

**Vela Improvement People**

**Project group 2**

**“Impact of the regeneration of Victoria”**

**(Report: April 2014)**

1. **Background**

Mark Dutton, the Head of Regeneration of Vela Group put forward a proposal in October for a VIP project looking at the following:

1. Review and evaluation of the resident relocation process currently taking place on the Victoria estate in Stockton
2. In conjunction with another VIP project looking at the lessons learned from a completed regeneration in Belle Vue, Hartlepool, the lessons that could be learned which could be applied to this relocation on Victoria

The Victoria estate consists of 254 properties, which are all low to medium rise blocks of flats and maisonettes and are located in the centre of the town. A consultation process started in 2009 over the re-development of the estate and concluded that all properties were not fit for purpose and would be demolished in a phased approach over a number of years, following which new builds will replace them (numbers yet to be determined).

Within the 254 properties there are 33 leaseholders, who as a result of their differing legal status to the households living in rented properties, are being supported by Stockton Borough Council. The agreed phased approach to relocation is as follows;

Phase 1 – 45 properties

Phase 2 – 45 properties

Phase 3 – 60 properties

Phase 4 – 60 properties

Phase 5 – 44 properties

Progress in the relocation of households so far can be summarised as;

* Tristar Homes started talking to the residents as far back as 2009 about the plans and over 100 residents engaged in the early stage consultations.
* Initial consultation in June 2012 to discuss phasing options
* In September 2012 the final phasing was announced so customers could see which phase they were in and where they sat within the programme
* In December 2012 a letter and information pack was sent to all customers on Victoria explaining the timescales and the fact an officer would visit them in their home
* A pro-forma has been given to all customers in all phases about what they aspire to regarding their housing and so far 140 have been completed
* In January 2013 all customers in phase 1 received a visit from the Project officers from the Regeneration Team
* Over the Summer of 2013 all phase 2 customers also received a similar visit.
* To date from phase 1- 25 customers have moved out, 3 have arranged to move and 5 are left to move
* Phase 2 have started to be relocated since 1st November with a staggered release of customers with the highest banding (1+)
* Households in future phases (3-5) will be relocated as the previous phases reach their conclusion

**2. Project group**

VIP – Michelle Bendelow

VIP – Jackie White

VIP – David White

VIP – Tommy Wright

VIP – Eric Risborough

Mark Dutton (Head of Regeneration)

Norma Ironside (Regeneration project coordinator)

Jonathan Cannon (Customer Involvement officer)

Lindsey Horner (Project officer – regeneration)

1. **Approach and methodology**

The approach to the project was as follows;

* Presentation by the Head of Regeneration outlining the background to the Victoria regeneration scheme giving an overview of the regeneration team and their function. This included looking at some of the regeneration schemes carried out by Housing Hartlepool, including before and after pictures.
* A site visit to the area with the Regeneration team walking round the estate and its location within the surrounding area.
* The VIPs watched a short video produced by the Stockton African Caribbean Association and the Victoria Estate Action Group about how living on the estate had improved for people from different ethnic backgrounds
* A number of meetings to agree the methodology and information required from the people being consulted
* An introductory letter **(see Appendices 3 and 4)** and paper-based survey **(see Appendices 1 and 2)** to customers in phases 1 and 2 and a chance to be entered into a £25 prize draw for those who completed the surveys
* Follow up phone surveys to people in phases 1 and 2 to improve response rate
* Focus groups consulting with the residents who have been relocated from phase 1 and residents currently in phase 2 **(see Appendix 5 for notes from the focus group)**.A £10 shopping voucher was offered to people taking part in the focus groups.
* Gathering of statistical data from the surveys and qualitative feedback from surveys and focus groups, collated by VIPs and officer.
* Draft report produced and presented to Head of Regeneration for comments (this report)
* Final report produced and circulated to officers and involved customers.
* Report placed on website and sent to those who took part in the focus groups

A full timeline of the key stages can be seen in **Appendix 6**

Given the numbers of people in phases 3-5 (164 properties) the VIPs felt it would not be practical not to include them in the scope of the project and that by consulting with customers in phases 1and 2 lessons could be learned for the following phases We agreed therefore that the approach should cover two distinct customer groups;

* Those in phase 1 who have moved (28 households)
* Those in phase 2 (35 households) who have all had a home visit and are starting to move from Nov 1st

We decided that the leaseholders who are being supported by the Borough Council should not fall within the remit of our work.

Phase 1 (28 customers)

It was agreed we would take the following approach;

* Introductory letter from the VIPs **(see Appendix 3)** including a short survey **(see Appendix 1)** and an invite to a focus group to take place in Stratford House in the centre of Stockton. We also said we would be carrying out some phone surveys during a specific week and may contact them.
* It was arranged with the Customer Service Centre manager for a slot where the VIPs, working in pairs, could use the Customer Service Centre at Tristar to carry out the phone surveys.

Phase 2 (35 customers)

We agreed we would take the same approach as for phase 1, however slightly altering the questions as for these customers the relocation process was just underway. **(see Appendices 2 and 4 for the introductory letter and survey)**

There are a number of customers who have on-going support from Social Services and who it is known have support from other agencies for perhaps drug/alcohol, domestic violence, young people/families issues. We discussed what approach we should adopt to getting their views and it was decided that the work this would generate and the sensitivities involved meant it would fall outside the scope of the VIPs.

1. **Findings**

**Phase 1 (people already moved)**

The information presented below is a summary of the surveys responses, the focus group and VIPs’ observations during the course of the project

There were 10 surveys returned from the 28 customers (36%), some of the results are shown below

**Do you feel you received enough support with the re-housing process ?**

Yes 10

No 0

**Did you read the information pack you were given about moving ?**

Yes 7

Some of it 3

No 0

**Did it help improve your understanding of the re-housing process ?**

Yes, I understood it very well 10

Yes, I understood some of it 0

No, I didn’t understand it at all 0

**Which parts of the pack were not clear or easy to understand ?**

We had four comments saying everything was very clear

**How could we improve the pack, what else could we include ?**

The only comment was “all ok everything was covered pretty well”

**Describe how you feel about the support you got from the regeneration team**

Very approachable 7 average 2 (2 no answer)

Very helpful 7 average 2 (2 no answer)

Very sensitive to your situation 5 average 3 (2 no answer)

**If you had to go through the moving process again how would you improve it ?**

“Removal men were great, but my cooker wasn’t done”

“Box missing on removal, no one got back to me about it”

“Give people enough time to move on the day itself, do not stand and put pressure on them as if they’re being evicted”

“Allow residents to move before you invite empty property staff into the property”

“ I don’t think it could be improved in my case, I lost my wife in the process of moving and the people I dealt with could not have been more kind, everyone was most helpful especially Vera at the Community house”

“Make sure all info we are told was backed up by all staff, info from one different to others”

“Told we would have 3 weeks to move, told pay what we need to as normal, and ended up paying 3 weeks full rent”

**What other things did you need help with which weren’t covered by our support ?**

“I got all the help I needed, very pleased”

“Give people support after they have moved, at least within the first few months. If they have moved to a new place, need support to settle and adjust to the area”

“Washer was not connected, got our money 5 days late”

**Phase 2 (People starting to move now)**

The information presented below is a summary of the surveys responses, the focus group and VIPs’ observations during the course of the project

There were 9 surveys returned from the 35 customers (26%), some of the results are shown below

**Do you feel you are receiving enough support with the re-housing process ?**

Yes 6

No 3

“some” 1

**Did you read the information pack you were given about moving ?**

Yes 3

Some of it 5

No 1

**Did it help improve your understanding of the re-housing process ?**

Yes, I understood it very well 2

Yes, I understood some of it 5

No, I didn’t understand it at all 2

**Which parts of the pack were not clear or easy to understand ?**

“Bidding process awkward, not computer literate”

“I didn’t get one”

**How could we improve the pack, what else could we include ?**

No comments

**Describe how you feel about the support you got from the regeneration team**

Very approachable 6 average 2 not very 1 (1 “not seen anyone”)

Very helpful 6 average 1 (2 no answer)

Very sensitive to your situation 6 average 1 not very 1 (2 no answer)

**What is the best thing about the re-housing process and how could we improve it ?**

“By telling people what is happening, and also offering properties”

“Plenty of help but more info on the bedroom tax”

“Bit slow and nightmare process”

**Are there any other things you need help with which aren’t covered by our support ?**

“Help with packing”

“Not enough support from team for people with disabilities”

“Need more support from health staff with regard to health problems”

1. **Recommendations**

**Phase1 strengths**

* Residents clearly felt they received enough support
* Most people read the information pack and everyone found it helpful and clear
* No comments about how to improve the pack
* The majority of respondents found the staff very approachable, supportive and sensitive to their situation

**Phase 1 recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the comments from the surveys from phase 1 customers, as well some suggestions from the VIPs themselves. We acknowledge that the information used to generate these is limited however we would still like these recommendations to be considered by the Regeneration team. They should be read in conjunction with the recommendations for phase 2 below;

1. On the day of moving a member of Tristar Homes’ staff should meet the removal company at the property to check everything is in order, and then the staff member should leave the property, calling back when the tenant is ready to vacate the property. This is so any issues raised at the start of the move can be addressed. This information should be added to the information pack.
2. It should become part of the procedure for moving customers that Empty Property officers do not enter the property until it has been fully vacated by the tenant
3. Soon after moving to a new property a visit is made to the tenant checking they have all their goods and if this is not the case it is chased up quickly with the removal men and the tenant informed of their response
4. Consider providing support to customers in their new property until they feel settled in their new community. This could range from liaising with the Patch Manager (where the customer moves to a new Tristar Homes property) or providing a basic assessment of their needs in their new homes and liaising with the relevant agencies. A home visit in the first few weeks of their new tenancy would monitor the customers’ progress in settling into their new community.
5. The information pack should have on the front page the standard text offering the information in the pack in another language if the customer requires it
6. The day of moving is clearly stressful for tenants. A number of positive comments were made about the removal men, but care needs to be taken that all removal of goods which are the responsibility of Tristar Homes (eg cookers) is completed on time. We recommend that the Regeneration officers carry out checks to ensure this happens prior to the moving day.

**Phase 2 strengths**

* The majority of respondents had read all or some of the information pack
* The majority of respondents found the staff approachable, helpful and sensitive to their needs

**Phase 2 recommendations**

1. For some customers the bidding process and restrictions on what properties people can bid is not clear. The banding process and how allocations are made (where more than one household bids on the same property) needs further clarification also. Some customers are not clear about the implications of the bedroom tax and how it affects them. More support needs to be given to customers by the relevant Tristar Homes’ staff to identify such customers and provide the appropriate support
2. The information pack while good was not clearly understood by some of the customers. A small group of customers should be consulted on how the pack could be improved to make it clearer.
3. Create a local community base(s) where people can meet locally and access up to date information in a consistent manner, voice their concerns and not rely on the postal service. Access to IT facilities would be helpful for customers who struggle with or can’t afford to access it on their own. Some form of weekly surgery where customers can be shown how to bid and get some basic training would be welcome.
4. Customers reported receiving inconsistent messages about the moving timescales, as they were told they had two years to move and then were told it was happening now. Consider the recruitment of Community Champions from the remaining phases who could meet regularly with the Regeneration team to quell rumours and achieve a consistent message across remaining customers.
5. Make sure the allocations’ staff from Tristar Homes are aware of the sensitivities of the customers being re-housed from Victoria and that there is a perception that hard-to-let properties are being pushed by Tristar staff. Training for relevant staff would be welcome.
6. That all new properties that customers move into are checked to ensure the standard is acceptable to them. If not then they consideration should be given to compensate the customer for the additional expenditure they will incur to bring the new property up to the standard of their previous property.
7. The person with a disability who commented does not feel adequately supported. The Regeneration team should take this up with the individual concerned and any lessons learned incorporated into future support.
8. There has been an increase in ASB on the estate since the rehousing process with a large increase in fly tipping, litter and rats. We suggest consideration being given to holding a “Bring out your rubbish” day once a quarter to clear up the estate and then more regular patrols of the estate to address ASB and fly tipping.
9. Liaise with Northumbria Water and Environmental Health to address the issue of poor drainage and vermin.
10. Hold discussions with Royal Mail about delivery issues. This arose as it has been noticed that some postal delivery staff are ignoring certain parts of the estate due to possible safety or health issues.
11. **Additional points of note**

There were clearly problems in encouraging customers, past and present, to attend the two focus groups, with only three attending from phase 2 and no one attending from phase 1. The latter group we always knew would be difficult to persuade to attend as some have been relocated for some time now.

The venue for the focus groups (Stratford House) was chosen as it is just off Stockton High Street and the date chosen (Wednesday) as it is market day and the group felt this was a popular place for people to go on a regular basis.

With hindsight, the use of a venue on the estate would have been better, and while we did consider the Community house, it was felt too small to accommodate comfortably the 12 people we expected.

The phone surveys carried out by the VIPs were useful in getting access to more customers and also presented a good opportunity for inviting people to the focus groups, however the take up in reality of the focus groups was a disappointment.

The incentive of a £10 voucher was clearly appreciated by those who did attend the focus group, however it was not clearly enough to attract more people. Perhaps the idea of being in a room with neighbours and talking about your feelings openly in a forum, is not comfortable for the majority of people, given the immediacy of the moving issues they all face.

While we did consider the advantages of making appointments with people and visiting them in their own homes, the safety risks for the VIPs was potentially too great, and having an officer present would have defeated the point of the VIP work being customer led and might have prevented the honest responses we were looking for.

Whilst we acknowledge that the limited number of responses might make general recommendations difficult, the customers we spoke to quite often spoke of “the general feeling is…” and “the rumour is…..” and therefore we have included these in the report.

**Appendix 1 – survey to phase 1 (note box sizes reduced)**

**Victoria regeneration survey**

**We are a group of involved tenants from Tristar Homes who are** **looking at the regeneration of the Victoria estate and as you have been affected by this we would like your feedback on how things went for you.**

**It is only a short survey and will only take a couple of minutes. Those who fill it in and return this form will be entered into a £25 Christmas shopping voucher draw. To enter the draw we need the following details. The draw will take place on Monday 9th December and we will contact you if you have won. Good luck !!**

**Name: ……………………………… Address: ……………………………………..**

**Phone number: ……………………**

1. **Do you feel you received enough support with the re-housing process ? (please circle)**

yes no

If no please tell us why below

1. **Did you read the information pack you were given about moving ? (circle your answer)**

yes some of it no

1. **Did it help improve your understanding of the re-housing process ? (circle one of the answers below)**

Yes, I understood it very well

I understood some of it

No I didn’t understand it at all

1. **Which parts of the pack were not clear or easy to understand ?**
2. **How could we improve the pack, what else could we include ?**
3. **Please circle one answer on each line below, to describe how you feel about the support you got from the regeneration team**
4. Very approachable average not very approachable
5. Very helpful average not very helpful
6. Very sensitive to your situation average not very sensitive to

your situation

1. **If you had to go through it again how would you improve it ?**
2. **What other things did you need help with which weren’t covered by our support ?**

**Thank you for your time in completing this, good luck in the prize draw !!**

**Appendix 2 – survey to phase 2 (note box sizes reduced)**

**Victoria regeneration survey**

**We are a group of involved tenants from Tristar Homes who are** **looking at the regeneration of the Victoria estate and as you are being affected by this we would like your feedback on how things are going for you.**

**It is only a short survey and will only take a couple of minutes. Those who fill it in and return this form will be entered into a £25 Christmas shopping voucher draw. To enter the draw we need the following details. The draw will take place on Monday 9th December and we will contact you if you have won. Good luck !!**

**Name: ……………………………… Address: ……………………………………..**

**Phone number: ……………………**

1. **Do you feel you are receiving enough support with the re-housing process ? (please circle)**

yes no

If no please tell us why below

1. **Did you read the information pack you were given about moving ? (circle one answer below)**

yes some of it no

1. **Did it help improve your understanding of the re-housing process ? (circle one of the answers below)**

Yes, I understand it very well

I understand some of it

No I still don’t understand it at all

1. **Which parts of the pack were not clear or easy to understand ?**
2. **How could we improve the pack, what else could we include ?**
3. **Please circle one answer on each line below, to describe how you feel about the support you’re getting from the regeneration team**
4. Very approachable average not very approachable
5. Very helpful average not very helpful
6. Very sensitive to your situation average not very sensitive to

your situation

1. **What is the best thing about the re-housing process and how could we improve it ?**
2. **Are there any other things you need help with which aren’t covered by our support ?**

**Thank you for your time in completing this, good luck in the prize draw !!**

**Appendix 3 – Introductory letter to phase 1 customers**

Dear

**Our involved customers would like to speak with you, and you will receive a £10 shopping voucher !**

At Tristar Homes, (part of the Vela Group) we are always trying to improve the services we provide, and we thought who better to ask than you about what your experience with us was like. To be able to do this independently we have trained a group of customers who are interested in getting your views and experiences. One project they are looking at is the regeneration of the Victoria estate and as you were in phase 1 and were affected by this we would like your feedback on how things went for you.

You can do this by filling in the survey that came with this letter and/or attend a focus group we are holding (maximum of 12 customers). If you fill in the survey you will be entered into a £25 prize draw (closing date Friday 6th December), but if you attend the focus group you will receive a £10 shopping voucher as well as being entered into the draw. The first 12 people who volunteer will form the focus group.

The focus group will be held in our Compass offices (Stratford House) in the centre of Stockton on Wednesday 4th December between 1-2.30pm and will be run by three of the customers mentioned above. If you would like to attend the focus group please ring Emma Maddison from the Customer Involvement team on 01429 525488 or e mail her on [emma.maddison@velagroup.co.uk](mailto:emma.maddison@velagroup.co.uk) and she will give you details of how to get there.

The information you provide will be treated in utmost confidence and only used to improve our services generally. Your name and details will not be shared with anyone, including staff, however some of your comments may be used anonymously in reports.

**Yours sincerely**

Mark Dutton

Mark Dutton

Head of Regeneration

**Appendix 4 – Introductory letter to phase 2 customers**

Dear

**Our involved customers would like to speak with you, and you will receive a £10 shopping voucher !**

At Tristar Homes, (part of the Vela Group) we are always trying to improve the services we provide, and we thought who better to ask than you about what your experience with us is like. To be able to do this independently we have trained a group of customers who are interested in getting your views and experiences.

One project they are looking at is the regeneration of the Victoria estate and as you are in phase 2 and are affected by this we would like your feedback on how things are going for you.

You can do this by filling in the survey that came with this letter and/or attend a focus group we are holding (maximum of 12 customers). If you fill in the survey you will be entered into a £25 prize draw (closing date Friday 6th December), but if you attend the focus group you will receive a £10 shopping voucher as well as being entered into the draw. The first 12 people who volunteer will form the focus group.

The focus group will be held in our Compass offices (Stratford House) in the centre of Stockton on Wednesday 4th December between 10.30am-12 noon and will be run by three of the customers mentioned above. If you would like to attend the focus group please ring Emma Maddison from the Customer Involvement team on 01429 525488 or e mail her on [emma.maddison@velagroup.co.uk](mailto:emma.maddison@velagroup.co.uk) and she will give you details of how to get there.

The information you provide will be treated in utmost confidence and only used to improve our services generally. Your name and details will not be shared with anyone, including staff, however some of your comments may be used anonymously in reports.

**Yours sincerely**

Mark Dutton

**Appendix 5 (notes from Focus group)**

Victoria regeneration Focus group phase 2

Introduction: Three tenants attended the focus group they were happy to be asked a number of questions which are shown below these are the responses we received.

**Q1 Can you tell us when you moved onto Victoria ?**

A.H 12 years. JW 16 years. GP 12 years. No problems depending where you live. AH had problems anti social victimisation she felt it was because of the mixed race of her child. She had 3 cars vandalised plus windows smashed. No support from any agencies i.e. police etc.

**Q2 How did you find the information pack and did you understand it ?**

Two people found it very easy to understand JW said she didn’t receive it.

**Q3 Do you feel you are receiving enough support ?**

Bidding process confusing but overall support was good.

**Q4 Are the regeneration team friendly and approachable and understanding of your needs ?**

Brilliant team felt they were like sisters. Happy to listen to any issues you may have.

**Q5 What other things do you think you might need help with which aren’t covered by our support ?**

Not enough time to move. Decoration of new property not up to standard so felt money being given with one hand then having to use that to decorate again.

**Q6 What is the general feeling on the estate about the re-housing and regeneration that is going on. What are people worried or excited about ?**

People are happy things are happening but not happy about timelines changing i.e. . Some people told it could be 2 years before moving then told they could start bidding now. Told people are dragging their feet as they feel they are being steered to rubbish homes that have been empty for a long time. Lack of support when no access to internet making it difficult to bid, can only use I.T for 1 hour in library.

Anti social behaviour increasing on estate, bins being empty by kids, furniture which is left out needs to be moved as soon as possible as it is encouraging fly –tipping. RATS a real problem because of waste and drains being blocked and not being flushed through. Depressing to be on the estate.

**Appendix 6 – Timeline of events**

**Timeline**

4th October:

VIP meeting outlining the project and visit to the Victoria area

18th October:

VIP meeting agreeing the approach and methodology

24th October:

VIP meeting producing the questions for the surveys and focus groups.

8th November:

VIP meeting agreeing the timescales for the different approaches and administrative tasks. Also agreed who would carry out the focus groups

18th November:

Surveys posted to phases 1 and 2

29th November:

Phone surveys carried out by VIPs in Tristar Homes’ Customer Service Centre

4th December:

Focus groups held by the VIPs for phases 1 and 2 in Stratford House

6th December:

Closing date for surveys

10th December:

Winners of surveys notified.

21st January:

Meeting of VIPs to draft report and produce key finding from all the above

17th February:

VIPs present draft report to the project group and relevant managers

8th April

Mark Dutton presents action plan to the VIPs and sign off of final report

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Victoria Action Plan** |  |  |  |
| **Phase 1 recommendations** | **current procedure** | **Action** | **Officer responsible** | **Deadline** |
| On the day of moving a member of Tristar Homes’ staff should meet the removal company at the property to check everything is in order, and then the staff member should leave the property, calling back when the tenant is ready to vacate the property. This is so any issues raised at the start of the move can be addressed. This information should be added to the information pack. | The team visit the resident at home to arrange the move at least a week in advance. They go through the move arrangements in detail and discuss any issues/concerns or extra support needed. They ask the resident to ring the office on a direct line if any changes to timing or problems. A phone call or visit may be made at the start if there are concerns with the move. If no contact the RPO visits approx 20 mins before end of move to ensure all okay. | Regeneration Officer to ring at the beginning of the move to ensure the van has turned up on time and other scheduled arrangements have been kept. | Alison Ramage (AR) Lindsey Horner ( LH) | immediately |
| It should become part of the procedure for moving customers that Empty Property officers do not enter the property until it has been fully vacated by the tenant | the RPO visits approx 20 mins before end of move to ensure all okay. As the move completes a final inspection is done with the tenant to ensure nothing has been left behind and takes meter readings, a copy of which is given to outgoing tenant for notifying the utilities. | Continue to visit as the move is completing to ensure all is well but won't enter the property unless invited. | Alison Ramage (AR) Lindsey Horner ( LH) | immediately |
| Soon after moving to a new property a visit is made to the tenant checking they have all their goods and if this is not the case it is chased up quickly with the removal men and the tenant informed of their response | As above the check are made before the van leaves to ensure no items remain. | None needed |  |  |
| Consider providing support to customers in their new property until they feel settled in their new community. This could range from liaising with the Patch Manager (where the customer moves to a new Tristar Homes property) or providing a basic assessment of their needs in their new homes and liaising with the relevant agencies. A home visit in the first few weeks of their new tenancy would monitor the customers’ progress in settling into their new community. | Support needs are identified via the home visits to ensure suitable alternative accommodation is offered. The RPO will ensure any extra support is in place for the new tenancy and move. Operations currently carry out settling in visits 2 - 4 weeks after the move. | To discuss suggestion for a joint settling in visit with regeneration and Patch Manager 2-3 weeks after move. | Norma Ironside (NI) Neighbourhood Manager |  |
| **Phase 1 recommendations** | **current procedure** | **Action** | **Officer responsible** | **Deadline** |
| The information pack should have on the front page the standard text offering the information in the pack in another language if the customer requires it | It was included within the letter in the information pack, currently check with the saffron team for an updated list of particular needs such as large print, knock loudly etc. | Highlight on future correspondence | Regeneration team | Next literature to go out |
| The day of moving is clearly stressful for tenants. A number of positive comments were made about the removal men, but care needs to be taken that all removal of goods which are the responsibility of Tristar Homes (eg cookers) is completed on time. We recommend that the Regeneration officers carry out checks to ensure this happens prior to the moving day. | The testing/disconnection of white goods is arranged in advance via email to ensure the appliance is ready for the removal van. | As point 1 a phone call can be made to resident to ensure works are done. | Alison Ramage (AR) Lindsey Horner ( LH) | immediately |
| **Phase 2 recommendations** | **current action** | **Action** | **Officer responsible** | **Deadline** |
| For some customers the bidding process and restrictions on what properties people can bid is not clear. The banding process and how allocations are made (where more than one household bids on the same property) needs further clarification also. Some customers are not clear about the implications of the bedroom tax and how it affects them. More support needs to be given to customers by the relevant Tristar Homes’ staff to identify such customers and provide the appropriate support | Both regeneration and the Choice Based Lettings team provide advice for bidding and welfare reform issues. The Tristar rent team have identified under-occupying customers and have been in touch with them to offer advice. The original community centre held surgeries on a Wednesday morning, attended by Tristar housing management and debt prevention officers. The new Community house will have extra surgeries to assist residents. The visits to phase 3 were carried out with a regeneration officer and a dedicated Choice based lettings officer so advice could be given. | Continue with support and advice and advertise when the new Community centre will open next month. | NI/Leah Beachill (LB) | 28.4.14 |
| The information pack while good was not clearly understood by some of the customers. A small group of customers should be consulted on how the pack could be improved to make it clearer | The earlier version of the information packs had been through a focus group however the recent version was updated in conjunction with the SBC leaseholder information packs to ensure consistency between tenures on the estate. | Any updates to the info pack will be shared with the most appropriate customer group | NI Nigel Budd (NB) | Next literature to go out |
| **Phase 2 recommendations** | **current action** | **Action** | **Officer responsible** | **Deadline** |
| Create a local community base(s) where people can meet locally and access up to date information in a consistent manner, voice their concerns and not rely on the postal service. Access to IT facilities would be helpful for customers who struggle with or can’t afford to access it on their own. Some form of weekly surgery where customers can be shown how to bid and get some basic training would be welcome. | At the time of the survey there was an established community house within phase 1 of the scheme where residents could use the telephone or IT facilities. Weekly surgeries were advertised and attended by Tristar Housing Management /Regeneration/Debt Prevention Officers and often the local beat Police Officers. This has closed in March 2014 to prepare for demolition, however an alternative property is being prepared nearby in phase 4 which will open most days and Officers carrying out additional surgeries. | In progress, see recommendation above (first one of phase 2) | NI/NB | 31.5.14 |
| Customers receiving inconsistent messages about the moving timescales, as they were told they had two years to move and then were told it was happening now. Consider the recruitment of Community Champions from the remaining phases who could meet regularly with the Regeneration team to quell rumours and achieve a consistent message across remaining customers. | The phases were deliberately explained as indicative as decant timescales can vary from phase to phase. Phase 3 due to start and home visits carried out. As above Officers form most departments attend weekly surgeries, and points of contact by phone or office are widely publicised. | Will raise the suggestion with remaining residents to recruit a 'champion' . | NI/NB | 31.5.14 |
| Make sure the allocations’ staff from Tristar Homes are aware of the sensitivities of the customers being re-housed from Victoria and that there is a perception that hard-to-let properties are being pushed by Tristar staff. Training for relevant staff would be welcome | Fortnightly 'decant' meetings are held between the teams to update on progress and any sensitivities with the rehousing needs of customers. Tristar may ask a resident if they've considered particular properties advertised but there is no obligation to accept them, and it keeps a dialogue between CBL and the customer. | Will highlight the perception with other depts. | NI/NB/LB | 23.4.14 |
| That all new properties that customers move into are checked to ensure the standard is acceptable to them. If not then they consideration should be given to compensate the customer for the additional expenditure they will incur to bring the new property up to the standard of their previous property | Properties are currently let to ' void standard' and decorating allowances given or if a property is particularly poor a full decoration will be carried out by Vela whilst empty. | Need further discussion with regards to the décor quality of an alternative property | NB/Void manager | ongoing |
| **Phase 2 recommendations** | **current action** | **Action** | **Officer responsible** | **Deadline** |
| The person with a disability who commented does not feel adequately supported. The Regeneration team should take this up with the individual concerned and any lessons learned incorporated into future support. | Full support is given to vulnerable residents and this particular comment has been investigated. | comment accepted and ongoing support is provided | LH/AR/NI | ongoing |
| There has been an increase in ASB on the estate since the rehousing process with a large increase in fly tipping, litter and rats. We suggest consideration being given to holding a “Bring out your rubbish” day once a quarter to clear up the estate and then more regular patrols of the estate to address ASB and fly tipping. | The regeneration caretakers are out on the estate several times a week and a formal inspection walkabout each Wednesday. Stockton Council pest control have been involved with advising on any reports of vermin. The communal gates are being checked to ensure they are locked to prevent dumping in this area. | will arrange with SBC and inform residents of dates as these need to be carefully arranged to ensure items left outside are collected the same day. | NI/LH | 28.4.14 |
| Liaise with Northumbria Water and Environmental Health to address the issue of poor drainage and vermin. | Northumbria Water aware of demolition plans and estate walkabouts identify any missing drain covers. No drainage problems had been directly received by the regeneration team. As above, Stockton Council Pest Control have been involved in any reports of vermin. | Will continue to monitor any reports of poor drainage, investigate and resolve. | AR/LH | ongoing |
| Hold discussions with Royal Mail about delivery issues. This arose as it has been noticed that some postal delivery staff are ignoring certain parts of the estate due to possible safety or health issues. | Regeneration team offer a reimbursement of 3 months post redirection (explained in information pack) the resident has to arrange this themselves due to personal details needed. Housing management had a report of mail not being redirected after move. No safety issues reported though | Regeneration team have contacted Royal Mail and ask if there are any safety issues. | NI | 10.4.14 |