court Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	25/11/2009
Joanne Raistrick	1	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at Abbey Court	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	26/11/2009
Heather Skipper	1	Other	Estate Tour of Swalwell	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	26/11/2009
Trish Slater	1	Other	Estate tour - Dunston Hill	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	26/11/2009
James Moody	10	Focus Group	Customers from Springwell, Beacon Lough East and Seven Stars were involved in a working group to identify their local priorities for the estates against Cleaner, Safer and Greener communities.	Customers identified local priorities which will then be taken to partners on the 16 December to build a neighbourhood action plan for the three estates.	01/12/2009
Julie McCartney/Kevin Roberts	30	Forum	A public meeting was held with residents to discuss the ongoing development on the Flowershow Field Estate.	Residents were informed as to the next stages in the process and were given timescales as to what would be happening and when	01/12/2009
Gary Lancaster	1	Other	Estate tour of Watergate	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	01/12/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Billy Liddell	20	Workshop	Watergate Bulb Planting - Washingwell Primary School - 20 children in attendance with officers from TGHC, LES and Gateshead Council and the Mayor of Gateshead	Children planted bulbs and trees in and around the schools and Watergate estate, dog fouling sign competition launched	01/12/2009
Joanne Raistrick	1	Other	Resident involved in the estate tour of Newbolt Court	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	02/12/2009
Rebecca Weightman	1	Other	Local resident involved in estate tour at Mount Pleasant	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	02/12/2009
Glen Thompson	120	Other	Letter drop to all residents in Park, Peareth and Priory Court for consultation re parking in the area	Awaiting information from the result of the consultation	03/12/2009
Gary Lancaster	1	Other	Estate Tour - Lobley Hill	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	03/12/2009
James Moody	180	Questionnaire/Survey	Involved customers as part of a second wave of consultation on enhancing estate tours. All current active customers on estate tours were invited to comment and give their views on the development of grading estate tours	Customers views will feed into the final descriptions and criteria for grading estates and confirmed that they were happy to move estate tours to quarterly as a min.	07/12/2009
Ian Burton	20	Workshop	Riverside Primary School - Tree and bulb planting and bird box making with partners from EDF energy, LES and Gateshead Council	School children were able to improve the school with new plants and tress, they also learnt about conservation and built bird boxes and fitted them	08/12/2009
Ray McKenry	1	Other	Eslington Court Estate Tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	09/12/2009
Rebecca Weightman	1	Other	Resident from Warwick Court involved in the estate tour	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	10/12/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Hazel Forster	300	Other	Hallgarth Residents Meeting	Met with group to discuss and resolve issues for individuals and estate. Partners present including Police, Ward members, Gateshead Council	15/12/2009
Heather Skipper	1	Other	Estate Tour of St Marys Green	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	17/12/2009
Trish Slater	1	Other	Estate tour of Holmeside Estate	Issues on the estate were identified and currently being actioned. Feedback given to customers on progress with outcomes.	17/12/2009

Leasehold Services

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Janice Adams	7	Service Improvement Group	Monthly meeting to investigate and develop service improvements	Discussed content of pre-sale interview for tenants. Investigated the introduction of a gardening and accreditation scheme for leaseholders. Discussed leaseholders priorities for an Estate Grading Scheme	05/10/2009
Janice Adams	3	Drop In Session	Informal meeting to listen and learn from leaseholders and identify service improvements.	Answered decent homes questions, discussed involvement activities within the company and looked at improvements to the services. The provision of a family tree for customers to include who within the Company is responsible for what.	21/10/2009
Janice Adams	6	Service Improvement Group	Monthly meeting to investigate and develop service improvements	Budget costs for the production of the revised handbook were discussed and agreed. Handbook to be printed and distributed Jan 2010. The interview script, implementation process monitoring and publication of the pre-sale interview for tenants was agreed.	02/11/2009
Janice Adams	4	Service Improvement Group	Monthly meeting to investigate and develop service improvements	Content of 'Money advice leaflet for leaseholders' discussed. Leaflet to include how to maximise your income. Review of account billing information and improvements agreed.	08/12/2009

Property and Technical

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Esther Hedley	12	Event	Dunston Road artwork - consultation with primary school children - practical workshop with Danny Clahane - St Philip's Neri Roman Catholic Primary School	Children learnt skills in stone sculpture and the school had pieces of artwork to keep for display.	01/10/2009
Esther Hedley	12	Event	Dunston Road artwork - consultation with primary school children - practical workshop with Danny Clahane - Dunston Hill Primary School	Children learnt skills in stone sculpture and the school had pieces of artwork to keep for display.	02/10/2009
Kate McDougal	59	Choices Event	Choices event at Millbrook Estate	Tenants discussed forthcoming decent homes and made choices.	19/10/2009
Simon Hand	1	Drop In Session	Simon Hand / Andrew Mason / Elaine Widdowson attended Councillor Woods surgery at Harlow Green School during involvement week	Cllr advised of a number of issues that had been brought to his attention and we took these back to the office, spoke with those concerned and fed back. Cllr Wood was very happy with our feedback and also advised he would like us to attend again.	21/10/2009
Debbie Mason	10	Event	Coffee morning for involvement week. Acomb Court invited to coffee morning to discuss decent homes works at the respite property at 2 Acomb Court.	Tenants attended to have a look at respite property, discuss works and complete choice forms.	22/10/2009
Alan Sandey	15	Service Improvement Group	Decent Homes SIG	New fire supplier agreed Six monthly performance discussed	22/10/2009
Kate McDougal	189	Choices Event	Choices event for Falla Park estate	Tenants can discuss forthcoming decent homes work and made choices.	22/10/2009
Lisa Orton	40	Choices Event	Choice event for Ventnor Crescent	Choices collected and individual queries about the decent homes process answered.	10/11/2009

Lead Officer:	Number Attending:	Activity:	Description:	Outcomes:	Date of Activity
Simon Hand	15	Service Improvement Group	Simon Hand / Claire Tallintire/ Tracey Dixon from Repairs attended the Older Persons SIG	Gave an update of the Repairs service and what we do and how things have changed and improved in the past 12 months. All queries taken at this time were handled and information fed back to those tenants concerned soonest.	13/11/2009
Iain Crosbee	21	Choices Event	Choices event for Centurion Way	Choices received from a number of tenants	30/11/2009
Alan Sandey	149	Drop In Session	High Lanes new build drop in	Tenants to see proposals for new build site at High Lanes	02/12/2009
Alison Bulman	24	Choices Event	Coatsworth Court Choices Event at Nursery House Workmen's Club between 11am and 3pm	Customers made choices for pending Decent Homes work and their queries were answered	07/12/2009
Alan Sandey	88	Drop In Session	Crowhall Towers sustainability works and art work drop in	Tenants could see proposals for sustainability works and also discuss community art proposals with artist	08/12/2009
Iain Crosbee	6	Choices Event	St Cuthbert's Court held out of hours to allow further access (4-6PM)	Choices received from a number of tenants	08/12/2009
Debbie Mason	22	Choices Event	Choices event held for Ripley and Willerby Court at Chowdene children's centre	Customers made their choices on the decent homes work due to be carried out in their homes.	08/12/2009
Simon Hand	12	Service Improvement Group	Home Repairs SIG held, in attendance was Julie Hewtison from Morrison FS / Jim Willis Board Member / Claire Tallintire and Michelle Sweeney repairs operatives / Eric Jubb from finance	Group looked at what repairs information could be placed in GHC publications Customers to go on visits with Morrison workforce and will feedback to group on their experiences. Update on mystery shopping provided.	11/12/2009



Customers and Communities Committee

20 January 2010

Title: Profile of Involvement Database - Update

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on the customer profile of the Involvement Database and note the targeted work carried out to expand and broaden the representation of people on the database.

Background

2. In July 2008, a new Involvement Strategy, 'Shaping Our Future' was launched. This document sets out how the company will work to continue to develop involvement with residents across our services. The strategy was developed in line with the core visions and values of the company, however specific aims for involvement were agreed including:

'To continue to reach out to those who are less likely to get involved and encourage involvement from a more representative range of residents'

3. This strategy outlines a number of actions which aim to increase representation of typically hard to reach groups and increase the number of customers getting involved.
4. The Involvement Database provides the statistics to allow us to measure on a regular basis, how successfully we are achieving this objective.

Summary

5. The Involvement Database is a directory of everyone who has indicated that they wish to be involved in shaping the services of The Gateshead Housing Company. Residents are added to the database after contacting us through a variety of ways including attending a training course, completing a form in the Guide to Getting Involved, responding to the company newspaper, texting 'INVOLVE' or by responding to Gateshead Council's Adult Learning and Skills programme. Once someone makes contact, the Involvement Team contacts the person directly to talk through the various opportunities available to get involved.

6. Residents indicate the methods of involvement that they would like to get involved in, such as attending an estate tour, taking part in Mystery Shopping, receiving information or joining a Service Improvement Group. Customers can indicate the service areas they want to be involved with. This information is recorded on the database and passed to the lead officer for the chosen activity.
7. Customers on the database are primarily tenants of the housing company (469) however there are a number of leaseholders (61), owner occupiers (32) and private tenants (27) who also get involved in shaping the services of the company. Owner occupiers are typically those living on estates largely still managed by the housing company.
8. The database is also used as a resource for any employee wanting to involve customers in their service. Where a service lead may want to set up a specific focus group, they can use the customer information from the database to see which customers want to get involved in this type of work.

Current Position

9. Appendix 1 to this report compares profile information for all tenants of the housing company and the customers on the Involvement Database. It also shows how this compares to the database in June 2009 when we last reported this information. This allows us to regularly monitor whether we are gradually involving a more representative group of customers in the company.
10. In comparison with June 2009, the profile information shows that we have an additional 63 customers on the database, with a total of 604 customers.
11. There are an additional 2 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) customers and an additional 21 customers who have indicated they have a disability, which is a third of the additional customers on the database since 1 July 2009. This is important as the latest profile information for the company indicates that only 1.94% of tenants are BME whilst our Involvement Database is represented by 5.96%, and 26.23% of households have at least one member with a disability, whilst our Involvement database is represented by 37.25%. We are therefore well represented in both categories.
12. Appendix 1 also shows that for each age bracket there has been an increase in representation which is very positive for the company.
13. The profile information also highlights the areas we need to focus on to make involvement more representative. The Involvement Team is already undertaking a number of actions to achieve broader representation across the categories:
 - Involvement Officer holds regular surgeries at The Gateshead Muslim Society and The Gateshead Visible Ethnic Minority Support Group and works to make links with other BME customers.
 - Targeted contact with customers after they have been in their tenancies for four months to advise them of opportunities to get involved.
 - Contact customers following results of satisfaction survey where they have indicated that they don't know how to get involved or are dissatisfied.

- Customer training courses are promoted in Gateshead Council's Adult Learning and Skills programme which is distributed to all households in Gateshead and various businesses and community organisations.
14. The database has recently been amended to include a field indicating how customers received information about how to get involved. This will assist the team to assess the success of various approaches to getting people involved, such as the letters sent or through the website.
 15. Appendix 2 to this report displays the various methods customers have found out about how they can get involved, and how many have gone on to be registered on our Involvement Database, since the last update report was submitted in July 2009.

Link to values

16. This report is in line with the following values of the company:
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
 - Being a listening and learning organisation
 - Embracing equality.

Impact on Tenants

17. Through expanding the database and involving a more representative group of customers, the company is able to get the views of a larger, more diverse range of people to inform service improvement.

Risk Management Implications

18. Failure to continue to engage with tenants has been identified as an overall strategic risk for the company.
19. Involving customers and the wider community in decisions that impact on them is a legal responsibility and something that is encouraged by the Audit Commission and Department for Communities and Local Government.

Financial Implications

20. The Director of Finance confirms that a budget is available to support customer involvement and resources have been made available from this budget to support the activities outlined in this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

21. The Involvement section has a commitment to involve people from diverse communities to ensure everyone's views, needs and aspirations are considered in the decision-making process. This helps to ensure involvement outcomes are representative of the communities we serve. By monitoring the involvement database the team is able to scrutinise representation and address areas to focus on.

22. Support is available to assist people with additional needs to access involvement opportunities. Customers are offered this support whenever they are invited to attend any involvement activities.
23. Every effort is made to ensure we do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any individual or group and we provide equal access to this service.

Value for Money implications

24. The database can reduce costs as targeted invitations can be sent to people who want to be involved rather than larger scale mail shots. Through using the database to get more customers involved in services at an earlier stage, it can enable service leads to effectively get things right first time.

Consultation carried out

25. The profile of the Involvement database is presented to the Involvement SIG on a regular basis. The group commented in their November meeting that the current profile of the Involvement database is 'brilliant' and shows that more people are getting involved with the company.
26. It was agreed that future SIG meetings will focus on targeting specific customer groups, looking at how we can engage further to increase representation on the database.

Recommendation

27. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the impact on customers to date.

Comparison of Profile Information – December 2009

Gender

	Involvement Database December 2009		Involvement Database June 2009		Customer Profile Sept 2009	
Female	364	60.26%	325	60.07%	11945	57.68%
Male	240	39.74%	216	39.93%	8765	42.32%
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	604	100%	541	100%	20710	100%

Age

	Involvement Database December 2009		Involvement Database June 2009		Customer Profile September 2009	
No date of birth	58	9.60%	47	8.69%	6	0%
Under 25	21	3.48%	20	3.70%	837	4.04%
25-39	85	14.07%	75	13.86%	4277	20.65%
40-49	71	11.76%	66	12.20%	3497	16.89%
50-59	85	14.07%	75	13.86%	3193	15.42%
60-74	203	33.61%	184	34.01%	4967	23.98%
75 and over	81	13.41%	74	13.68%	3933	18.99%
Total	604	100%	541	100%	20710	100%

Disability

	Involvement Database December 2009	Involvement Database June 2009	Customer Profile September 2009
% of main tenants that have a disability	37.25%	37.33%	26.23%
% main tenants that do not have a disability	62.75%	62.67%	73.77%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Ethnic Origin

	Involvement Database Dec 2009		Involvement Database June 2009		Customer Profile Sept 2009	
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0%	0	0%	8	0.04%
Asian or Asian British Indian	4	0.66%	3	0.55%	14	0.07%
Asian or Asian British Other	3	0.50%	3	0.55%	66	0.32%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	3	0.50%	3	0.55%	12	0.06%
Black or Black British African	14	2.32%	13	2.40%	130	0.63%
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0%	0	0%	3	0.01%
Black or Black British Other	4	0.66%	4	0.74%	17	0.08%
Chinese	0	0%	1	0.19%	15	0.07%
Mixed White & Asian	0	0%	0	0%	18	0.09%
Mixed White & Black African	2	0.33%	1	0.19%	14	0.07%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	1	0.16%	1	0.19%	4	0.02%
Mixed Other	3	0.50%	3	0.55%	17	0.08%
Other	2	0.33%	2	0.37%	83	0.40%
TOTAL BME	36	5.96%	34	6.28%	401	1.94%
White British	524	86.76%	465	85.95%	20057	96.85%
White Irish	1	0.16%	1	0.19%	26	0.12%
White Other	11	1.82%	9	1.66%	189	0.91%
Refused	0	0%	0	0%	17	0.08%
Unknown	32	5.30%	32	5.92%	20	0.10%
Total	604	100%	541	100%	20710	100%

Appendix 2

Method of promotion	Number of people involved
Adult learning programme	14
Moving Forward programme	6
SIG referral	3
Press release	1
Website	1
Guide to Getting Involved	1
Other	37
Total	63

1

¹ Total