

Tenant Involvement – Impact Assessment 2020/2021

HOMES FIRST

Lewes and Eastbourne
Councils
working together for you



Impact Assessment

This document aims to show the impact made by tenants involved in shaping **Homes First** services, both strategically and in our communities during 2020/2021. It has been a difficult year for tenant involvement because the national pandemic curtailed many of our normal face to face activities. Therefore, our focus has been to empower key tenants to remain involved through better use of technology and build our digital offer to enable more tenants to have a say on service improvements.



1 New this year: Virtual 300

We launched the Virtual Involvement of Tenants and Leaseholders (**VITAL**) part of our Tenant Involvement Strategy by inviting all tenants who use email to join a new digital group called the **Virtual 300**.

To date we have recruited 110 tenants and aim to build the group to 300 tenants across **Homes First**.

How does it work?

- When there are issues that can be informed by tenants' views, we use online methods to consult. This might involve emailing a short online survey or competition or asking them to take part in online focus groups for example. Tenants can choose whether to take part, but if they do, they are entered into prize draws for shopping vouchers, and there is an end of year prize for the most active participant.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY
£120



STAFF TIME
39 HOURS



TENANT TIME
5 HOURS
(notional)

VITAL: Outcomes

Influenced:

- 31 tenants commented on the Anti-Social Behaviour and Pets in Homes policies which were amended because of feedback.
- 15 tenants entered a competition to choose the name for our new Homes First newsletter to tenants – now called Tenants' Open Voice.

Feedback

- 54 tenants provided feedback on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 28 tenants have signed up to test our new housing portal to provide feedback on the service.

Jacqui from Eastbourne received vouchers worth £40 and a bouquet for being the most involved tenant.



2 New this year: Enabling key tenants to remain involved during COVID-19 pandemic

To enable our key tenants from strategic groups to remain involved during the pandemic we provided equipment and bespoke training, so they could continue to participate in online meetings.

How did we do this?

- We conducted a survey of all tenants involved in **TIE, Residents Voice, TOLD, Scrutiny** and **Retirement Housing Forums**, to determine what IT equipment and training each person needed.
- We sourced funds and purchased new equipment such as laptops, Wi-Fi hubs, microphones etc. Equipment was provided to 12 tenants and bespoke training was delivered to 26 tenants which enabled them to take part in online meetings. Most of our engaged tenants were able to take part using online meetings technology and many developed new skills to help them in non-tenant engagement, for example shopping and connecting with their families online.
- We worked with an IT specialist and developed bespoke training for tenants as required.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY

£2000
(equipment)

£1784
(training)

TOTAL
£3784



STAFF TIME

50 HOURS

TOTAL
50 HOURS



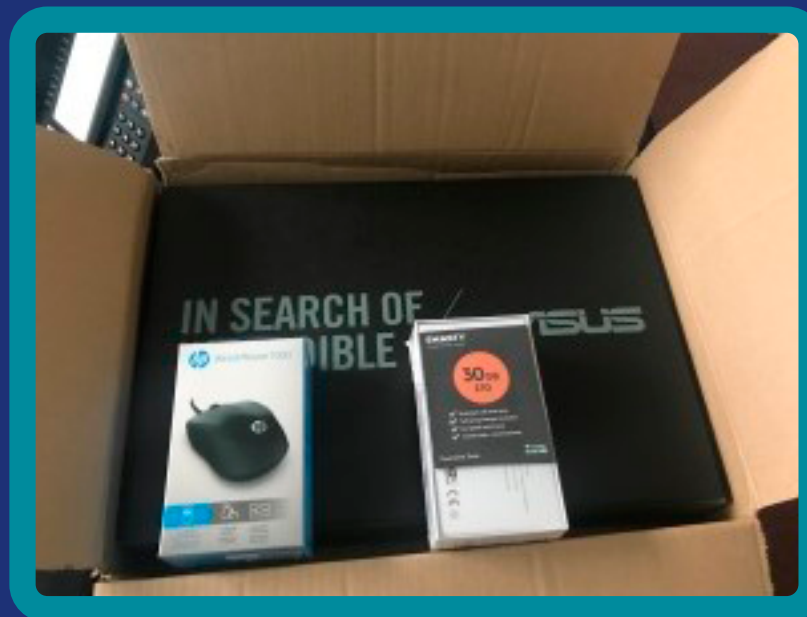
TENANT TIME

26 HOURS
(notional)

TOTAL
26 HOURS

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT: Outcomes

- All strategic groups resumed meetings online.



3 Tenant Involvement and Empowerment (TIE) panel

TIE is a strategic group which brings together tenant representatives from Lewes District Council & Eastbourne Homes Limited on a quarterly basis.

Its job is to hold the Senior Leadership team and **Homes First** to account on performance, oversee the scrutiny action plan, and make sure that everyone is involved in and consulted on key decision making that affects the everyday lives of tenants.

TIE works cooperatively with **Residents Voice** and the **Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD)**, and also oversees the tenant involvement strategy, the development of housing policies and service procurement to ensure value for money.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY

£0



STAFF TIME

50 HOURS



TENANT TIME

34 HOURS

TENANT INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT PANEL: Outcomes

Ensured that Homes First delivered on its commitments to tenants outlined in the Tenant Involvement strategy

- Held the Tenant Involvement team to account on the delivery of their action plan and made sure that key milestones were achieved.

Influenced service delivery

- Challenged the business on changes to the advice and support tenants were receiving on benefits, which resulted in a continuation of the service.
- Ensured that Homes First delivered against the scrutiny action plan for Communal Repairs by holding staff to account.

Influenced how and what tenant feedback collect

- Recommended a change in methodology for the STAR survey.
- Worked with staff to develop the transactional survey questions for complaints & planned maintenance work.



4 Homes First - Tenant Scrutiny team

The **Tenant Scrutiny** team is a strategic group, made up of tenants from **Lewes District Council** and **Eastbourne Homes Limited** who carry out in depth reviews of Homes First Service areas chosen by the **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Group**.

Each review concludes with a report showing the strengths and weaknesses of the service area, together with recommendations for service improvements. The focus this year has been on complaints management, and the work is nearing completion.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY

£35
(transport)



STAFF TIME

93 HOURS



TENANT TIME

124 HOURS

SCRUTINY: Outcomes

Greater Understanding

· Having undertaken a desk top review, staff interviews and analysis of performance information, the scrutiny panel have a good understanding of the current complaints process and the challenges of complaints management. The process has enabled them to make informed recommendations on service changes to the Customer Experience Team complaints service.



5 The Tenants Organisation of Lewes District

The Tenants Organisation of Lewes District (**TOLD**) holds three open events per year, which all tenants of Lewes District are invited to (24 different tenants attended last year). The events include guest speakers on topical housing issues and sometimes social events.

TOLD has a working committee comprising 12 tenants who are elected at the AGM. The **TOLD** committee meets quarterly with senior housing leads to discuss on-going housing issues relevant to LDC tenants and agrees how other tenants are consulted on these issues. It also monitors LDC housing performance and works closely with **TIE** on **Homes First** policy. The **TOLD** committee also oversees a devolved annual Community Improvements budget of £20,000 which is open to bids from LDC tenants.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY

£106

(gifts for involved residents)

£113

(transport)

TOTAL

£219



STAFF TIME

39 HOURS

(meetings)

99 HOURS

(admin of community improvement budget)

TOTAL

138 HOURS



TENANT TIME

182 HOURS

(meetings)

TOTAL

182 HOURS

TOLD: Outcomes

Maintained social connections during pandemic:

- Three open events this year including an online Christmas quiz.
- Have developed stronger / closer links with Councillors and the local MP.

Influenced:

- ASB and Pets in Homes policies & a new system for feeding back on housing repairs.
- Information and support for tenants affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

Improved local communities:

- Approved spending of £20,000 on a range of community improvement projects including accessible picnic tables in Seaford, IT equipment enabling tenants to join virtual meetings and various donations to local groups.

Increased residents understanding /knowledge of services and considered tenant feedback:

- Guest speakers discussed new housing developments & housing finance.
- Reviewed performance information for LDC housing including STAR survey feedback.
- Contributed to the Tenants' Open Voice magazine.

Effectively influenced services to tenants:

- Negotiated continuation of Universal Credit support post for tenants

6 Residents Voice

Over the last 12 months **RV** has moved away from being a representative group of panel members to an open meeting format. They have met virtually 4 times over the year using Microsoft Teams. The new approach has resulted in 7 new residents becoming involved, 4 of whom have been regular contributors. However, this has also meant that the group have lost some regular members, who decided not to engage virtually.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY

£0



STAFF TIME

27 HOURS
(meetings)

16 HOURS
(admin & pre meetings)

9 HOURS
(IT support)

TOTAL
52 HOURS



TENANT TIME

75 HOURS
(at meetings & IT support)

TOTAL
75 HOURS

RESIDENTS VOICE: Outcomes

Improved local communities:

- Due to the Old Town Area Panel not meeting, RV approved £10,000 of Eastbourne wide community investment applications.

Increased residents understanding / knowledge of services and considered tenant feedback:

- One to one IT training and support to access Microsoft teams and other software packages.
- Guest speakers presenting on Council Services, including new housing development proposals and the Housing Revenue Account.
- Reviewing performance information for EHL housing including STAR survey feedback.
- Contributing to the Tenants' Open Voice magazine.

Influenced:

- ASB and Pets in Home policies
- Presentation of the ASB KPIs

Represented tenant views:

- Challenges made regarding solar panel funding.
- Service charge breakdown
- Improved links and communication with the EHL Board

7 Tenant and Resident Associations (Lewes District Council tenants only)

There are a small number of tenant and resident associations established across the Lewes District. The associations work on behalf of their community to make improvements in the local area, and liaise with **Homes First** on housing issues that affect local tenants. Due to the pandemic most TRA's have been unable to meet, but the **Landport Residents Association** held two online meetings, attended by 9 different tenants, councillors and staff. **LRA** have continued to run or support many community projects over the year.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY

£0



STAFF TIME

18 HOURS

(meetings)



TENANT TIME

26 HOURS

(meetings)

**TOTAL
18 HOURS**

**TOTAL
26 HOURS**

TRAs LANDPORT: Outcomes

Supporting the local community:

- A weekly foodbank collection service, (or delivery during lockdown) supporting on average 21 families per week and 25 single clients.
- Organised socially distanced litter picking around the estate
- Held a monthly online book club maintaining social connections during the pandemic.
- Held online Christmas and Easter events for children.
- Supported the community café in delivering weekly meals to homes and the NHS.
- Promoted a tenants' insurance scheme.
- Discussed youth services and how to deal with local ASB.



8 Area Panels

There are four area panels, three of which continue to function albeit with different levels of engagement. Over the last year only the **Hampden Park and Willingdon Trees Area Panel** has met on three times occasions. With the support of the **Residents Voice** Chair and the tenant involvement team, all the Area Panel community investment budgets were spent, but only the **Hampden Park and Willingdon Trees Area Panel** was able to meet to use their individual budget allocation. Whilst the community investment money spent has made a great difference to the community groups who received it, consideration is being given to the method by which the money is allocated. This will also give the panels the opportunity to consider their aims and objectives for the coming year, and the role of **Residents Voice** in overseeing and sharing the success of the grants made.

Lastly, it should also be noted that the amount allocated is £40,000 - double that for Lewes.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY
(revenue budget spend)

TOTAL
£1000



STAFF TIME
226 HOURS
(meetings/issues/admin/
PR/comm improve fund)

TOTAL
226 HOURS



TENANT TIME
51 HOURS
(meetings)

TOTAL
51 HOURS

AREA PANELS: Outcomes

Supporting the local community:

- Spent £40,000 improvement funding across Eastbourne - providing local school children with computer equipment to support learning during the pandemic; providing gardening equipment for retirement schemes, supporting art walks in the local communities to support those who are socially isolated



9 Tenant Training



We have:

- Carried out a training needs and skills assessment of involved tenants and used this to design Individual bespoke training profiles. These offer free or low-cost online training opportunities funded by **Homes First** where necessary, which involved tenants can use as they wish. The profiles also provide details of in-house training events that can be organised or higher cost external training. We are planning our ongoing training programme based on the training events that are most requested.
- Been drafting a tenant training induction pack for all involved tenants which includes basic training on topics such as an introduction to **Homes First**, working well as a team etc.
- Sent information by email to all tenants, linking to external training events which could benefit their well-being or employment opportunities.



FINANCIAL OUTLAY

£125
(trainer)

TOTAL
£125



STAFF TIME

86 HOURS
(skills/assess
advertising/training)

TOTAL
86 HOURS



TENANT TIME

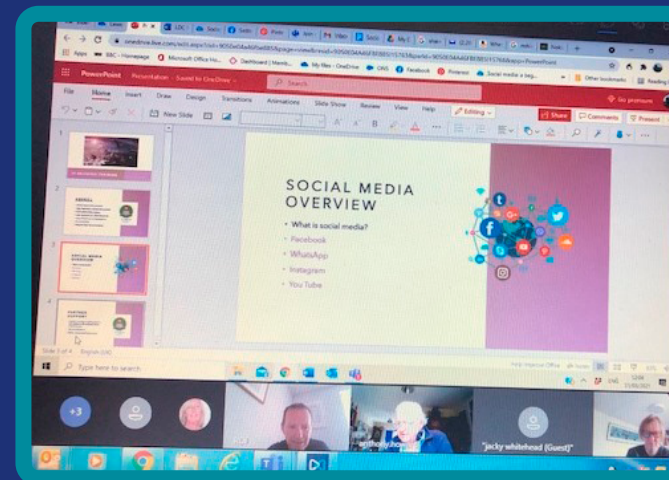
16 HOURS
(training)

TOTAL
16 HOURS

TENANT TRAINING: Outcomes

Supporting tenants personal development:

- 18 involved tenants have been provided with bespoke training plans, which they are working through and sharing feedback so we can update and improve the offer.



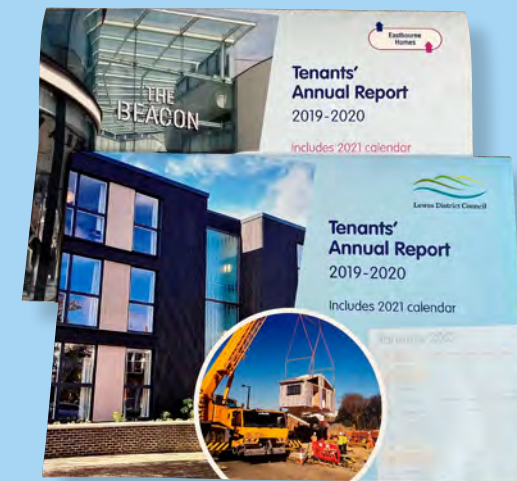
- 8 tenants attended an online IT helpdesk session which supported them in virtual engagement and how to comment on documents/share documents etc.

10 Other tenant involvement activities

Tenant involvement staff have run several other involvement activities to help us inform or consult with our tenants. These are not accounted for in the impact assessment, but they include:

- **Annual satisfaction survey of tenants** A satisfaction survey was sent out to a representative sample of tenants to determine satisfaction levels within key areas of our service. We are currently collating the results to share with the **TIE** panel, **TOLD** and **Residents Voice**.
- **Estate walkabouts** We designed a new way to carry out estate walkabouts and our next step is to complement these by organising 'community pop-up' events. These will provide officers with the opportunity to meet tenants to consult on issues arising from **Neighbourhood First** estate checks, discuss planned major works or environmental improvements and encourage increased tenant participation. Our plan is to target resources to areas where there is most need and be more responsive to tenant concerns..
- **Tenants' Open Voice newsletter** We have produced three editions of our new joint newsletter Tenants' Open Voice, which have been sent to all tenants and leaseholders across **Homes First**.

- **Annual Reports to tenants** Separate annual reports were produced by the team for EHL and LDC. The reports included performance information on all aspects of Homes First services for the year 2019-2020.



- **Transactional Surveys** We have used the TP Tracker software to carry out our first transactional survey to capture 'real time' customer feedback on the experience of accessing and using the complaints management service. We will use the results to inform our scrutiny review and to identify potential service improvements. We have also been working with the property maintenance team to draft a transactional survey for their planned maintenance programme.
- **Support to Retirement Housing Forums** We continue to attend Retirement Housing Forum meetings and support members to attend.
- **Commonplace project** We have been involved in developing a commonplace website for the Shinewater (North Langney) area of Eastbourne. Once launched, residents and visitors will be invited to share their views on the area, and the feedback used to develop a neighbourhood action plan.