

<b>Title:</b> Leasehold Workshop and Resident Conference	<b>Meeting:</b> Board	
<b>Report authorised by:</b> Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing & Customer Care and Jamie Carswell, Director of Strategy and Performance	<b>Date of the meeting:</b> 9 November 2010	<b>Item No.</b> 6
<b>Report author</b> Lisa Keating, Head of Leasehold Services and Paul Allen, Head of Engagement	<b>Classification</b> Open	<b>Report type</b> Information, Discussion and Decision
<b>Business Plan Objective</b> 1.3 Diversity - To demonstrate that services are accessible, inclusive and fairly provided to all. 1.4 Engagement and Influence – To demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of engagement undertaken across all services. 4.2 Partnerships - To plan, procure and deliver services in partnership with public, private or third-sector organisations.		
<b>Financial implications</b> The total cost of the Leasehold Workshop was £7,600 and the cost of the Resident Conference was £12,100. This includes all expenditure including staff costs. This results in a cost of 84 pence per leaseholder (Leaseholder Workshop) and 55 pence per resident (Resident Conference). The outcomes and actions arising from the two events are helping us to reshape and improve our services will benefit all tenants and leaseholders.		
<b>Risk Management</b> 3. Making a difference 5. Organisational Coherence		
<b>Linkages to Strategies</b> The Will to Win – Business Plan 2010/11 Diversity Strategy Resident Engagement Strategy		
<b>Summary</b> These events were attended by a total of 118 residents and provided opportunities to discuss current services and to help shape plans for the future. The results of the conversations and debates will be fed back to those who attended and are already influencing decisions about the year two Neighbourhood Action Plans; the Neighbourhood Action Days in 2011/12 and resident engagement in our business planning process.		

## Recommendations

That the Board:

- (i) notes the contents of this report, and
- (ii) agrees that the detailed feedback form both events will feed into and inform the 2011/12 Business Plan.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 The Leasehold Workshop was the first of its kind exclusively for leaseholders and was held on Saturday 2nd October 2010. The event was attended by 45 leaseholders who were supported by 26 staff.

1.2 The Resident Conference was held Saturday 16th October 2010 and was attended by 73 residents who were supported by 36 staff.

## 2 Objectives for the Workshop and Conference

2.1 The objectives of the Workshop were to give leaseholders:

- information, help and assistance;
- an overview of our service now and find out what they would like to see in the future;
- an understanding of what our plans for the future are;
- give detail to the Leasehold Policy Review in partnership with LBTH;
- carry out a satisfaction survey; and
- sign up people as key leaseholders to work actively with us in the future.

2.2 The objectives of the Conference were to:

- have neighbourhood focussed conversations;
- pair and group different neighbourhoods so they could compare and challenge actions in other neighbourhoods;
- build connections between different neighbourhoods and with THH;
- receive feedback on the process of developing, delivering and monitoring the Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs), with a view to improving them in their second year; and
- reflect on what makes a good neighbourhood.

These objectives were achieved by the planning and design of the events and the workshops and discussion sessions described below.

## 3 Background

3.1 One hundred and forty leaseholders expressed an interest in attending the Workshop. 85 leaseholders confirmed their attendance by letter or following a phone call from us and on the day 45 leaseholders took part. The staff support was based on attendance by the Leasehold Team, Asset Management, Caretaking and the Resident Engagement Team.

3.2 The agenda for the Leaseholder event was based around four workshops in the morning and four workshops in the afternoon. The workshops were decided upon following consultation with our leaseholders on the Getting Involved Register. The workshops were:

- Building Insurance;
- Major Works;
- Leaseholder Advisory Services (LEASE);
- Repairs and Maintenance;
- Leasehold Valuation Tribunal;
- Estate Services – Cleaning & Caretaking;
- Money Help & Advice; and
- Landlords & Leaseholders Rights and Responsibilities.

3.3 One hundred and thirty two residents confirmed their attendance at the Conference with representation from every neighbourhood. We anticipated some drop out which in most cases this was due to illness and care commitments. We do know that some residents were not in favour of attending on a weekend. The staff support was based on attendance by the Neighbourhood Champions but included some Neighbourhood Friends, Area Housing Managers, Senior Housing Officers, Neighbourhood Housing Officers and the Engagement Team.

3.4 The Conference was focussed on neighbourhood level discussions.

The morning session discussed the effectiveness of the NAPs as a tool to improve the neighbourhoods; how engaged residents are and their level of ownership of the NAPs and what impact the NAPs have had. We wanted to learn from the first year of the three year process.

The afternoon session was used to ask residents what they think makes a good neighbourhood; what makes for good neighbours and what THH and the residents can do, together, to achieve these.

The main objective of these discussions was for staff and residents to consider the future in a positive way and generate a shared vision for building good neighbourhoods and to avoid a negative look back at what had not worked.

The day also included three videos to promote successful neighbourhood projects. These were allotments schemes and community food growing; youth football teams and the improvement of communal spaces.

## 4 Outcomes

4.1 The results of the Leaseholder Workshop included signing up key leaseholders to work with us on:

- mapsites;
- timesheeting managements administration charges;

- caretaking & cleaning; and
- S20 Policy & procedure.

#### 4.2 We also agreed to:

- use the feedback session at the end to obtain the leaseholders' views on how they would like us to engage with them in the future;
- use the satisfaction survey to give us views on what we can change in the future events;
- capture the feedback from each workshop and use it to inform and improve the process for next years Leasehold Conference;

The results of the discussion about the next steps for leaseholder services included:

- increased use of e-mail to send out information;
- transparency of charges with easy to understand information;
- proper consultation on all works over £250;
- driving down costs and correcting accounts quickly;
- low annual service and management charges;
- improved repairs reports;
- workshop by LEASE very well attended putting leaseholders directly in touch with a free professional leasehold advice;
- opportunity for leaseholders to hear from a leasehold member of the board (adding credibility to the improvements witnessed); and
- opportunity to get feedback on improvements in leasehold services direct from the customer.

This feedback will help shape next years team and service plans.

#### 4.3 The results of the Conference discussion about NAPs included:

- low awareness overall of the NAPs and a strong view that there should be more resident awareness and involvement in their formulation;
- most residents had received their copy of Neighbourhood News, and were aware of what it reported; they had therefore seen much of the NAPs content without appreciating what it was;
- mixed messages about how visible some staff were to residents – some Neighbourhood Housing Officers were clearly very high profile, and others less so;
- many of the tables highlighted the value of engaging with all age-groups, young and old;
- strong support for the idea of the NAPs, and their continuation. Residents emphasised how they would like to see the plan as a joint agreement between them and THH, rather than that of their landlord;
- several groups emphasised the need for a more local NAP, so residents can see the actions for 'their corner' of the neighbourhood;
- strong support from a number of tables for a simple 'to do' list to capture the day to day, local issues;

- the local neighbourhood action days had been communicated to varying degrees, but were strongly supported as an initiative which could be built upon;
- a number of discussions highlighted the importance of residents taking responsibility for their own behaviour, and there was some debate about how this element could be incorporated into the NAP;
- monthly progress reports on the notice boards would help keep residents up to date on progress; the monitoring of the NAPs more generally was highlighted as a need for further development.

In addition, there were a number of neighbourhood specific commitments ranging between establishing a TRA, running a series of 'community days', and sharing advice and visits between neighbourhoods (in quite different parts of the Borough).

The feedback from each table has been captured and will be used to inform and improve the process for agreeing, managing and monitoring the year two NAPs from January 2011. This will ensure that the resident proposals, summarised above, positively influence and shape what the NAPS look like; how residents are engaged in their formation and that they accurately reflect the local issues and priorities.

4.4 The results of the afternoon discussion about supporting and building good neighbourhoods included:

- increased use of family friendly activities at the Neighbourhood Action Days;
- development of green spaces and community food growing;
- improving the use, management and availability of the community buildings;
- increasing and widening our support for vulnerable adults and children;
- increasing and improving engagement between residents and staff on an informal basis, as a fore-runner of 'business' discussions';
- increasing and prioritising youth engagement; and
- increasing community cohesion, particularly across the generations and between neighbours.

Appendix A shows the feedback from this exercise, sorted by theme, and gives a fuller sense of the richness of the discussion from the tables.

The feedback from each table will be used at a follow up engagement session on 17th November 2010 when staff and residents will consider the main themes emerging from the conference, and how this will now drive our business planning for next year and beyond.

## 5 Equalities and Diversity Implications

The discussions during Residents Conference repeatedly returned to issues of cohesion across various strands of diversity – in particular, how residents working together in neighbourhoods can reach across backgrounds of

different ethnicity, age and gender to allow common purpose. These themes will be built into the 2011/12 business planning process. The discussions also emphasised the different needs and aspirations of different customers – including vulnerable residents, children, and older residents – and how these needs could be built into the neighbourhood action plans and the 2011/12 business plan.

## **5 Implications**

VFM – addressed under financial implications on page one.

Legal Implications - none

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Leasehold Workshop 2010 was well received by leaseholders and staff and the level of detail given and topics covered were generally felt to be useful.
- 6.2 The results of the workshops and feedback session will be genuinely helpful in improving the services offered and in engaging leaseholders' in our future business planning.
- 6.2 The Resident Conference 2011 was generally well received by residents and staff and the simplicity and focus of the agenda were successful. The results of the table based discussions will be central to the second-year NAPs currently in planning stage, and our business planning for 2011/12 and beyond.

## **Appendix A – Full feedback from afternoon exercise on supporting and building good neighbourhoods**

### **GREEN/ARTS**

- Allotments.
- Art in the borough- an addition to improve Ed Green space and encourage youth activity and identify local talent.
- Energy efficiency/ environmental support.
- Energy efficient, environmental support from the local community- i.e. explore solar panels.
- Solar panels in flat roofs.
- Horticultural contracts should be managed better to stop plants dying, care for them.
- Recycle food waste everywhere, make it easy for residents and helps council too.
- Community arts.
- Recycle food waste to gas and collect old clothes.
- Sponsor finding new talent- painting/art. For young generation plus elderly. Local or borough wide.
- Green area for all to meet, information on website for each estate
- Utilise the space.
- Leaf problems, clean them up so kids can play.
- Open spaces that are safe guarded for residents.
- Private gardens looking nice especially rented.
- More space green areas, more cleaners, benches, less people.
- Neighbourly concern regarding communal areas, allocate more green space.
- THH work with contractors and council to guarantee equality of access to all facilities to all families.
- Recycling (making it easier).
- Having communal open air exercise classes for older and middle aged people.
- More privacy access only residents fenced estate.
- Cleaner neighbourhoods where people would not think of throwing rubbish.
- Grow fruit trees in small specific areas, have fruit picking day.
- Creating community champions, regarding private and communal garden and space of THH land.
- Community day in each neighbourhood (not action days) people want community garden projects.
- Best front garden competition.
- Greener, allotments, orchards.

### **HEALTHY ACTIVITIES**

- Play areas.
- Sports team.
- Adventure play park in Langnor estate.

### **VULNERABLE GROUPS ARE SELDOM HEARD**

- Engaging with vulnerable groups.
- old people's lunches clubs.

- trips out to seaside for elderly people.
- Helping elderly people with isolation, e.g.: travel/help to set out.
- Don't exclude elderly people, create times to meet.
- Bingo for the elderly, elderly trips, social care.
- Reducing isolation.
- Walking bus for O.A.P who feel vulnerable scared to attend meetings.
- Secure area for elderly people (globe road).

### **YOUNG PEOPLE**

- Annual sports day
- Invest in youth activities
- More things for 5 to 7 year olds (as these ages don't get catered for)
- Include everybody, don't exclude problem youths
- more accessible youth and community services
- Give authority, help and initiative to people who want to work with youths
- Parents take more responsibility for their children
- Youth: engagement in community projects.
- Employ people to work with youth, coach youth, organise and raise money.
- ASN, chicken spot is a venue where gangs are congregating St James Avenue.
- Avoid duplication of youth work.
- Activity days for children, age group 5-16 years i.e. take children to city farm, canal walks.
- Would like to see youth service work after university like we did before
- Youth activities in local hall, used constantly for activities, youngsters having get together with different cultures and having fun days together as a thriving community.
- Recycling not frequent enough, need to educate people in how to recycle.
- Youth engaged, involve others, parents take children to the park.
- Help youths in employment, help train, find work experience.
- Youth clubs.
- Play facilities and kick about used fully e.g.; football organised activities.
- Activities for kids e.g. planting.
- Safer places for kids to play (community activist involved making these safe).
- Community work by kids- rewarded.

### **COMMUNITY CENTRES**

- Community centre old style.
- Access- community centres space to attract funding e.g. hall.
- Building a place for residents and tenants to meet and share ideas
- Resource centre in every estate.
- Local point community- function of buildings/ workshops, function community.
- More community halls with variety of activities for all ages and background.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

- Focus on employment and skills council
- Provide more work experience to local people
- Opportunities for meaningful work experience training- into work for all, young people, retired people, experienced, youth
- Skill/job banking

## **COHESION/COMMUNITY/PLACE**

- Involve the whole community.
- Feeling proud about where we live.
- Identify community advocates.
- Taking pride in your neighbourhood.
- Activities for all ages.
- Parents need to get involved, not leave it to everyone else.
- Lets get the community working together.
- Respect each other, noise and rubbish.
- Getting together, sharing and caring.
- Language classes.
- Street parties.
- Go to a pub/meal with THH staff- more socialising.
- Good neighbour days, people get to know their neighbours and families, more respect. Communities would reduce ASB, community day activity.
- Breaking down language barriers, better understanding between diverse resident groups.
- More neighbour to neighbour communication, encourage more of a social community.
- Have open days to include the younger generation and the elderly
- Respect for neighbours and neighbourhoods.
- Help communities know their neighbours and let communities act.
- Good neighbour scheme (induction to neighbours for new tenants).
- More community cohesion projects.
- safety for vulnerable people (intercom with video)
- social cohesive community- inspiration, ideas and protection and services for local community.
- finding common ground between diverse groups e.g. all parents want a B&C regardless of ethnic background
- organise events for elderly people, young people and community 'a social network'
- 30 to 50 year olds no facilities. Singles people, single parents, whole cross section of the community.
- Look out for each other, collecting responsibility, person responsibility
- Bringing people together (community events).
- Events that encourage community integration.
- Consider more carefully the 'neighbourhood mix' i.e. do not put a young, large family into a block that comprises predominantly older residents and vice versa.
- Be mindful of not focusing all attention on particular groups- need to consider all to prevent resentment and alienation.
- Baking day event- give cakes to charities within Tower Hamlets
- More community days e.g. sports days, fairs.

- Encourage a sense of pride for local neighbourhood.
- Not just rights, take responsibility too.
- Community engagement to tackle issues together.

### **COMMUNICATION/ENGAGEMENT**

- Good communication.
- Learning, communication, comprehension.
- Communication between THH and the residents.
- Follow through and really make things happen.
- Information, communication, getting together, comprehension
- NHO surgeries from resident reps homes (make it even easier to talk to THH).
- More consultation meetings, more training for staff and residents.
- Very important to consult residents with regards to any communal improvement work.

### **EMPOWERMENT**

- Residents decide on who gets money from 'you make a difference fund'. Voting?
- Ability to make decisions and take responsibility.
- Help people know about all the training opportunities available for them.

### **SERVICE ISSUES**

- Estate officers visit residents, maybe every six weeks.
- Civilised contractors.
- Safe place.
- ASB team to respond when we need them.
- Mobile ASB team during the week, not only weekends.
- Residents feel that some THH workers (e.g. caretakers) only sort things for senior managers/important visitors rather than for residents. Do not want it to be a special event.
- Cleaner estates- roll out yellow and red cards to all neighbourhoods, shield for external bins, gold estates- reward and behaviour charge.
- Ask contractors to offer advice sessions i.e. how to use timer.
- Good quality neighbourhood and homes.
- Tenancy audits to be put in place for leaseholders and tenants how to sublet their properties.
- Training for adolescents and everyone, overcrowding which is a great issue.
- THH under occupation tenancy audits.
- Each estate to have THH officer property. This property to occupy for 2 or 3 month periods by THH board members and directors. Hopefully this would better inform and educate those trying to organise and engineer our estates.