

THANK YOU!

Thank you to those that got involved with our recent resident engagement exercise around the government's housing green paper. As you may recall we offered a number of ways to get in touch with us and answer some questions regarding the future of social housing and how we can work with you more effectively.

Your responses to our questionnaire and those residents who came to our Residents' Conference were really helpful. Our feedback was returned to the government on the 6 November and your efforts were a key part of our response.

Your feedback has given us a few things to think about and we will be looking into how we can respond more effectively to a number of your suggestions.

Here are some of the main highlights of the feedback:

Home maintenance and safety

We asked you what information you would regularly like to see from Worthing Homes in terms of ensuring that your home is well maintained and safe. We received a variety of answers.

- 25% felt that we were doing a good enough job in this regard.
- 19% wanted better information about the programming and quality of works carried out by our contractors.
- 12% were keen to see a system of more regular checks of properties and services.
- 12% were interested to get more information about improvements within the organisation.
- 10% were interested in receiving more information on the scheduling of planned maintenance.
- A similar number wanted better information about the programming and quality of works carried out by our contractors.

We are working on finding ways of getting more information to you on the works we undertake and of the inspections we do. Did you know, our



neighbourhood warden inspects each communal area we own on at least a quarterly basis! We will publish a schedule of his inspections in future.

Complaints procedure

We asked "If you complain about something to Worthing Homes but the issue you complained about isn't fixed, do you know what to do next?"

Many residents at the conference did not feel that it was easy to get in touch with the right person when they needed to, and for some the problem was compounded by not getting call backs about issues. For many of those we spoke to, a quick call back to update them on an issue was really helpful but it did not happen consistently.

We asked you if our complaints procedure would be better with residents involved to ensure balance.

- 37% thought it would improve the procedure
- 32% thought it wouldn't

Worthing Homes will work with its Residents' Panel on this issue and see how we can involve residents in this process.

Residents were also clear that complaints need to be handled as effectively as possible and that information about how we do this and time taken should be available in Home News.

League tables and comparing performance with other housing associations

The government's green paper suggests that league tables to compare how housing associations perform against each other would be useful. We asked you what you felt about this idea:

- 37% of residents responding felt that league tables would not be that useful whilst 32% believed they would. 29% were not sure.

Views, especially from the conference, were that there could be some positive benefits from greater sharing of information with other housing associations locally which would allow residents to see where their association was doing well and areas for improvement. Residents particularly felt that finding out how other housing associations dealt with issues like anti-social behaviour could be very useful.

We have included these findings as part of our response to the green paper.

Selecting contractors

We asked if you believed residents should be more involved in the selection of our contractors.

- 54% of residents believed that this was a job for Worthing Homes and not for them.
- 23% believed that there was some benefit to residents being involved in the decision making

Whilst only a few residents thought this was a good idea we will look to identify opportunities where we feel our selection process might benefit from the scrutiny of some of our residents. A number of residents at the conference were keen to see poor contractors replaced if they underperform.

Stigma in social housing

One of the areas the government's green paper wishes to see addressed is the perceived stigma of living in social housing. We asked you what you felt about stigma in social housing:

49% of residents answering felt that there was a stigma. For some this was an issue for people who don't live in social housing but have generally negative ideas of what it could be like, others felt there were some things that could be done to change the discussion:

- 17% of those responding felt that requiring residents to maintain their home and garden would go a long way to addressing this issue; with Worthing Homes also taking a firmer line on anti-social behaviour.
- 5% of you felt that Worthing Homes should highlight the quality of service we currently offer which would address stigma and also emphasise the diversity of residents living in social housing.

These views were mirrored by those of you who attended the Residents' Conference in October. Anti-social behaviour was also seen as something





which could very visibly drag a community down but it was also felt that working more closely with the communities would strengthen them and address local issues, thus changing the face of the area and addressing stigma with positive messages.

Your thoughts on stigma have been passed on to the government by Worthing Homes.

Anti-social behaviour

We also asked what information you would like to see about how we tackle anti-social behaviour and got some very good replies:

At the conference residents asked that actions taken should be put in the *Home News* magazine noting the number of issues addressed and the complaints resolved. This was a view echoed by those responding to the questionnaire with 34% also asking for the same. The conference attendees also felt it was important that Worthing Homes showed greater leadership in this area which was also important to questionnaire responders with 30% feeling that Worthing Homes should enforce tenancy responsibilities more strongly and work more closely with Police and other agencies. We were also asked for more understanding and listening to residents experiencing these situations.

Planning and design of new developments

We asked if you wanted to get involved in some of the new developments we are building. Nearly 50%

of residents responding believed that this was something they looked to Worthing Homes to be leading on but 24% felt that it was something they could get involved in. The wish to be involved was supported by some residents at the conference who stated that there were areas where their experience would be useful to ensure that Worthing Homes provided the kind of developments which were best suited to residents' needs.

We believe this is worth exploring further and will look to find an avenue which will allow residents to be involved in real decision making where they can have a positive impact.

Reporting performance data

We report performance data through a variety of mediums including our website and *Home News* magazine. We wanted to know if this was enough information or could we add other elements which residents would find useful.

Results of the questionnaire and from those attending the conference, showed that, for the most part, residents were happy with the level of information provided, though some wanted more. Areas of specific interest were in the achievement of maintenance and performance deadlines and a number of residents were interested in greater advanced notice of planned maintenance and repairs. Others wanted more information on the results we presently make available in *Home News* and on the website.



How can we give you greater choice/ influence/control over how we deliver services?

The views expressed by residents both through the questionnaire and the conference were very broad. Whilst a majority felt that we offered a considerable amount of control over service delivery a small minority wanted more information through Home News and also information about who was their neighbourhood housing officer.

We will look at the results and see if there are any areas in which we can increase both information and ways to influence the delivery of services.

Do you feel that there are enough ways in which you can make your views known to us? What could we do to improve this?

Over 50% of our residents responding felt that we presently offer a wide range of contact options for residents. However there was a view expressed by a few that sometimes we do not seem to listen to what the person is saying. We always try to ensure that we react to residents needs in an effective and customer centred way but if we do slip on occasions please let us know. It can only help to ensure we continue to build a better service for you.

In addition to our present range of services we are also bringing out our customer app in the coming

months which will allow you to keep tabs on your account, make a payment and report a repair via your mobile phone.

Would you recommend Worthing Homes to your friends and family?

Of those who answered the question some 73% said they would recommend Worthing Homes to other people. This is a good figure but we want to improve our services by trying to address the issues you raised through the survey.

Are you proud of where you live?

We asked if you were proud of where you live and over 72% of residents said they were. We are however keen to work with residents to improve this figure by supporting the creation of stronger communities and strengthened relations with our residents.

On behalf of the board and executive I would like to thank you for contributing to our response to the green paper and I look forward to many of you continuing to be involved with us, helping to shape and improve services that we deliver to you.