

STOCKPORT COUNCIL SCRUTINY MEETING – CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT.

SMBC members recently reviewed the customer and community engagement approach of two organisations, namely Blackpool Coastal Homes and Barnet Housing. These organisations demonstrated some good practice, and it has been a useful exercise to compare these to the Stockport Homes Group (SHG) offer. The table below shows the SHG approach on each of these issues and in general shows that our approach in these areas is strong, but the Scrutiny Review Panel report has presented a good opportunity to benchmark against other organisations and an opportunity to challenge our services.

SHG is proud of its customer and community engagement. It is a vital element of SHG’s approach that customers are involved in developing and monitoring services. In 2023 TPAS (formerly Tenants Participation Advisory Service) undertook a comprehensive review of the SHG approach to customer engagement and involvement using the National Tenant Engagement Standards framework and awarded SHG one of the highest grades in the country. The Menu of Involvement shows that customers can be involved in a variety of ways from completing surveys to attending local meetings through to more formal groups.

The Customer Voice and Influence Strategy (2024-2027) developed using customer insight and consultation is SHG’s plan for continually improving its approach to engagement and involvement.

Customer Engagement Activity	Blackpool	Barnet	Stockport Homes
A resident board which provides scrutiny and strategic direction, incentivised by a payment of £75 for each meeting attended	Blackpool Coastal Homes has the Tower Panel which is made up of customers. It looks at strategic issues across and new policies across Blackpool. It undertakes scrutiny reviews of services, for example, recent review was about rents.	Has a Resident Board made up entirely of residents who have received training. The purpose of the Resident Board is to review performance and hold officers to account for this and to be involved in scrutinising new policies and other developments.	SHG set up the Aspire Panel in July 2024 and they have had three meetings to date. The Panel comprised of customers only have received training to understand the context and processes of SHG. Their role is to look at performance and risk, review key policies oversee strategies (such as the Customer Voice and Influence Strategy) and to

	Customers are paid for attendance.	No information available on incentives/payments	<p>undertake scrutiny reviews of services (the first planned is to look at communications associated with rehousing).</p> <p>The Panel report directly into the Customer Focus Committee of the SHG Board. The Chair of the ASPIRE Panel attends Customer Focus Committee meetings to present updates on what the Panel has been considering / working on</p> <p>Each panel member receives £125 for each meeting attended.</p>
Resident satisfaction surveys	Committed to consulting customers in a variety of ways including telephone surveys, face to face and online consultation.	No information on overall approach	SHG undertake a wide range of satisfaction and consultation surveys in a variety of methods. Recent examples have included caretaking services, greenspace, repairs completed, rent increase consultation, concierge services, new lettings and building safety. This is in addition to approximately 1,500 Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys carried out per year.
Resident newsletter, published four times a year	<p>Quarterly newsletter.</p> <p>Annual Report to Customers.</p>	<p>Newsletter (atHome) published four times per year and distributed to all 13,000 homes.</p> <p>Annual report to customers delivered to all 13,000 homes</p>	<p>A resident newsletter is published each month online. Customers who are not online also receive newsletter updates.</p> <p>An annual report to customers was produced online and all customers not online received a paper copy.</p>

<p>Resident support group, which feeds directly into the Resident Board. Through the support group, members are invited to be involved in a range of opportunities including focus groups, mystery shopping, and service improvement projects</p>	<p>Has a range of tenant and residents group and individual customers who can be involved in resident activity.</p> <p>BCH has recently relaunched the Mystery Shopping scheme (Tower Scrutiny) which is in its infancy. A pilot exercise focused on knowledge of the complaints process across the organisation to ensure a consistent approach and that complaints are handled in line with the policy.</p>	<p>Barnet have a Resident Support Group. This is comprised of a wide range of customers who want to be involved in service development but do not want to be on the full Resident Panel. They form a pool of customers who participate in different activities such as focus groups, mystery shopping and scrutiny reviews. Barnet have tried to make the group as representative as possible.</p> <p>Mystery Shopping group who undertake several exercises per year.</p>	<p>SHG supports a number of groups that feed into the Aspire Panel, this includes high rise forum meetings, block safety meetings, local resident groups and thematic groups.</p> <p>SHG has recently developed the Customer Voice Group of 400 tenants who are willing to complete surveys and will be invited to participate in focus groups and mystery shopping to match their interests.</p> <p>Mystery shopping exercises are undertaken as part of scrutiny reviews and have included mystery shopping of repairs, reception and complaints in the last year.</p> <p>The Aspire Panel will now lead scrutiny Reviews which will incorporate mystery shopping exercises.</p>
<p>The opportunity to form a Tenant Management Organisation to</p>	<p>Legal requirement to provide information on this.</p>	<p>Legal requirement to provide information on this.</p>	<p>It is a legal right for customers (that meet specific conditions, laid out by legislation) to form a tenant management organisation. This is</p>

<p>manage an estate/block</p>			<p>stated on the SHG website. https://www.stockporthomes.org/my-home/tenancy/right-to-manage/</p>
<p>Resident Procurement Group, in which residents can be involved in appointing contractors to carry out a range of external repairs and improvements to homes</p>	<p>BCH has trained customer volunteers for procurement who sit on a Procurement Panel. This involves reviewing applications from contractors and suppliers. Over the past year, volunteers have been involved in the tender process for the Grounds Maintenance Contract and Building Works contract.</p>	<p>Barnet Homes has a Resident Procurement Group. This group involves residents in appointing contractors for various external repairs and improvements.</p>	<p>Although no formal Resident Procurement Group exists customers have been involved in procurement. For example, selection of a company to support the decoration voucher scheme, and a company which carpets furnished tenancies.</p> <p>Customers will be involved in the selection and appointment of an independent consultant/mentor to support the Aspire Panel.</p> <p>Customer insight is utilised by different SHG service areas to shape their tender specifications. An example of this is customer insight shaping the Grounds Maintenance procurement specification around preferred grass cutting methods.</p>
<p>A programme providing free knowledge, guidance, training and regular free webinars on resident rights</p>	<p>Information video on Damp and Mould.</p> <p>Links to external agency, Council and CAB information videos on general resident rights on the website where relevant.</p>	<p>Provides free knowledge, guidance, training and regular free webinars on resident rights and how to stand up for them, how to deal with difficult landlords, how to form and get involved in resident groups and how to shape the services they pay for.</p>	<p>The SHG website has extensive information on tenant's rights and rehousing applicant's rights. This includes videos on Section 21 evictions, domestic abuse, the prevention duty and mediation.</p>

			<p>From April 2025 a series of videos on customer responsible repairs will be available.</p> <p>SHG also offers a wide range of training for customers including employment support, life skills and personal development.</p>
Telephone surveys	Blackpool Coastal Homes has a range of ways it engages with customers which includes telephone surveys, face to face meetings, online surveys and group meetings.	Have a programme of telephone surveys, if this is a customers preferred method of consultation. Find it is helpful for detailed discussions.	There are a number of online and face-to-face surveys carried out every month. However, telephone surveys can be useful for more qualitative conversations. Processes are in place to collect telephone survey feedback from customers on anti-social behaviour cases and complaint cases.
Opportunity to become an “involved customer volunteer”, helping to improve services by providing the ALMO with lived experiences. Training and financial support (for transport and childcare) are offered alongside this	Blackpool Coastal Homes encourages all customers to be involved. It maintains a list of customers who are interested in different service areas and will involve customers when it can.	Barnet have a Resident Support Group. This is comprised of a wide range of customers who want to be involved in service development but do not want to be on the full Resident Panel. They form a pool of customers who participate in different activities such as focus groups, mystery shopping and scrutiny reviews. Barnet have tried to make the group as representative as possible.	SHG has a Menu of Involvement for customers. This is a range of ways that customers can be involved to share their experiences. This includes surveys, to local groups, thematic groups or formal involvement in regular meetings. In recent months SHG has developed a Customer Complaints Panel to review decisions and compensation on complaints and has developed the Customer Voice Group which is a group of 400 customers who are willing to complete a quick survey on any topic.

	<p>No payment plan in place for paying focus group members but do cover travel costs, childcare costs and support training and development.</p>	<p>Barnet offer to cover the costs of travel, training, creche and conferences for involved customers.</p> <p>Barnet Homes conducts Focus Groups where residents help shape or improve services. They pay customers expenses and a fixed fee to attend these groups.</p>	<p>SHG cover customer expenses and provide additional payments to involved customers as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspire Panel £500 per year • Complaints Panel - £80 per year • High Rise Living Panel £80 per year • Green Inspectors £100 per year • Scrutiny Reviews - £50 per review
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