



You are the key to a better housing service

Report of: The Residents' Improvement Taskforce

Meeting of	Date	Agenda Item
Housing Executive	16 January 2014	

SUBJECT: Residents' Taskforce major Works Consultation Service Review

1. Summary

- 1.1 Major Works Communication was identified by residents as a priority area for review at the first Taskforce meeting on 4 December 2012. This report sets out the processes and recommendations of the second service review by the Residents' Improvement Taskforce.
- 1.2 This second review was undertaken by the Residents' Champions supported by the Residents' Review Panel volunteers and facilitated by the Resident Engagement Team.

2. Purpose of review

- 2.1 All Taskforce service reviews aim to improve the service delivered to residents. All reviews aim to reflect the Islington Fairness Commission objectives to make Islington a fairer place to live and work by producing fair policies, fair practices and fair people.
- 2.2 This service review looked at the communication between the landlord, contractors and residents during major works programmes.
- 2.3 Inconsistencies with the major works communication process were highlighted as an issue at resident's meetings and Taskforce surgeries. The review therefore aims to improve the consistency of the major works communication process to make it more consistent for all residents.

3. Terms of reference for the review

- 3.1 This review looked at how effective the consultation and communication for residents is throughout the major works process with specific reference to the timing of each stage of the consultation process.
- 3.2 The review looked at the procedures that are in place for residents when things go wrong and what residents can do if they are not happy with the work that has been carried out or the way they have been consulted.

3.3 The review looked at residents' satisfaction with the major works consultation process and the quality and effectiveness of the satisfaction surveys that are carried out.

3.4 The type of major works included internal works (kitchen and bathroom replacements), external works (cyclical improvement works) and Mechanical and Electrical (communal heating and lifts).

4. Recommendations

4.1 Improve the clarity, quality, timing and consistency of the information provided to residents so that they are able to influence the scope of the proposed works.

This includes:

- a) Taking a more imaginative approach to planning public meetings to make them more attractive to a wider range of residents.
- b) Ensuring the major works survey provides value for money, is relevant to residents and is effective and useful.
- c) Improving the monitoring of procedures so there is more confidence that they are being followed.
- d) Improving the quality and timing of information sent to leaseholders.

4.2 Sustained good communication whilst on site and after care.

This includes:

- e) Ensuring lessons are learnt from complaints and that they are monitored effectively, and dealt with consistently.
- f) Improving the quality of letters and written explanations of the snagging and defects procedures.
- g) Better consideration of vulnerable and disabled resident's needs.
- h) The major works sections of the website should be reviewed with input from residents.
- i) There should be a bigger presence of the Resident Liaison Officer on site with a greater flexibility in their role.

4.3 More details about Taskforce suggestions for improvements for each of their recommendations are set out under point 8 and appendix 4.

5 Service review methodology

5.1 Working with the Resident Engagement Team, the Residents' Champions have established a methodology for carrying out service reviews. Whilst each Taskforce service review might be a little different, in general, they will follow the same basic steps which include the following:

- Identify and agree the scope of the review
- Identify and agree specific objectives for the review
- Identify the information and evidence that will be required
- Identify who will need to be involved, how and when
- Gather the evidence
- Evaluate the evidence
- Reality checking: speak with staff, residents and other relevant stakeholders
- Agree recommendations and draft the report

A summary of the approach taken for the review of major works communication is set out below:

5.2 Scoping the review

5.2.1 The Taskforce presented their plans for the scope of the review to the Director of Property Services and Director of Operations on 12 June 2013. This set out the areas of the major works consultation process that would be included in the review as well as the areas that would not be considered.

5.2.2 The scoping document sets out the terms of reference for the review as well as the timescales and methodology. The full scoping document was published on the website and is attached as Appendix 1.

5.3 Developing the review timetable

5.3.1 A timetable for the review was agreed with the Taskforce and is attached as Appendix 2.

5.4 Identifying and gathering evidence

5.4.1 The Taskforce identified the documents required for the desktop review which was to better understand the major works communication process. Below are some examples of the documents requested and reviewed:

- Consultation procedures
- Sample letter templates
- Sample complaints
- Surveys and results
- Major Works pages on the council's website

5.5 Reality checking

5.5.1 To test the desktop research, the Taskforce met with residents, staff and contractors. In each case some initial questions were scripted to find out how the

service was working on the ground. The scripted questions served to provide a starting point for these meetings and are attached as Appendix 3.

5.5.2 Residents were involved in the review process and shared their experiences of the major works process during a leaseholder focus group and two focus groups held during site visits to estates where major works were taking place. The Taskforce attended a number of public consultation meetings. There was also a meeting with the Housing Disability Panel.

5.5.3 Residents looked at sample complaints to pick up on common themes.

5.5.3 Meetings were held with the two main contractors responsible for major works and with one communal heating contractor:

- Breyer (Major Works Contractor)
- Mears (Major Works Contractor)
- CBS Ltd. (communal heating)

5.5.4 A series of meetings were held with council staff involved in delivering major works programmes, to better understand the process, the challenges and ideas for service improvements. The meetings included both senior management and staff. Full details of the meetings and who was involved can be seen in Appendix 2.

6 Equality & diversity

6.1 As part of the review, the Taskforce engaged with a range of residents from the Resident Involvement Register. The Taskforce also attended a meeting with the Housing Disability Panel to gather views and issues from residents.

7 Findings

7.1 On examining the evidence and conducting interviews the taskforce members carrying out the review found that the following areas of the major works consultation process needed improvement:

7.1.1 From the focus groups residents reported that too much jargon is used in written communication. They were not always kept informed when dates changed or when scaffolding was being put up. Residents said they would like meetings to be managed better so that individuals don't take over, encouraging everyone to have their say. Residents fed back that they felt more thought could be given to public consultation meetings and the way they are run to make them more appealing.

7.1.2 Leaseholders would like better information about what is planned over future years. They feel that staff should spend more time familiarising themselves with the estate and involve estate services and residents at an early stage. Roles and responsibilities should be clearer and more information should be put online including some Frequently Asked Questions. They would like to know about planned works and potential costs earlier.

7.1.3 The focus group with the housing disability panel revealed that disabled resident's needs are not always taken into account. The lack of consultation for environmental works can have a negative impact on disabled residents. The panel revealed that the defects and snagging processes were not clear and disabled

residents would like to be present when works are signed off. More care needs to be given when disabled residents belongings are moved, failure to place things back in the right place can have a big impact on residents, particularly those who are visually impaired.

- 7.1.4 Contractors reported that they did not always receive names, contact details and disability and communication requirements due to data protection issues. If all this information was passed to the contractor at the start of the contract it would save time and ensure resident's needs are taken into account. Contractors would also like this information for environmental as well as internal works. They would like to improve the relationship they have with the consultation officers and be introduced to TRAs and other formal groups early on. The contractors explained that complaints are reported differently to the council and this should be aligned.
- 7.1.6 Staff interviews revealed that it is difficult to go to leaseholders with very accurate costs early on as the scope of works can change due to consultation with residents. Tenants could be given more information about costs and invited to leaseholder meetings. Staff agreed that residents should be involved in developing the website pages. Discussion revealed that it could be useful to have greater flexibility in the role of the Resident Liaison Officer (RLO).
- 7.1.7 The Taskforce looked at the major works satisfaction survey and the costs involved. They were not confident the survey provided value for money and were not clear what was done with the results. They felt the survey questions were not meaningful for residents or easy to understand.
- 7.1.8 The Taskforce looked at some sample complaints and felt some residents struggled to make a clear complaint which affected how it was dealt with. It wasn't clear if any staff had an overall view of all complaints to identify trends or reoccurring issues.
- 7.1.9 Both residents and staff agree the website needs to be improved. The pages are hard to navigate, not all information is up to date or relevant to residents. The Taskforce were not confident that the review of the website was being given a high enough priority.

8 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 8.1 The Taskforce recommendations are based on the evidence and feedback provided by residents, staff and contractors during the review. Set out below are some of the suggestions for improvements which the Housing Executive should consider when reviewing the action plan staff have developed.

The primary aim of the action plan is to find solutions to the areas highlighted for improvement by the Taskforce. Where suggestions for improvements are difficult, not practical to implement, or would not provide value for money officers will look at alternatives they can implement in order to achieve the aim that has been highlighted by the Taskforce.

- a) **A more imaginative approach should be taken to planning public meetings to make them more attractive to a wider range of residents.**

The council should work with TRAs and other resident's groups to plan public meetings and think of alternative ways to encourage people to attend with sufficient resources made available to do this. All venues should be accessible and local and all minutes should be put on the website.

- b) **Ensure the major works survey provides value for money, is relevant to residents and is effective and useful.**

The survey needs to be evaluated to ensure it provides value for money and that the questions are relevant and useful so that residents and staff know it is worth carrying out. More use of the website should be made to publicise results and changes that are made, as a result of the survey, so that residents are aware of improvements that have been made. The defects card could be improved to ensure residents have a better understanding of the defects process.

- c) **Improve the monitoring of procedures so there is more confidence that they are being followed.**

Procedures should have tighter monitoring so that residents can be confident they are being followed and there should be consistent timescales on all contract types. More use of the website could be made to share a resident friendly version of the procedure so residents can better understand the process. Contact information of all residents should be shared with the contractor, in particular details of disabled or vulnerable residents.

- d) **Improve the quality and timing of information sent to leaseholders.**

To avoid potential Leaseholder Valuation Tribunals the information and timing of information shared with leaseholders should be improved. Surveys could be less generic and more specific for individual blocks and adequate evidence should be provided.

- e) **Ensure lessons are learnt from complaints and that they are monitored effectively and dealt with consistently.**

Guidelines on how to make an effective complaint should be developed to help those residents who find it hard to make a complaint. It would be beneficial for one team to oversee all complaints about major works so that lessons can be learnt. The way complaints are dealt with should be constant.

- f) **Improve the quality of letters and written explanations of the snagging and defects procedures.**

Letters could be more friendly by being reviewed by the reader's panel and addressed to named individuals. It could be beneficial for tenants to receive an 'indicative costs' letter as well as leaseholders and for this letter to be sent earlier in the process.

- g) **Better consideration of vulnerable and disabled resident's needs.**

It is essential that contractors are aware of disabled and vulnerable residents so that their individual needs can be fully considered. There needs to be closer consideration given to the needs of vulnerable and disabled residents when it comes to both internal and environmental works.

- h) **The major works sections of the website should be reviewed with input from residents.**

The strategy and timetable in developing the major works pages of the website should be shared with residents. Resident's ideas about what information is available are essential to ensure it contains the information they want to see.

- i) **There should be a bigger presence of the Resident Liaison Officer on site with a greater flexibility in their role.**

Work could be done to improve the relationship between contractors and the consultation officers with an opportunity for consultation officers to feedback on performance. There should be more flexibility in the way the council and contractors communicate with residents which would be supported by the opportunity to alter the role of the RLO officer depending on the needs of the estate. If residents are more involved in signing off works there will be more understanding and a reduction in dissatisfaction.

9. Next steps

- 9.1 The Taskforce recommendations will be built into an action plan which will be drafted by council officers for consideration of the Housing Executive at their meeting in May 2014.

10 Acknowledgments

- 10.1 The Taskforce would like to thank the residents that took the time to share their views and experiences, providing positive input and ideas for improving the communal repairs service.
- 10.2 The Resident's Champions would like to thank the Review Panel volunteers for their time, commitment, ideas and support during this review.
- 10.3 The Taskforce would also like to thank all of the staff, managers and contractors that participated in the review for their cooperation and positive input.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Major Works Communication Scoping Document
- Appendix 2 – Major Works Communication Service Review Timetable
- Appendix 3 – Scripted questions for reality checking meetings
- Appendix 4 – Major Works Communication Recommendations

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Appendix 1 – scoping document

Resident Improvement Taskforce

Service Review Scoping Document

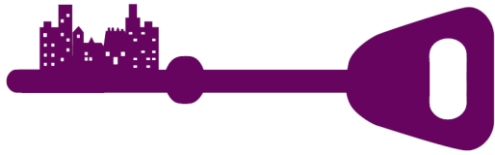
This document is completed at the beginning of every Resident Improvement Taskforce (Taskforce) service review and is referred to throughout the review process. The completed scoping document informs the Service Review Timetable.

1. Title of Service Review	Major Works Consultation Review
2. Purpose of the review	<p>All of the Taskforce service reviews set out to improve the service delivered to tenants and residents. All reviews should reflect the Islington Fairness Commission objectives to make Islington a fairer place to live and work by producing fair policies and fair practices.</p> <p>This service review will look at the consultation and communication process between the landlord, contractor and residents prior to major works being identified until the end of the defects period.</p>
3. Taskforce Review Group members	<p>Theresa Coyle MBE (Residents' Champion) Peter Owen (Residents' Vice-Champion) Violet Oruwari-Mccabe (Residents' Vice-Champion) Chris Graham- Review Panel Member Tracey Willoughby - Review Panel Member Susanne Lamido - Review Panel Member Annabel Goulding - Review Panel Member Angela Picknell - Review Panel Member Georgia Constantinou - Review Panel Member Nicola Eyidah - Review Panel Member Luigi Indri - Review Panel Member Yvonne Quinn – Review Panel Member</p>
4. Expected timescale for the review	From 12 June 2013 – January 2014 Housing Executive
5. Terms of reference for review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This review will examine how effective the consultation and communication for residents is throughout the major works process with specific reference to the timing of each stage of the consultation process. • The review will look at the procedures that are in place for residents when things go wrong and what residents can do if they are not happy with the work that has been carried out

	<p>or the way they have been consulted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review will look at resident's satisfaction with the major works consultation process and the quality and effectiveness of the satisfaction surveys that are carried out. • The type of major works to be covered in the review will include internal works (kitchen and bathroom replacements), external works (cyclical improvement works) and Mechanical and Electrical (communal heating and lifts).
<p>6. Key areas of enquiry – desktop research required</p>	<p>Listed below are documents and evidence requested by the Taskforce. Additional evidence may be requested during the review, following the initial desktop review and feedback from staff or residents.</p> <p>Where performance data or sample complaints are requested they should cover the period from April 2012 to present date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What level of investigation is there into identifying works • Staffing structures relating to major works, highlighting areas of responsibility (specifically who is responsible for the different stages of major works). • How does the leaseholder consultation team work with the wider consultation team? • Customer care and performance standards relating to major works • Complaints handling procedure. • Information on major works on the internet. • Customer satisfaction surveys relating to major works. • Major works procedures including contractor and sub-contractor responsibilities. • Major works complaints including sample complaints. • Process for snagging/defects. • Major works programme. • Any post works inspection data. • Samples of letters and communications with residents at each stage for both tenants and leaseholders • Samples of leaflets and newsletters sent to residents regarding the major works process • Evidence of consultation carried out prior to going on site. • Evidence where residents have an opportunity to make decisions on fixtures and fitting. • What information are residents about the quality of fixtures and fittings • Site set up regarding accessibility. • How the council consult with vulnerable residents. • How the council work with adaptations. • Details of meetings/drop ins. • How do the council consult and communicate with disabled residents. What processes are in place?

7. Key areas of enquiry – reality checking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mystery shoppers – attending consultation meetings • Staff interviews • Resident focus groups • Benchmarking major works consultation procedures/letters etc • Satisfaction surveys • Interview contractors • Comparison with other housing providers
8. Who will we speak to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Property Services • Head of Property Support Services • Head of Capital Programming • Group leader capital works • Consultation manager • Consultation team • LVT Officer • Contractors – RLOs etc • Home Ownership manager • Leaseholder Major Works Consultation Team Leader • LH calculation and sales team leader • Estate Service Co-coordinator
9. Potential visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onsite where major works are taking place • Consultation meetings • Any registered providers delivering best practise in terms of consultation
10. Possible co-optees	Non required for this review
11. Equality & Diversity	<p>The Taskforce will ensure that a representative sample of residents is consulted during the review and will liaise with a range of community groups.</p> <p>An initial screening / risk assessment template will be completed as part of the review with a full Equality Impact Assessment undertaken as part of the action plan.</p>
12. Risks	The review must ensure that any recommendations do not compromise the council's position in recharging leaseholders. Legal services will review recommendations before they are finalised.
13. Expected outcomes of the review	<p>The review will aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the consultation and communication with residents during programmed major works. • Improve satisfaction with the consultation process • Increase the number of residents who attend consultation meetings
14. Communications – how the review will be publicised?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping document published on the website • Final report published on the website • Article summarising report, recommendations and outcomes in autumn edition of Your Home

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan (agreed by Housing Executive) published on the website • Press release
15. Council Officers involved in the review	Helen Taplin – Resident Improvement Taskforce Coordinator Lee Farrow - Resident Improvement Taskforce Coordinator Nalini Trivedi – Resident Engagement Officer Jacqueline Robinson – Resident Engagement Manager
16. Reporting arrangements to Residents Improvement Taskforce	An interim report will be presented at the Taskforce meeting on 2 October 2013 with a full report on 23 January 2014
17. Reporting arrangements to Housing Executive	An update will be given at the Housing Executive meeting on 7 November 2013 and the final report and recommendations will be presented at the Housing Executive meeting on 16 Jan 2014.
18. Ongoing reporting arrangements	Any extraordinary meetings will be timetabled during the course of the review.



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Appendix 2



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Major Works Communication Review - Reality Checking Timetable

w/c	Date	Task	Where	Staff	Champion	Panel Member
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AUGUST 2013

19 Aug	19					
	20					
	21	Deadline for desktop templates	Send to Helen Taplin	HT	ALL	ALL
	22	Reality Check - Morgan Mansions Consultation Meeting	Town Hall 6.30-8pm		n/a	4 panel members
	23					

w/c	Date	Task	Where/When	Staff	Champion	Panel
26 Aug	26					
	27					
	28	Taskforce meeting to write interview questions	HH 6.30-8.30pm	HT/HB	ALL	ALL
	29	Reality Check – Half Moon major works progress meeting	Half Moon Community Centre 7-8pm	n/a		TBC
	30					

SEPTEMBER 2013

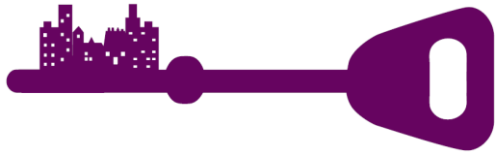
2 Sep	2	Housing Executive	Town Hall 6 – 8pm	HB	1 champion	All welcome
	3	Staff interview - Director and Consultation Manager	HH 10 -11.30am	Jacqu.	2 champions	1 panel member
		Staff interview - Contractor	HH 12-1pm	Nalini	2 champions	
		Consultation Manager – procedure reality checking	HH 1.30 2.00	n/a	2 champions	
	4	Staff interview - Asset management	HH 10.30-11.30	Helen	2 champions	
		Staff interview - Home ownership manager and LVT officer	HH 11.45- 12.45	Wendy	2 champions	
		Staff interview - Leaseholder consultation Team Leader and Operations Director	HH 2 – 3pm	Nalini	2 champions	1 panel member
	5	Staff interview - Consultation Team	HH 2 – 4pm	Helen	2 champions	1 panel member
		Disability Panel	Laycock Street 1pm-3pm	Wendy/ Jacqu.	1 champion	n/a
		Staff interview - Heads of Service	HH 5 - 6 pm	Helen	2 champions	

9 Sep	9					
	10	Staff interview - Customer Excellence Manager (complaints) – Vicki Bates	HH 10 – 11am	Lee	2 champions	
	11	Contractor interviews Breyers – 10-10.45 Mears - 11-11.45 Communal heating contractor - 2.00-2.45	HH Room 11	Helen/ Lee	3 champions	2 panel members

	12					

16 Sep	16	Leaseholder focus group Weston Rise section 20 meeting 6-8pm – Weston Rise Community Centre, 187 Pentonville Road, N1 9NZ		Jacqu.	1 champion	
	17	Deadline for interview notes Clifton Court Pre-commencement meeting 7–8.30pm – Durham Road Community Rooms, 86 Durham Road, N7 7DU	Staff to send notes to HT	HT	n/a	n/a
	18	Onsite visit and focus group Aubert Court Estate	10 – 12.30 Aubert Court Community Centre	Nalini	1 champion	2 panel members
	19					
	20	On site visit and focus group Half Moon	HM Crescent Community Centre 10 – 12.30pm	Helen	1 champion	2 panel members

23 Sep	23	New North Road Estate Section 20 meeting 6-8pm – Islington Town Hall				
	24					
	25	Helen to send out all evidence gathered to Taskforce for them to consider before meeting on 9 October		Helen	All	All
	26					
	27					



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Staff Interview Questions

Background

The Residents' Improvement Taskforce was set up to improve housing services by involving residents directly in reviewing services. Major Works Consultation has been identified by residents as the second service area for review.

This review will look at the communication and consultation that takes place between the landlord and tenants and residents during the major works process.

As part of the review the Taskforce have reviewed a number of documents to better understand the Major Works Consultation process.

We would like to find out more about your involvement in the Major Works Consultation process and your ideas for improving the service.

1.0	Director of Property Services and Consultation Manager
1.1	What is your role in the consultation process for Major Works?
1.2	What do you do with the feedback from the consultation meeting feedback forms and the cards that are sent out when works are completed?
1.3	Who is responsible for the website pages? How do you make sure the website is useful for residents? How are state profiles on the website developing?
1.4	Do you consult with residents about whether they feel the work is necessary?
1.5	Do staff who make decisions on whether major works take place have the technical qualifications to do so? Do they provide evidence to residents to support whether works are necessary?



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2.0	Contractor leads
2.1	What role do you play in monitoring how the contractors communicate with residents?
2.2	How do you monitor complaints made to the contractor?
2.3	What clauses in the contract ensure the contractor communicates well with residents? What penalties are available if they fail to communicate effectively?

2.4	How do you monitor the conduct of sub-contractors and how they communicate with residents?
2.5	What do you think could be done to improve communication with residents during major works?



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3.0	Asset Manager and Housing Business Plan Manager
3.1	What is your role in the process for Major Works?
3.2	What process do you use to decide when cyclical work needs to be carried out?
3.3	Who makes the decision?

3.4	Who decides what constitutes cyclical works?
3.5	How do you prove everyone's home has been maintained?
3.6	What happens to street properties that are managed by the council?
3.7	What do you think could be done to improve communication with residents during major works?



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4.0	Home Ownership Manager and LVT Officer
4.1	What is your role in the consultation process for Major Works?

4.2	How do you justify to leaseholders what works needs to be carried out?
4.3	What do leaseholders do if they feel work is unnecessary?
4.4	What methods do you use to encourage leaseholders to get involved in the consultation process?
4.5	What can be done better to avoid tribunal cases? How can we raise the level of involvement to avoid potential tribunal cases?
4.6	What do you think could be done to improve communication with residents during major works?



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5.0 Director of Operations and Leaseholder Consultation Manager

5.1	What is your role in the consultation process for Major Works?
5.2	Do you consult with leaseholders about whether they feel work is necessary?
5.3	What do leaseholders do if they feel works are unnecessary?
5.4	How are leaseholders informed about delays?
5.5	How do you inform leaseholders what their rights are concerning the defects period?
5.6	Does someone from the leaseholder consultation team attend all consultation meetings?
5.7	What methods do you use to encourage leaseholders to get involved in the consultation process?
5.8	What do you think could be done to improve communication with residents during major works?



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Background

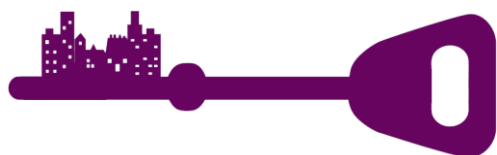
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6.0	Heads of Service
6.1	What is your role in the consultation process for Major Works?
6.1	Who is responsible for the major works pages on the website? How often are they reviewed? How do you make sure they are useful for residents?
6.2	We have some questions regarding the Kwest survey – a) Does the survey provide value for money? b) Do you look at other providers to carry out the survey? c) What do you do with the results of the survey? d) The number of surveys carried out since 2011/12 has dropped significantly, what is the reason for this?
6.3	How are cyclical works managed for Street Properties that are managed by the council? Have decent homes works been completed for these properties?
6.4	What do you think could be done to improve communication with residents during major works?



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7.0	Customer Excellence Manager (complaints)
7.1	What is your role in the consultation process for Major Works?
7.1	How are complaints filtered on the online complaints form?
7.2	Who do complaints go to after being filtered?
7.3	What training do staff have in dealing with complaints?
7.4	How do you know if something is still in the defects period and what do you do if it is?
7.5	How do you make sure vulnerable residents are understood by staff when they make a complaint?
7.6	If a resident wants to make a complaint about a member of staff, how can they be confident it is dealt with professionally and not by the manager who they might be friends with?
7.7	What do you think could be done to improve communication with residents during major works?



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Background

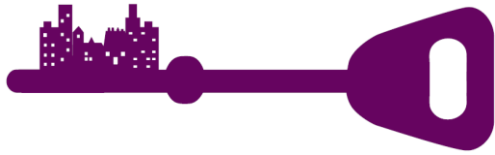
The Residents' Improvement Taskforce was set up to improve housing services by involving residents directly in reviewing services. Major Works Consultation has been identified by residents as the second service area for review.

This review will look at the communication and consultation that takes place between the landlord and tenants and residents during the major works process.

As part of the review the Taskforce have reviewed a number of documents to better understand the Major Works Consultation process.

We would like to find out more about your involvement in the Major Works Consultation process and your ideas for improving the service.

8.0	Consultation Team
8.1	What is your role in the consultation process for Major Works?
8.2	How do you check and monitor complaints made to the contractor and the responses that are given? How regularly do you monitor them?
8.3	How do you explain to residents what their right are during the defects period?
8.4	Who from the council monitors the snagging process? Who does the snagging and who ensures it gets done?
8.5	Have the tone of some letters been changed as a result of complaints that have been made?
8.6	How are residents informed of delays?
8.7	How do you monitor that standard letters are being used? How often are letters reviewed?
8.8	What different methods do you use to encourage residents to get involved?
8.9	How do you ensure that signage is put up on estates telling residents about the works being carried out?
8.10	What do you think could be done to improve communication with residents during major works?



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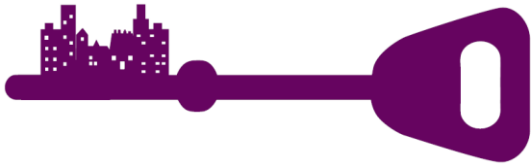
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9.0	Contractors
9.1	What is your role in the consultation process for Major Works?
9.2	What training do staff have in dealing with customers?
9.2	Do you produce a regular newsletter to residents?
9.4	How do you make sure vulnerable residents are understood by staff when they make a complaint?
9.5	How do you tell residents about their rights during the defects period and what do you tell them?
9.6	How are residents informed about the delays?
9.7	What do you think could be done to improve communication with residents during major works?



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Appendix 4 - Recommendations

Aim	Recommendation	Detail
<p>Improve the clarity, quality, timing and consistency of the information provided to residents so that they are able to influence the scope of the proposed works.</p>	<p>A more imaginative approach should be taken to planning public meetings to make them more attractive to a wider range of residents.</p>	1 Details of people who complain should be collected and actively encourage these people to attend consultation meetings.
		2 Send meeting minutes to all residents who attend and ensure they are always put on the website/notice boards. Ensure all staff are consistent in doing this.
		3 Some resources should be set aside to encourage more people to attend meetings and make them more friendly and interesting. Training and support in engaging residents in an imaginative, more fun and positive way and on how to conduct meetings effectively.
		4 Half Moon should be used as a good example. Half Moon had clear and useful signage, the site office was in community centre, and they were effective at organising and running meetings.
		5 Tenants should be 're-consulted' when there are changes to major works programmes resulting from consultation with leaseholders.
		6 Plan consultation meetings with TRAs/interested residents groups using different ways to get people involved.
		7 Ensure that venues are accessible and make full use of local venues.
		8 Investigate making more use of mobile phone numbers for texting, for example to let people know about upcoming meetings.
		9 Residents should be consulted if changes need to be made to parking spaces on site.
	<p>Ensure the major works survey provides value for money, is relevant to residents and is effective and useful.</p>	10 Survey questions should be reviewed and assess whether the survey provides value for money.
		11 A summary for residents should be published.
		12 Advertise and monitor what has been done as a result of the survey.
		13 The defects card should be reviewed, returned in an envelope and better explain the defects period.

	Improve the monitoring of procedures so there is more confidence that they are being followed.	14	Procedures for all contract types should show clear and consistent timescales.
		15	Review how following the procedures is monitored.
		16	A resident friendly procedure to be put on the website, written in conjunction with residents.
		17	All contact information, including information about disability and vulnerability, should be sent to the contractor prior to works starting.
	Improve the quality and timing of information sent to leaseholders.	18	To avoid potential Leaseholder valuation Tribunals the dialogue with leaseholders should start as early as possible.
		19	Improve information given to potential leaseholders including potential costs and some FAQs.
		20	Review and improve the information provided to new leaseholders including plans for upcoming years.
		21	The pledge needs to be marketed more widely and effectively.
		22	Consider more ways including technology (e.g. Skype) to include and involve absent leaseholders in consultations.
		23	Surveys should be less generic and more specific for individual blocks before indicative costs are sent.
		24	Adequate evidence should be provided to support decisions and this information should be available online.
25	Consider a 'pre-indicative cost' letter. The earlier the dialogue begins with residents ahead of major works, the better.		
Sustained good communication whilst on site and after care	Ensure lessons are learnt from complaints and that they are monitored effectively and dealt with consistently.	26	Develop clear guidelines for residents on making a complaint and what information to include.
		27	Develop clear guidelines on how to make a complaint about a communal improvement.
		28	A complaint about major works should not be signed off until all work to rectify the problem has been completed.
		29	The Consultation Team should be more involved in major works complaints and possibly oversee all major works related complaints.
		30	The Consultation Team should regularly review the onsite complaints book.
		31	Clear roles and responsibilities should be set out between the contractor and council in dealing with complaints. Residents need to be clear about who they should go to first. This should be set out in newsletters, at meetings and in the introductory pack of information provided.

		32	Take steps to ensure contractor and council complaints procedures are aligned.	
		33	Encourage proactive approaches from staff to resolve issues as they arise, dealing with issues early and taking ownership.	
		34	Contractors need to be clearly accountable for their sub-contractors and monitoring should be improved.	
	Improve the quality of letters and written explanations of the snagging and defects procedures.		35	All letter templates should be reviewed by the reader's panel and made more polite and friendly and written in plain English.
			36	Letters should all be addressed to a named individual and contain a named contact.
			37	Letters should be sent out two weeks in advance of planned works/changes.
			38	Staff should receive further training in writing letters in plain English.
			39	There should be clearer communication around snagging and defects including clear definitions of each and when and how they will be happening.
			40	Investigate sending tenants (as well as leaseholders) an indicative unit costs letter (with the caveat costs can change).
			41	Investigate giving leaseholders indicative costs earlier.
	Better consideration of vulnerable and disabled resident's needs.		42	Ensure that aids and adaptations are taken into account when carrying out major works.
			43	Information to identify vulnerable and disabled residents should be provided consistently to contractors for environmental works as well as internal works. Ensure this is shared at an early stage to allow for effective planning and engagement.
			44	Ensure vulnerable and disabled residents are clear about the snagging and defects procedures.
			45	Ensure vulnerable and disabled residents are consulted fully with when internal works are carried out so belongings are put back in the correct place.
	The major works sections of the website should be reviewed with input from residents.		46	Include residents in redesigning the website including the GIS system. Ask residents what they want to see on the website.
47			Devise a strategy and timetable for the website review which should be shared with residents.	
48			Estate profiles should include minutes of meetings.	
49			Make the Asset Management and Capital Improvement Plan available on the website.	
50			The website should have clear, regularly updated information which allows residents to see what works are planned for their estate and when.	
		51	A site manager or RLO should be available on site 9-5pm or contactable on a Freephone number.	

	There should be a bigger presence of the Resident Liaison Officer on site with a greater flexibility in their role	52	Offer up community centres as respite from noisy works.
		53	RLO should phone the operative on the day of the appointment to remind them.
		54	Where there is no TRA other formal groups should be used for the walk about, if neither then other residents should be invited.
		55	Communication needs to be improved between contractors and the Council's consultation officers. Build on relationships at key meetings and more presence on the estates by council consultation officers during works.
		56	Consultation officers should give feedback on contractor performance for performance indicators.
		57	The council should have the ability to change the emphasis of the contractor RLO job description on a project by project basis so that tasks can be tailored accordingly to best meet the needs of residents.
		58	Introduce a system to identify and introduce RLOs/contractors to TRAs and TMOs at an early stage of the works.
		59	Offering flexible times to discuss options with residents particularly those who work 9-5pm
		60	There should be a clear process for signing off major works that includes residents. Individuals and TRA should be invited to a walkabout to sign-off works