

Review: Communications in the new build process (2016)

The findings of this review were previously reported to the Housing Scrutiny Committee

Recommendations

	Objective	Actions
1	General for all teams	
1.1	Obtain feedback and publicise learning achieved	<p>Include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teams to carry out a satisfaction survey at the end of each project • Produce a newsletter about the scheme at the end of the project outlining learning achieved that will improve the resident experience for future schemes
1.2	Look at different communication methods to improve customer experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications material should refer to people who have experience of completed schemes, using photos and videos from inside their new homes • Communications Team should provide the necessary templates and guidance for contractors so that the messages and material given to residents are consistent and accurate • The booklet for Parkview Homes was too lengthy and could have been more visually appealing. There were too many words and not enough illustration. The information was too technical in nature; use of layman's terms would make it easier for residents. • The storyboards at the consultation events could be more organised so that residents can gain an understanding of the works that will take place
1.3	Involve the Inclusive Design Team so that accessibility is at the heart of a new development and publicise this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult the Inclusive Design Team to use the Joseph Rowntree Lifetime Homes Standards (recognising that the standards have changed to new ones that are less demanding)
1.4	Improve the Customer Care experience	<p>a. Consultation meetings should include time slots for residents who work irregular hours</p> <p>b. Project Managers to have customer care and interpersonal and communications skills training</p> <p>c. Refresher courses on use of written material to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The need for communications to be clear and simple with no jargon ➤ That the tone of letters need to be professional and empathic ➤ There should be less text on invites to events ➤ The need to for more use of bullet points ➤ The need for it to be clearer what the council wants residents to do

2	New Build team	
2.1	Make the customer experience real for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CGIs or photographs of internal layouts at planning stage including people for scale for boards and website b. 3D presentation boards to include a person to help demonstrate the scale of the property c. Use imagery to show a person in a wheelchair in adapted properties d. Refer to people who have experienced other schemes that have now completed e. Make a video on the different stages of a development project
2.2	Be open and transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Changes in design specification or anything else should be highlighted making it easier for residents to track all changes b. Arrange council organised risk management group meeting where residents can contribute on possible risk factors c. Clear role explanations of all experts involved – what they can do and can't do
2.3	Be clear in all forms of communications to improve resident understanding of the new build process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Initial invitation for drop in meetings should prepare residents on what to expect– in and out of project scope b. Comms should have a role in explaining the local lettings policy – standard letters/ posters c. Clear explanation of the local lettings policy but ensure that it is clearly understood to those who are eligible. Consider a quick text survey?
2.4	Advise non-resident leaseholders of the scope of the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Include as part of current process
2.5	Develop a role for a residents champion	<p>Appoint a designated Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) in the new build team to act as a champion for residents, especially those who are not represented by a Tenants and Residents Association.</p> <p>The RLO would meet everyone affected over the project cycle.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to what the best profile of the champion should be for each new build project. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person should not be a Council Officer • The person should not be a resident on the estate where works are being carried out • The person should be an independent, impartial party who provides reassurance to residents and who will assist in addressing issues and concerns from the residents regarding any issues that arise as a result of the New Build works.

3	Joint working	
3.	Promote Joint working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work closely with other councils on developing best practice for engagement b. Consider joint procurement c. The Inclusive Design team to discuss new New Building Regulations Approved Document M, Volume 1 – 3 categories – see notes d. Consult with Disability Action in Islington on design standards