



**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
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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 progress update against the review recommendations.

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 **June** 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	June 2016 progress update
1	Engagement is <u>difficult</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even harder with underrepresented groups such as young people 	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	<p>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</p> <p>TARAs encouraged to use the tenants levy to support existing local groups.</p> <p>In each edition of The Bridge (TARA magazine produced 3 times per year) we feature a TARA to showcase their activities, achievements and benefits of getting involved. Each edition also includes a guest editor who is an active tenant volunteer.</p> <p>We have pushed for stories/case studies from tenants about the benefits of being involved. It was identified that there was a lack of confidence in providing stories so we developed a basic story template for people to fill in. These were circulated to the area housing teams involved in community engagement.</p>

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			<p>Potential for engaging by other means – eg digitally – eg by using Citizen Space - still to be tapped. Need to be clear what we mean by engagement. It could be used to mean SCC engagement with TARAs, SCC engagement with all tenants, or TARA engagement with tenants.</p>
2.	<p>There is general apathy towards involvement and volunteering</p>	<p>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 to recruit volunteers and involve tenants in the process</p>	<p>‘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.</p> <p>Periodically used digital channels to promote getting involved to different audiences (young 20-40s) which were highlighted as a community engagement service priority.</p> <p>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 routes and even did a feature in The Bridge and a push through social media. Again we received virtually no increase in involvement Need to keep pushing this.</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</p>

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			<p>but a number of TARAs e.g. Gleadless Valley are actively using these to share information and promote their own activities. TLOs are using Locality Management Blogs to promote TARA activities in Central Area.</p> <p>The Communications Service still maintains a housing events pack as part of the HRA Communications SLA. This contains helpful information about Council Housing including getting involved. Communications also now utilises mosaic data to understand better our audiences, their channel preferences for how they prefer to receive information, including where they go, which buses they use etc. 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"> - Online (website, social media) - Locality Management blogs and direct email - Information leaflets (At events, all housing offices and first points and PDFs online) - Through TARAs - Piggy backing at events - TLO's - Articles in In Touch and The Bridge. - Public Relations - And recently added Gov. Delivery email alerts which has nearly 15,000 tenant email addresses.
3.	Specialist activity has less of a problem with recruitment	R11 - Recruit to specific things not general and promote the fact that volunteers can pick and choose how	Established Gov delivery email alerts which has nearly 15,000 tenant email addresses. This has been

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		<p>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>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.	<p>People don't understand what Community Engagement actually means</p>	<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>TARA Networking Events 'Get to know your new Neighbours' are being arranged for TARAs moving into the new Neighbourhood Areas to meet the Management Team and meet other TARAs in the Neighbourhood.</p> <p>The communication plan is aligned against CE's objectives. If this changes the plan will reflect this. Last year there was a strong focus on supporting the Community Engagement 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>

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5.	Communication methods are not clear enough in explaining what involvement entails	R7 - Use social media to feed back on action taken ask new tenants to use Facebook R15 - Revamp the communication strategy R20 - Make the website more attractive with less text / more visuals and provide appropriate links to relevant external organisations	Promote CE through Locality Management blogs. Communications have trained 20 TARAs to manage their own webpages. The housing web platform will be moved over to the new Council platform later this year following the appointment of web developer, Adobe. Still waiting to hear details of how the TARA area will be built into this.
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. 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. We are programming 3 LAHFS, 3 LESIFs and up to 3 open meetings per year in all areas on issues of interest or concern to the community. The invitation to these meetings will be widened to include other community groups and stakeholders.

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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	<p>We encourage TARAs to use the Round the Areas section of The Bridge to showcase their work. The agenda for the Neighbourhood TARA network events to include time for TARAs to talk to one another about their projects and achievements. We plan to have a discussion at CEPG about using some of these meetings for TARA led networking sessions, to share ideas and best practice.</p> <p>Under the 2016/17 Communications SLA agreement we will be deliver a campaign focussed on the Council Housing Service being 'In Touch'. Part of this will capture how tenant involvement is leading to improvements to services.</p>
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	<p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -You Tube channel (Housing+) -Website that supports video -Gov delivery email alerts -Twitter now supports video -We can now edit video and produce animations <p>CE/Governance Team carried out a survey of TARAs to</p>

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			<p>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> <p>Wi fi is currently being fitted in Emerson Crescent Meeting Room, The Bungalow Meeting Room, Langsett and Greenland Meeting Room, Darnall</p> <p>The contract is now in place with Heeley Development Trust to work with TARAs and other community groups as a continuation of the work that they have done previously</p> <p>TARA contact details are listed on Sheffield Directory.</p>
9.	The benefits of involvement are not made clear to individuals	R9 - Ask Job Centres to encourage people to get involved	June CEPG – information given out on Voluntary Action Sheffield 'Community Achievement Awards' 2016
10.	The “getting involved” section of the website is not inviting / warm / welcoming enough, or easy to navigate	R28 Navigation on the website needs to made easier – especially the mobile platform. Links should be easier to find 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.</p> <p>We have met with the Project Team to discuss the requirements of TARAs. Awaiting an update as to what the TARA area of the new platform will look like.</p>

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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	R12 - Clearer role for TLOs – role in the community and for this to be communicated. R21 - Consider renaming TLO to Tenant and Community Liaison Officer - TCLO	Officer roles, including TLOs reviewed as part of MER restructure of the Housing Service. Neighbourhood Officers will undertake a greater role in wider engagement with TARAs on their 'patch' and identify opportunities for wider engagement.
12.	TARAs do not operate consistently	R1 - Promote TARA's at New Tenancy Visit – how many people get referred on and what do TARA's do with them? R2 - Consistent staff numbers committed to CE and TARA support. R22 - The new recognition policy should be reasonably and consistently applied and enforced where appropriate R23 - A minimum TARA communication standard should be applied across all areas e.g. at least one newsletter a year R24 - TARAs should be encouraged to share good practice R25 - Provide information to levy payers about how the levy is used	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. Staffing levels identified as part of the restructure of the Council Housing Service. A revised TARA Recognition Policy was introduced in September 2014 and has been adopted by all recognised TARAs. Ongoing support and guidance is provided to TARAs as appropriate to ensure their continued compliance with the Recognition Policy and any issues promptly addressed. The Community Engagement & Governance Team carry out a quarterly monitoring review with the Area Community Engagement Teams. Following the restructure of the Housing Service monitoring of compliance with the TARA Recognition Policy will come under the remit of the Community Engagement & Governance Team.

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			<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. A pilot project to be undertaken in the Hackenthorpe Area October – December 2016. Following a review of the pilot this will be rolled out citywide</p>

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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