



## **RESIDENT SENATE – STRATEGIES PROJECT**

### **SUMMARY REPORT TO SEVERNSIDE BOARD – July 2012**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY**

1.1 As part of the Senate Annual Workplan 2012, four key projects were identified:

- Linkages
- Strategies
- Customer Standards
- Communication

1.2 The Strategies Project directly contributes to Senate's mission, which is, *'To enable residents to influence and shape Severnside now and for the future'*.

1.3 This project was a priority for us as currently none of the Board Directors are residents. Without a system on strategies, there is a danger that the Board makes decisions about Severnside's future without being able to consider the views of residents.

One of our key duties is to,

*"Support the delivery of excellence in the Severnside landlord services by....reviewing, agreeing, challenging customer facing strategies...."*

1.4 In undertaking this project, we had a number of meetings to discuss and share our views, and we asked Sue Groom, Neighbourhood and Communities Director, if we could use her new Neighbourhood Strategy and the new Equality and Diversity Strategy to pilot and test our ideas.

#### **2. SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

2.1 The focus of this project was mainly upon establishing a system for resident input towards new strategies which go to the Board for approval. We briefly considered how this system could be adapted for key policies which are

approved by the Executive Team but this was not our main focus. We have not yet considered how we will review existing strategies but anticipate that the same process could be adapted for this.

### 3. **AIM OF THE PROJECT**

- 3.1 The aim of the project was to establish a system to ensure residents have a say in the future of Severnside by ensuring residents' views are considered when a new strategy or policy is developed.

### 4. **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

- 4.1 We hoped that successful completion of the project would deliver the following benefits:

1. Establish an agreed mechanism as to how Senate will review and agree customer facing strategies and key policies with the Board /Senior Management and covering the different groups' expectations in this process and ensuring that Senate input is informed by the views of other residents and resident groups
2. Provide for two-way communication and feedback including accountability from top down
3. To use the suggested process for consulting on strategies to test the linkages which we were putting into place as part of the Linkages project.

### 5. **CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 We have put together a suggested mechanism that, once adopted and embedded, will provide a clear process to ensure residents have a say in Severnside's future. We have tested the initial parts of this process by using the new strategies just being developed and these generally worked very well. Going forward we hope to improve the information flows from other resident groups to the Senate, to further inform our views particularly when we write the Green Papers. We also hope that the linkages established will confirm the Senate as the bridge for two-way communication on these key decisions between the resident groups and the Board and Senior Management.

In time we hope that Board and Senior Management will automatically consider residents' views when they are developing new customer-facing strategies or key policies.

- 5.2 We ask the Board to consider and approve our recommendations.

## 6. Our Recommendations

Recommendations	Progress	Key Outcome
<p>1. That Senate receives initial draft of strategy well in advance of the draft strategy going to Board for approval, and provides initial feedback</p>	<p>Senate received initial drafts of both the Neighbourhood Strategy and the Equality and Diversity Strategy (E &amp; D Strategy) in plenty of time to allow feedback and provided initial written feedback on both of these policies . this seemed to work well.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>2. That the ET project leader consults other resident groups / carry out surveys as appropriate, such as Customer Panel. This consultation may contain comments or questions from Senate to the other groups.</p>	<p>Sue Groom, the ET lead on each of these strategies, has now consulted with various groups on the E &amp; D Strategy (the Neighbourhood Strategy will be done at a later stage).</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>3. That the ET project leader provides the Senate with a report with a summary of the other resident consultation (which groups were consulted, what were their main comments) and a copy of the final draft of the strategy which they intend to send to Board. (This will enable Senate to ensure that the points from resident consultation have been incorporated into the strategy, ensure the Senate takes account of other residents views when writing the Green Paper, and provides better scope for the Senate to feed back to each group after the Strategy has been to the Board).</p>	<p>Sue Groom reported back to the Senate with a summary as to which groups had been consulted as part of the E &amp; D Strategy. Sue used the feedback to alter the Strategy, and provided a tracked change document to show how the initial version had been altered. Going forward, Senate would welcome a report which provides the main points from each group and Sue has agreed that this can be tested with the Neighbourhood Strategy.</p>	<p>2, 3</p>
<p>4. That the Senate drafts a %Green Paper+to sit alongside the Board Report commenting on the consultations (the extent to which resident views have been taken into account) and any recommendations to Board</p>	<p>A draft Green Paper has been prepared for the E &amp; D Strategy</p>	<p>1,3</p>

5. That the ET project leader has the opportunity (if they wish) to provide a Management Comment which is added to the end of their Green Paper- this is their response to the Senate's comments	This will be done shortly.	1
6. That the Green Paper is then sent to the Board with their Board Papers for its decision	To be sent to July Board meeting	2
7. That the Board feeds back to the Senate its decision and any comments on the Green Paper (either by way of written comment from Chair or alternatively extract of Board Minutes to be provided to Senate)	To take place following Board decision	2
8. That Senate then cascades the results of the Board decision back to customer panel / other key resident groups	To take place following Board decision	2
9. That Policies should usually go to Customer Panel rather than Senate, because the Senate would concentrate more on strategies. However, we think that the Senate should be consulted and involved where the policy is a key customer-facing policy (such as the Repairs Policy).	Senate shortly to be consulted on the Rechargeable Repairs Policy	1
10. That Customer Panel consider Ian Gardner (Asset Management Director)'s suggestion that a sub-group of Customer Panel be formed to consider policies in more depth and free up time for the full Customer Panel meeting to consider key points or questions. If this is put into place, we would recommend that this reading group consider all such documents and not just those coming from the AMD. If a group is established, then part of the linkages project would be to consider how the Senate can link with this group in relation to key policies.	For Customer Panel to consider	1
11. That Senate consider what are the key customer-facing policies for them	This will be taken up as part of the Standards Project	1,2
12. That a similar process to the above is used when a key customer-facing policy is proposed, although if the policy does not need approval by the Board, our final feedback would be to a member of ET rather than the Board.	Still to be tested	1,2
13. That the process be tested and then reviewed and, if need be, further refined.	In due course	1
14. That as part of the review, Senate to consider whether A-Star is being effectively used	In due course	2

**MANAGEMENT COMMENT**