

Residents' Working Group: Workshop Four
27th June 2019, 6-8pm

The Residents' Working Group met on 27th June 2019 for the fourth workshop in the series to look at how the Council reports performance.

The webpages were due to be discussed, however due to a delayed launch of the Council's new website, this will be dealt with as a separate focus group.

It was acknowledged at the beginning of the meeting that issues had been raised over some of the discussions during the workshops. It was confirmed that there would now be a fifth workshop to recap on what has been discussed over the period of the RWG and approve the draft Resident Participation Strategy. A suitable date will be set for this in July/August.

How the Council uses complaints data was also due to be discussed, but as workshop four overran, the RWG will spend some time discussing this in workshop five.

Housing Online Portal

Officers from the Housing IT Team attended the RWG meeting to provide a demo of the new residents' portal which is due to go live on 5th August. They explained that this will be a soft launch to ensure that everything is working fully before widely publicising the portal.

Residents will be able to request services such as a repair, update their contact details, and view their rent account. Repairs can be requested for the block, estate or individual property, with leaseholders only able to report repairs to communal areas. Pictorial guides will help residents fix or request an appropriate repair. The system will also allow for repairs satisfaction feedback to be provided easily and quickly, with the Council looking at how to expand this to other services.

Reporting anti social behaviour (ASB) will not be going live on this date as the Council needs to ensure that ASB can be reported in the most effective way.

Residents will need to register for an account, and those who are registered with the current online service will need to re-register using either their rent account number, tenancy number, application number or person reference. Residents will be able to contact the Department to find these out. Once residents have registered for an account, they will no longer need this number and will be able to log in with their chosen username/password. Therefore, when housing applicants have been housed, they will not need to re-register. Residents can also link their login to their Google or Facebook account for ease.

The team advised that the system will be subject to a rigorous security test to ensure that it is secure before going live.

Performance Reporting

The Social Housing Green Paper highlights the importance of providing residents with meaningful information on landlord performance on topics that matter to residents.

The Housing and Regeneration Department, in line with all Council departments, monitors its performance in key areas to ensure its services are delivered to a standard acceptable to our residents and to meet any legal requirements.

Council officers explained that the purpose of this workshop was to seek the RWG's views on current performance reporting channels to ensure these were effective and useful to residents.

BRF

Updates on Departmental Key Issues and Key Performance Indicators are presented to the June BRF, before being reported at HROSC. These are the highest level of performance monitoring in the Department.

These are reviewed annually and set at Committee. Amendments must go through a set corporate review process, therefore it is not appropriate for us to review these as part of this process.

However, as part of this review, the Council wants to consider how the BRF can have a greater role in scrutiny of performance. It was suggested that:

- Annual Report to Residents should be presented to BRF for information.
- BRF to have a greater role in complaints data – to be considered in greater detail in workshop five.
- Annual performance report on a topic of BRF's choice – as agreed at an earlier workshop, the BRF will vote to decide the topic.

Performance Reports

The Council produces several performance reports which allow residents to scrutinise performance statistics:

- Area Housing Panel – Quarterly report. Compares performance of the four area housing management teams.
- Area Housing Panel – Annual report. Compares performance of the four area housing management teams.
- Co-op Forum – Quarterly report. Compares performance of the individual Resident Management Organisations and the Council.
- Annual Report to Residents – Annual report published in Autumn edition of Homelife. Summary of the Department's activity over the year and compares performance to previous year.

RWG participants were split into three groups and each asked to feedback on a performance report. Groups were asked to consider:

- Is there any information that is not clear or could be clearer?
- Is there any information missing that you would like to see included?
- Is any superfluous information included that you feel is not useful?
- As well as any other general comments? E.g. on the design?

Area Housing Panel Reports

Feedback from residents on the Area Housing Panels reports is listed below:

- Residents felt that the report is graph heavy – would like more textual performance information where a graph is not necessary, as in the annual report to residents.
- Direction of travel would be useful in some cases – e.g. in the table showing no. of residential properties managed by area housing team, no. of decent homes and evictions.

- Include year of establishment in the table of RMOs.
- Average cost of management and maintenance tables need more contextual information would be useful, e.g. what the costs are for and why they're going up?
- Repairs graph needs to include a definition of 'completed' to ensure it is not misleading. It would also be beneficial to include the actual figures, rather than just a %.
- It was suggested that repairs figures need to be broken down further by priority time or type of works, rather than emergency/urgent/non-urgent.
- Repairs satisfaction is subjective – whilst this is the nature of satisfaction results, the questions asked can be reviewed to ensure they are useful.
- More context was requested in relation to void figures – e.g. an explanation of why the target hasn't been met (is the target unrealistic or is there a reason for decline?)
- Include actual figures as well as percentage of rent lost through vacant properties.
- It was felt that the tenancy enforcement / ASB graphs were confusing and were not useful to people who did not have prior knowledge of tenancy enforcement. They require better contextual information. It was suggested that this data could be presented as a heat map – although it was noted that this must not identify any particular cases and the Council would need to check feasibility of producing this format.
- Budgetary performance would benefit from contextual information – e.g. explanation as to why there is an increase in September for each team.
- Complaints monitoring should be broken down further – e.g. by each area team and by topic.
- It was asked whether the Council can report on fire safety quarterly. One resident suggested that we report on the number of fires. It was discussed at the group that this was a difficult area to report performance on but the Council will look into ways on increased reporting.
- It was also suggested that the reports contain information on staffing levels, for example staff turnover by area team. Council officers advised that this would need to be checked with HR to see whether this information can be published.

Annual Report to Residents

Each year, this report is subject to a review by a residents' focus group who agree the traffic light ratings.

Residents from the RWG gave the following feedback on the Annual Report to Residents:

- It was noted that this is a busy report, but all the information is useful and important.
- When designing the report the Council must consider accessibility for those who are colour-blind.
- Some felt it was confusing to use red/amber/green as the heading colours, as these could be mistaken for traffic light ratings.
- Residents generally felt this was an attractive looking report.
- The Council should encourage ongoing resident feedback on this report and Homelife in general.
- A resident suggested that as well as showing successes, the report should set out areas for improvement, for example conditions of pavements/estate roads, parking, cleaning. It was agreed that this could be presented in the report as a 'challenges we

face' section setting out what the Council is doing to tackle challenges and make improvements.

- The annual report should also breakdown the number of RAs per area.
- Major works satisfaction scores would also be beneficial.
- The report could include feedback from member led estate inspections, such as what actions arose, common themes from inspections over the year.

Rewarding Involvement

The RWG's views were sought on the ways residents can be rewarded for taking part in participation activities.

The Council believes it is important to recognise the time and effort given up by residents to get involved. We currently offer shopping vouchers as a token of gratitude for residents who have given up their time to be part of focus groups. However, there are other approaches which could be considered, such as prize draws or points schemes (where points earned could be used towards a range of activities/shopping vouchers).

The RWG felt that supermarket vouchers are good as they can be used for a range of goods, including food. It was also suggested that access to sports/leisure facilities could be included and that residents could have more choice over whether they wanted an activity or shopping vouchers.

Regarding the points based system, RWG raised concerns that there might not be enough opportunities for residents to get enough points and that residents might take part because they need to build up their points rather than because they are interested in the topic/activity at hand.

Taking into account the views of the RWG, the Council will carry out further research and establish the feasibility of options for rewarding involvement. Information will be brought to AHPs/BRF.