

REVIEW OF WALKS AND TALKS

Report of the Director of Housing & Customer Service

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 Local Housing Board North received a report regarding proposals to improve estate walkabouts on the 5 February 2009. The proposals recommended the implementation of Walks and Talks.
- 1.2 This report outlines progress on the Walk and Talk procedure since its implementation in April 2009.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Local Housing Board notes the content of this report and accepts the recommendation to adapt the procedure following a Bright Idea submitted by two members of staff.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The new Walk and Talk procedure (Appendix 1) was implemented in April 2009 following recommendations by the Estate Management Process Improvement Team.
- 3.2 It was agreed that:
 - all events would take place between April and September
 - venues were identified for residents to meet
 - times of days were varied, e.g. some Walk and Talks were planned for early evening and some during the day
 - improved marketing and publicity to help promote the events
 - tenants given the option of walking the patch or staying within the venue to discuss issues.
- 3.3 To date we have held 60 Walk and Talk events city wide. Despite a good presence by local councillors and partners, only fifty five residents have attended. Some of the issues raised were as follows:
 - nuisance neighbours
 - anti-social behaviour from children in the area
 - lighting issues
 - overgrown garden/hedges issues
 - highway issues
- 3.4 Issues raised have been dealt with through housing officer intervention and some via Estates Pride funding. All residents that have attended have received feedback in the form of a 'you said – we did' report.

- 3.5 Due to the low attendance of residents at the Walk and Talk events, it is felt this is not cost effective to continue with the process in its existing form.
- 3.6 Two member of staff have put forward a 'Bright Idea' that suggests we could hold the Walk and Talks sessions at the city wide Neighbourhood Forums and Housing Focus Groups. This will, hopefully, increase the attendance of residents and reduce the number of meetings for councillors and partners.
- 3.7 Derby Homes are one of the key partners at Neighbourhood Forums and are given the opportunity to update attendees on Derby Homes activities either during a surgery before the meeting or alternatively given a slot on the agenda. The Walk and Talk session could be implemented within this forum. Should any residents express a desire to 'walk' the estate details will be taken and a suitable date and time will be arranged.
- 3.8 Similarly, Walk and Talk sessions could be incorporated into Housing Focus Group agendas.
- 3.9 We will continue to review ways of engaging with our residents and will report back to the Local Housing Boards with any future ideas or improvements.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

The issues have been thoroughly discussed with the residents through the Process Improvement Team.

5. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Staff will not be required to attend individual Walk and Talk sessions therefore there will be a substantial saving on staffing time.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Increasing dialogue with residents will help us to identify where we need to prioritise our resources on our estates.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Offering a wider choice and opportunity will open the process to a more diverse group of tenants.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report

- Legal and Confidentiality
- Personnel
- Health & Safety
- Risk

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or the Chief Executive,
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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None