



Report to Customers and Communities Committee

11 February 2016

Title: Customer Involvement Activity - update

Report of: Customer Support Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on customer involvement activity for the third quarter of 2015/16.

Background

2. The committee has previously requested a quarterly update of involvement activity across the company. In line with the company's delivery plan we aim to support and embed co-regulation by involving customers in looking at the services we provide now, and helping us to shape them in the future via a number of methods including supporting the TALISMAN and Complaints panels and continuing to involve customers in how we deliver services.
3. This report demonstrates where we support the key actions within the company's five year strategic plan's key objective of 'Supporting tenants and sustaining tenancies and neighbourhoods'.
4. The Guide to Getting Involved sets out the wide range of ways customers can get involved depending on the time they have available and the areas they are particularly interested in.

Summary

5. During the period, 1 October to 31 December 2015, 72 involvement activities took place.
6. Customers were involved in various activities including panel and customer meetings, Service Improvement Groups, drop in sessions, forums, focus groups, mystery shopping exercises and training courses.
7. Customers have been involved in our involvement activities on 2600 occasions although some may have been involved in more than one activity.
8. Appendix 1 to this report shows a summary of activities undertaken during this period and demonstrates the variety of ways customers have been involved.

The activities are broken down by service area to highlight the different work that has taken place across the company.

9. Appendix 2 to this report shows the venues of where activities have taken place during this period.
10. Appendix 3 to this report shows a breakdown of activity by neighbourhood area.

Key outcomes of involvement

11. There have been a number of outcomes from customer involvement during this period which are highlighted below;
 - Members of TALISMAN attended the 5th Annual Tenants Panels Conference in York with officers from the Customer Involvement team. The key themes of the conference included the business benefits of tenant involvement, how to make customer involvement relevant and how to measure involvement.
 - TALISMAN continued work on their latest review of hard to let properties.
 - The art work and DVD produced in partnership with GemArts and pupils from two senior schools, Heworth Grange Comprehensive and Joseph Swan Academy was launched during National Hate Crime week. The project was promoted at the Police and Crime Commissioners event and the LGBT Federation meeting in support of Hate Crime. Copies of both were circulated to all high schools in Gateshead, shared with our involved customers at meetings and also made available on our website. It was also shared with attendees at this years Stonewall conference in Edinburgh.
 - The estate officer for Barley Mow joined up with Police, Fire and Rescue Service and teachers at Barley Mow Primary School to talk to the children about the importance of keeping their estate clean and tidy with particular reference to bonfire night. This was followed up with an estate clean-up day involving pupils, teachers, the handyperson service and the estate officer.
 - The Customer Involvement team attended International Day of Disability at the Sage Gateshead to engage with service users and support organisations to hear views and gain a better understanding of how we can improve access to our services.
 - The Older Persons team attended National Older Persons day at Gateshead Leisure centre. The event included a French bowls competition for tenants of sheltered schemes. This activity will be run as future sessions in communal lounges
 - An event was held in Warwick Court providing basic computer skills for customers including access to the Internet.
 - Customers from the Multi Storey Service Improvement Group attended a meeting to discuss a pilot of a new door entry and CCTV system.
 - The Customer Involvement team hosted a Christmas party attended by 40 involved customers as a thank you for their time and involvement over the past 12 months, to celebrate what they have achieved and to look ahead to priorities for the forthcoming year.

Involvement database

12. There has been a slight increase of 9 involved customers from the database since June 2015 totalling 936 members.
13. The representation of involved BME customers continues to be high at 7.69%, which is more than double of our overall customer profile, indicating that our work to engage with the BME community has had a positive impact.
14. The number of 'over 75s' has increased since June 2015 and both this and the 60-74 age group have a higher representation of involvement compared with the overall customer profile.
15. Appendix 4 to this report displays profile information of our involved tenants and leaseholders compared with our overall customer profile.

Performance against service standards

16. There are a number of service standards in place for involvement to help monitor performance and ensure that we continue to involve customers in the way services are delivered. They are as follows: -
 - Representation of involved customers (customers on our involvement database)
 - Annual training programme course attendance
 - Satisfaction with feedback following involvement
 - % of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account
 - Number of events attended.
17. At the end of the third quarter performance was as follows: -
 - There were 936 involved customers on our database at the end of this quarter, exceeding the target of 890
 - There were 79 attendees on customer training courses by 31 December 2015. The figure will increase as additional courses are run in quarter 4.
 - Satisfaction with feedback following involvement is reported in the fourth quarter
 - % of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account is reported six monthly, the next update will be at year end.
 - We have attended 13 events during this period. We will continue to actively engage with community groups to find out about events that are taking place for us to attend and represent the company.

External Recognition

18. At the end of last year the company was shortlisted for two awards for the "We Stand Together" project in partnership with GemArts and pupils from Joseph Swan Academy and Heworth Grange Comprehensive School.
 - IARS Research & Youth Leadership awards 2015 (runner up). The award category is for a public, private or third sector partnership project that has worked effectively with young people to actively

involve them in social problem solving and/or enabled them to influence decision-making processes.

- Positive Social Behaviour Order awards 2015 (shortlisted). These are regional awards that recognise and celebrate the achievements of young people and projects across the North East. We were nominated in the Best Youth Project 2015 category.

Future activity

19. The following activities are planned for the fourth quarter of 2015/16:

- Carry out a review of the current Involvement structures including Service Improvement Groups, forums and networks to ensure that they continue to provide opportunities for customers drive improvements to service delivery, shape policies, monitor performance and improve satisfaction.
- Working alongside our Energy Advice Officer we will deliver 12 Energy Best Deal sessions to customers across Gateshead. The sessions will focus on ensuring customers are on the lowest available tariff and also provide advice on energy efficiency savings, free home insulation and government schemes. Funding has been secured from FINCAN to run these sessions.
- Work with a new training provider, Silver Training to pilot two digital inclusion training courses with a view to rolling out a programme of courses during 2016.17 that meet different customer needs.
- We will attend the GemArts Mini Mela at Caedmon Hall to promote the work of TGHC including opportunities to get involved and other projects such as the Energy Best Deal sessions. We will also meet with Gem Arts to discuss further opportunities to build on our successful work around hate crime with young people.
- Finalise the Moving Forward programme for 2016/17 and publicise to customers and partners.
- We will continue to work in partnership with the Eagles basketball team to promote the Hoops for Health programme in schools. This will include attending the Gateshead schools play off competition to gain feedback from teachers and pupils around the stereotyping module of the programme. The feedback will help inform any changes to the programme in 2016/17.
- Launch the revised of Equality Inclusion Scheme with customers and partners.

Link to values

20. This report relates to the following company values: -

- Customer focused
- Inclusive, valuing diversity.

Impact on tenants

21. We have worked extensively with tenants, leaseholders and the wider community during this period, to get views and opinions to identify priorities and inform services.
22. The information gained from these involvement activities helps inform service improvement and delivery to make sure that the services we are providing to our customers meet their needs.

Risk Management Implications

23. Failure to engage with customers was identified as a key strategic risk for the company.
24. The Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA's) Involvement and Empowerment standard requires us to demonstrate that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing and are provided with the support they need to take part in this. The activities outlined within this report demonstrate our compliance with this standard.

Financial Implications

25. The Head of Corporate Services 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

26. 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.
27. Support is available to assist people with additional needs to access involvement opportunities and this is regularly promoted.
28. 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 and the representation of involved tenants is regularly monitored and acted upon.

Value for Money implications

29. 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.
30. Value for money is considered within Service Improvement Groups when making decisions, for example, agreeing what training courses to run in the Moving Forward programme taking into account monetary costs and the impact they will have on individuals and the wider community.

Environmental implications

31. The environmental impact of involvement is considered when conducting activities across the company and addressed wherever possible, for example, customers sharing taxis where possible when attending events.

Consultation carried out

32. The Involvement Service Improvement Group is regularly updated with the progress of involvement across all services and the outcomes which result.
33. Members of the Involvement SIG were presented with an overview of involvement activity for the second quarter and were satisfied with the information provided.

Health Implications

34. There are no direct health implications arising from this report although the successful implementation of the recommendations would have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Gateshead residents.

Recommendation

35. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the involvement activities undertaken in the quarter.

Contact Martin Poulter, Customer Support Manager

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Appendix 1 Summary of involvement activity

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Service Improvement Group	7	59
Drop in	5	47
Surveys	15	886
Meeting	3	22
Event	13	1098
Estate Clean Up	1	30
Training	5	33
Forum	4	40
Focus group	2	30
Workshops	5	244
Conference	1	100
Other	11	11
Total	72	2600

Summary of involvement activity – Corporate Services

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Surveys	15	886
Service Improvement Group	6	49
Event	5	590
Workshop	5	244
Training	4	23
Drop in	4	44
Forum	4	40
Conference	1	100
Total	44	1976

Summary of outcomes – Corporate services

- The 2015/16 Moving Forward programme continued in quarter 3 and included money management, gardening, mystery shopping, managing stress and leading a healthy lifestyle. All courses received positive feedback
- The Complaints Scrutiny Panel met on a regular basis to analyse complaints performance applying a revised scrutiny framework to completed complaints. A revised format for monthly update reports circulated to investigating officers was agreed and implemented in this quarter.
- Monthly Leasehold Service Improvement meetings were held and a range of topics were discussed including satisfaction with information provided around service charges, the automation of repairs and maintenance statements and water hygiene assessments.
- The Customer Involvement team attended World Mental Health Day in Gateshead to raise awareness of the Moving Forward programme, Guide to Getting Involved and different ways to report hate crime.

Summary of involvement activity – Customers and Communities

Title of Activity	Number of Events	Number of Customers Involved
Event	8	508
Estate Clean Up	1	30
Meeting	3	22
Drop in	1	3
Training	1	10
Focus group	2	30
Other	11	11
Service Improvement Group	1	10
Total	28	624

Summary of outcomes - Customers and Communities

- Sheltered scheme drop ins held across the schemes to give residents the opportunity to raise any issues they may have with their scheme officer on a regular basis and identify any areas for improvements
- Multi Storey inspections took place during this period by customer inspectors to check the blocks are achieving the service standards in place
- Multi Storey Service Improvement Group held where customers received an update on new entrance signage, information about investment in multi storey blocks for 2015/16 and an update on Sustainable Communities Fund schemes in multi storey blocks.
- A bulb planting event was carried out at Harlow Green with the estate officer and pupils from St Anne's school.
- Over 420 trees were planted on an empty site by local school children, volunteers from Gateshead College, and local councillors.

Appendix 2: Venues of involvement activities

Venue	Amount
Civic Centre	9
Warwick Court lounge	2
Community centre	10
Sheltered scheme	7
Multi storey block	9
School	8
Library/Caedmon Hall/Gateshead leisure centre	2
Other/survey	21
Housing Office	4
Total	72

Appendix 3: Neighbourhood area of involvement activities

Area	Amount
East	3
Central	33
South	19
Inner West	0
West	3
Other/survey	17
Total	72

Appendix 4: Profile information of involved customers

Gender:

	Involvement Database December 2015		Involvement Database June 2015		Customer profile December 2015	
Female	587	62.71%	583	62.89%	11,297	59.23%
Male	349	37.29%	344	37.11%	7773	40.76%
Blank	-		-	-	2	0.01%
Total	936	100%	927	100%	19,072	100%

Ethnicity:

	Involvement Database December 2015		Involvement Database June 2015		Customer profile December 2015	
Asian Or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	0.11%	1	0.11%	15	0.08%
Asian Or Asian British Indian	2	0.21%	2	0.22%	9	0.05%
Asian Or Asian British Other	11	1.17%	11	1.19%	125	0.65%
Asian Or Asian British Pakistan	13	1.39%	13	1.40%	17	0.09%
Black Or Black British African	34	3.63%	34	3.67%	217	1.14%
Black Or Black British Caribbean	-	-	-	-	6	0.03%
Black Or Black British Other	1	0.11%	1	0.11%	26	0.14%
Chinese	1	0.11%	1	0.11%	22	0.12%
Mixed Other	3	0.32%	3	0.32%	30	0.16%
Mixed White & Asian	-	-	-	-	20	0.10%
Mixed White & Black African	2	0.21%	2	0.22%	14	0.07%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	-	-	-	-	8	0.04%
Other	4	0.43%	3	0.32%	106	0.55%
Total BME	72	7.69%	71	7.67%	615	3.22%
Refused	1	0.11%	1	0.11%	48	0.25%
White British	769	82.15%	759	81.88%	17906	93.89%
White Irish	1	0.11%	1	0.11%	37	0.19%
White Other	13	1.39%	13	1.40%	364	1.91%
(blank)	80	8.55%	82	8.83%	102	0.54%
Grand Total	936	100%	927	100%	19,072	100%

Disability:

Does the tenant have a disability?	Involvement Database December 2015		Involvement Database June 2015		Customer Profile December 2015	
N	643	68.69%	633	68.28%	13,598	71.30%
Y	292	31.20%	291	31.40%	5,258	27.57%
Yes but type not disclosed	-		-	-	105	0.55%
Refused	-		-	-	34	0.18%
(blank)	1	0.11%	3	0.32%	73	0.38%
Not disclosed	-		-	-	4	0.02%
Total	936	100%	927	100%	19,072	100%

Age:

	Involvement Database December 2015		Involvement Database June 2015		Customer Profile December 2015	
No date of birth	112	12%	114	12.29%	1	0.01%
Under 25	15	1.6%	17	1.83%	680	3.57%
25-39	125	13.35%	124	13.38%	4060	21.29%
40-49	107	11.43%	104	11.22%	3179	16.67%
50-59	136	14.52%	137	14.78%	3449	18.08%
60-74	260	27.77%	261	28.16%	4537	23.78%
75 and over	181	19.33%	170	18.34%	3166	16.60%
Total	936	100%	927	100%	19,072	100%