

## Appendix 4 – Service Review Group – Communications in the New Build Process

### Summary of learning revised 25.2.16

#### Officer meetings

##### Communications and New Build team

- Produce a video of different stages of a development process including resident consultations using officers and residents
- Consider carrying out satisfaction survey on those affected by works at the end of the project
- Consider producing a newsletter about the scheme at the end of the project
- Newsletter should say what lessons have been learnt and that changes will be made to processes to improve resident experience
- Communications should have a role in explaining the local lettings policy
- Difficult to understand flat pictures – 3D images would be good and it would be useful to include a person in the images to demonstrate the scale. These should be accessible to everyone; imagery should show a person in a wheelchair in adapted properties
- Early briefings were described as good and transparent

##### Architect

- Involve residents as early as possible and at the preliminary stage if possible
- Clear role explanations of all experts involved – what they can do and can't do

##### Lettings

- Consider carrying out satisfaction survey on lettings process

##### Inclusive Design team

- New Build Team should consult the Inclusive Design Team before pre Ap stage
- The Inclusive Design Team to discuss new design standards with DAII (see link below)

[http://www.islington.gov.uk/services/planning/planningpol/pol\\_supplement/Pages/inclusivedesign.aspx](http://www.islington.gov.uk/services/planning/planningpol/pol_supplement/Pages/inclusivedesign.aspx)

#### From Disability Housing Panel

- The panel should be consulted at design stage
- All homes should be built with accessibility in mind and if it is to be a home for life then it should be designed with the view that the householder could be disabled and could become disabled or elderly
- Disabled people should have been consulted earlier in the planning process
- Why are disabled people, including the panel, not consulted in the planning or design stage of new developments?
- All new developments should include a percentage of specifically designated accessible homes
- All new developments should include planned Lifetime\* homes, which have basic accessibility features built in as future-proofing against the need to do more expensive 'back adapting' if need arises
- Deaf residents need to be consulted, and supported as tenants by housing/repair staff by the use of technology where possible, e.g. tablets using BSL apps/sites

- Lack of disabled parking spaces needs to be addressed – only disabled parking available on new schemes

### **Focus Group meeting**

- What is the role of the New Build Team in communicating with leaseholders who do not reside at the property? (*Email from resident unable to attend*)
- As the freeholder of the property we have the contact details of non-resident leaseholders. They should receive letters regarding the initial consultation informing residents there are plans to redevelop and giving them the opportunity to raise any issues or comments they have. They do not necessarily receive a copy of every subsequent letter that goes out.
- Feel that all project managers should have basic customer care/ interpersonal / communications skills training
- Asked communications to be clear/ simple /no jargon
- Fun days are good way communicate as these are family days
- We interviewed the architects, went to a council organised risk management group meeting where we could give the resident point of view
- There are many new build projects in the south of the borough – there seems to be no planned approach between the council another builders so the whole area has become an enormous building site
- Tone of letters need to be professional/ empathic
- Residents should attend a council organised risk management group meeting where residents can contribute on possible risk factors
- Any changes in design specification or anything else should be highlighted – makes it easier for residents to track all changes
- Residents should be given sufficient times to request for action especially over a holiday period
- A council officer should be appointed to act as a champion for residents especially those who do during a new build scheme i.e. designated Resident Liaison officers in the new build team
- The New Build Team's material should now refer to people who have experienced other schemes which have now completed

### **Telephone Survey – 4 out of 6 responses received**

- If long term project try to ensure that meet all affected residents
- Consider more face to face contact with residents as a telephone survey may not be as effective as discussing issues directly
- Check if local lettings policy is accessible on website
- Check that all residents have understood the local lettings policy
- Ring fence bidding to those who are eligible

### **Consultation meetings**

- CGIs of internal layouts for planning stage including a person in the images to give an idea of scale
- Less text on invites to events. Instead make more use of bullet points and also make it clearer what is expected of residents
- Use of too many words and not enough illustration. Found that 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 to take place
- Information leaflets to be shorter and visually appealing
- Time slots for residents who work unsocial hours
- Revised current survey should be sent to prepare the residents for the drop-in consultation as they seemed unprepared for it created an anxious meeting
- Consult with all relevant age groups at design stage

- The local lettings policy can be easily found on the website. It is well laid out and presented. Although, there needs to be clearer communication to residents on the points system for attaining new build flats. This information could be displayed on electronic noticeboards signposting residents to the website where the policy can be accessed

## **Benchmarking**

- Work more closely with other developing councils on best practice for engagement
- Consider joint procurement

## **Publication material**

### **Islington Council**

- Less text on invites to events. Instead make more use of bullet points and also make it clearer what is expected of residents
- Comms material should refer to people who have experienced other completed schemes – using photos/ videos / comments
- Use photographs of residents inside their new homes
- Produce a video of the internal and external communal areas and use real people in the representations.
- Include positive and negative feedback from residents in the communication material – for example on the electronic noticeboards

### **Contractors**

- There needs to be better co-ordination and oversight of the communication material between the council's Communications Team and the contractor prior to residents being informed of the builds. Communications Team should provide the necessary templates and guidance for contractors so that the messages and material to residents is consistent and accurate

## **Website**

### **Good**

- Very positive about the website; there were good drawings of the schemes and it was well laid out. The links on the pages were easy to follow

### **Learning**

- Photos of internal lay outs on completed schemes on website

## **General Comments**

- Consider the establishment of resident representation (trusted resident champions) to relay consistent and accurate information to their fellow residents on the works to be carried out and to communicate any changes and issues, for example, delays during the building process - so that residents feel involved. This could also help with obtaining feedback in an organised way of any issues residents feel need to be addressed during the build
- Follow up on issues raised by residents during the consultation phase of the project
- Consider how the role of the Resident Liaison Officer can be more effective in building trust, dealing with issues that arise and managing the expectations of residents
- Ensuring that consultation is carried out with all relevant groups and in particular those with disabilities who would be affected by the build in line with the disability standards recommended by the DAI