



## Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 7th April 2016

**Report of:** Challenge for Change Tenant Scrutiny Group

**Subject:** Challenge for Change: Community Engagement Report - Progress Update

**Author of Report:** Catherine Hill, Manager Community Engagement Council Housing Service, Communities and Nassim Koriba, Manager Communications, Resources.

### Summary:

The customer scrutiny panel known as Challenge for Change (C4C) was set up in 2011 to perform an independent review of services delivered by the Council Housing Service. They presented their review of Community Engagement to scrutiny in September 2014. This report provides a progress update against the reviews recommendations.

**Type of item:** The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	X

**The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

Note the contents of this update.

### Background Papers:

Challenge for Change: Community Engagement Review - Report  
Challenge for Change: Community Engagement Review - Recommendations  
**Category of Report:** OPEN

## Challenge for Change - Community Engagement review : Progress Update April 2016

### 1. Introduction and background

Challenge for Change (C4C) is a tenant led scrutiny group that reviews aspects of the Council Housing Service and produces reports and recommendations. In September 2014, the group presented its review of Community Engagement to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee. A request was made for officers to provide a progress update against the recommendations that the group made. These are presented below

	What is the C4C Judgement?	C4C's Recommendations	April 2016 progress update
1	Engagement is <u>difficult</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even harder with underrepresented groups such as young people</li> </ul>	R5 -Go to where people are – young people/ single Mums R9 - Tell Job Centres to encourage people to get involved R10 - Use tenants that are involved to promote benefits	Greenhill and Bradway TARA run a successful annual festival. A number of TARAs run one off activities for children and have supported <i>Activity Sheffield</i> events using it to promote the TARA TARAs encouraged to use the tenants levy to support existing local groups. We still lead with a tenant editor of The Bridge (magazine for TARAs) and a double page feature with an interview with a TARA in each edition. Despite pushing for stories and tenants to come forward we have had very little response.
2.	There is general apathy towards involvement and volunteering	R10 - Use tenants that are involved to promote benefits R11 - Recruit to specific things not general R13 - Campaign to tell people benefits of getting involved R14 -Use more “event driven” recruitment in “special” locations R18 - Use a wide variety of methods	‘Around the Areas’ page in The Bridge. TARAs supplying articles to promote activities and share best practice. We encourage TARAs to put copies of The Bridge in community venues and pass it round their members.  Market Stalls at last two annual tenant conferences have promoted VCF and SCC teams including opportunities for getting involved. Positive feedback received from both tenants and stallholders. We actively pushed greater involvement through the TLO

		to recruit volunteers and involve tenants in the process	<p>routes and even did a feature in The Bridge and a push through social media. Again we received virtually no increase in involvement</p> <p>Have promoted Locality Management Blogs with TARAs to get latest volunteering opportunities and news on community activities. Take up is variable across the city but a number of TARAs e.g. Gleadless Valley are actively using these to share information and promote their own activities.</p> <p>We still have events pack. The communications service also now uses mosaic data to understand better our audiences, their channel preferences for how they prefer to receive information and where they go, even down to which buses they use. We use this to deliver more targeted campaigns which could be applied to community engagement activity</p> <p>We take a belt and braces approach including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online (website, social media and direct email)</li> <li>- Information leaflets (At events, all housing offices and first points and PDFs online)</li> <li>- Through TARAs</li> <li>- Piggy backing at events</li> <li>- TLO's</li> <li>- Articles in In Touch and The Bridge.</li> <li>- Public Relations</li> <li>- And recently added Gov delivery email alerts which has over 13,000 tenant email addresses.</li> </ul>
3.	Specialist activity has less of a problem with recruitment	R11 - Recruit to specific things not general and promote the fact that	Recently added Gov delivery email alerts which has over

		<p>volunteers can pick and choose how much involvement they would like</p> <p>R6 - Email adverts re recruitment activity</p> <p>R16 - Offer flexible involvement – home based / not dependent on attending meetings</p>	<p>13,000 tenant email addresses. This has been used to promote tenant participation and activity.</p> <p>Volunteer opportunities promoted to TARAs through Locality Management blogs and email. Regularly promote these with TLOs at service development group who are encouraging TARAs to sign up for this.</p>
4.	People don't understand what Community Engagement actually means	<p>R1 - Promote TARA's at New Tenancy Visit – how many people get referred on and what do TARA's do with them?</p> <p>R7 - Use social media to feed back on action taken</p> <p>R15 – Revamp the communication strategy and explain/define/promote what Community Engagement actually is and possibly rename as something more meaningful</p>	<p>South East housing area model office have developed a process during the new tenancy sign up process - details of local TARA discussed. Also during Housing + plan appointment officer discusses local TARA and provides details to tenant.</p> <p>Future agenda item for CEPG around TARAs and social media. Sharing current best practice and ideas for increasing use of social media by TARAs to promote themselves and wider CE activities.</p> <p>Naming of teams being considered as part of the Council Housing Service restructure</p> <p>The communication plan is aligned against CE's objectives. If this changes the plan will reflect this. This year there has been a strong focus on supporting the communications review. Part of this has been to support the consultation with tenants and increasing participation in the review. If the review identifies a demand to rebrand the service, communications will support this.</p>
5.	Communication methods are not clear enough in explaining what involvement entails	<p>R7 - Use social media to feed back on action taken ask new tenants to use Facebook</p> <p>R15 - Revamp the communication strategy</p>	<p>Promote CE through Locality Management blogs.</p> <p>Communications have trained 20 TARAs to manage their own webpages</p>

		R20 - Make the website more attractive with less text / more visuals and provide appropriate links to relevant external organisations	Progress has been made regarding the transfer of the Council housing website over to the main Council website. SCC will be appointing a web partner to revamp their web offer. Part of this will encompass the housing website. The project team have advised that they should be able to provide timescales of when this will happen in the next couple of months.
6.	The variety of people involved is limited and does not broadly reflect the customer profile	R5 - Go to where people are – young people/ single Mums R9 - Tell Job Centres to encourage people to get involved R13 - campaign to tell people benefits of getting involved R14 - Use more “event driven” recruitment in “special” locations R26 Promote types of involvement that do not involve attending meetings and research what people are actually interested in	Have continued with business as usual communications around promoting involvement in the service. Also on standby to understand the outcomes of the Community Engagement review and what the new/different opportunities will be to get involved.  As part of the HANAP Task and Finish Group they conducted a survey of meeting attendees to find out why they attend meetings and what they hope to get out of attending. Feedback informed their recommendations.
7.	The impact of involvement is not made clear to those getting involved	R27 Use case studies to publicise the impact of involvement more widely and provide regular updates	No update
8.	Communications not effective – social media is under used	R8 - Monthly campaigns using social media on specialist topics R17 Useblogs/videoclips.vox pops -Webchats on live topics -Use Sheffield Forum -Balanced use of Facebook i.e. not all about evictions	Outcome of HANAP Task and Finish Group review recommendations include – Explore other methods of engaging – including online, Citizen Space, Social Media to help reach a wider audience and increase the number of residents we engage with. It is essential that the council website and Facebook page are brought up to date and continually updated. Other digital tools available include -You Tube channel (Housing+) -Website that supports video

			<p>-Gov delivery email alerts -Twitter now supports video -We can now edit video and produce animations</p> <p>CE/Governance Team carried out a survey of TARAs to identify use of IT for their TARA activities. Information from the survey fed into the SCC IT strategy.</p> <p>TARAs working with Heeley Development Trust to deliver IT training in some areas.</p>
9.	The benefits of involvement are not made clear to individuals	R9 - Ask Job Centres to encourage people to get involved	No yet actioned
10.	The “getting involved” section of the website is not inviting / warm / welcoming enough, or easy to navigate	<p>R28 Navigation on the website needs to made easier – especially the mobile platform. Links should be easier to find</p> <p>R19 - Integrate the Council Housing Service within the main Council website</p>	Web pages to be redesigned as part of overall redevelopment of SCC website
11.	There is a lack of understanding within the service of the role of TLOs and also by tenants and TARAs. The role could be more “community” driven	<p>R12 - Clearer role for TLOs – role in the community and for this to be communicated.</p> <p>R21 - Consider renaming TLO to Tenant and Community Liaison Officer - TCLO</p>	<p>Officer roles, including TLOs reviewed as part of MER restructure of the Housing Service.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Officers will undertake a greater role in wider engagement with TARAs on their ‘patch’ and identify opportunities for wider engagement.</p>
12.	TARAs do not operate consistently	<p>R1 - Promote TARA’s at New Tenancy Visit – how many people get referred on and what do TARA’s do with them?</p> <p>R2 - Consistent staff numbers committed to CE and TARA support.</p>	South East housing area model office have developed process - during sign up process details of local TARA discussed. Also during Housing + plan appointment officer discusses local TARA and provides details to tenant.

		<p>R22 - The new recognition policy should be reasonably and consistently applied and enforced where appropriate</p> <p>R23 - A minimum TARA communication standard should be applied across all areas e.g. at least one newsletter a year</p> <p>R24 - TARAs should be encouraged to share good practice</p> <p>R25 - Provide information to levy payers about how the levy is used</p>	<p>Staffing levels identified as part of the restructure of the Council Housing Service.</p> <p>All TARAs have adopted the revised Recognition Policy at their AGM. Training and support given to individual TARA to ensure understanding of the more stringent requirements of the policy.</p> <p>Compliance being monitored through quarterly desk top reviews between CE/Governance Team and Area CE team.</p> <p>Following implementation of Council Housing Service Restructure compliance will become the responsibility of CE/Governance team with ongoing monitoring and support tailored to individual TARAs.</p> <p>Using CEPG to share best practice. South West housing area organised networking event to discuss recognition policy and annual return.</p> <p>Currently undertaking review of the residual levy, recommendation made for consultation with residual levy payers on ideas for use of monies in their area.</p>
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## Glossary

CE – Community Engagement

CEPG – Community Engagement Partnership Group

HANAP – Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel

IT – Information Technology

SCC – Sheffield City Council

TARA – Tenants and Residents Association

TLO – Tenant Liaison Officer

VCf – Voluntary, Community and Faith sector

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