**Scrutiny.Net - Sept 2014**

**On the couch – Discussions**

**Overcoming obstacles, sharing ideas, supporting each other**

1. Recruitment criteria for Scrutiny Panels – what do you do?
2. How involved are your senior managers in influencing the scope of scrutiny and the final report how do you define independence
3. How does your scrutiny group link in with your board?
4. Value for Money – Compliance statements – what did you do?
5. Measuring success In involvement
6. Participatory budgets – do you? How and how much?
7. Neighbourhood Committees – do you and how?
8. **Recruitment criteria for Scrutiny Panels – what do you do?**

* Incommunities
* Involvement is in the customer promises
* ask -do you want to be involved to new tenants – not at sign up but by follow up call and visits – this has been very successful
* Get people to express an interest in:
  + Higher level things
  + 4 Local Management areas (stock about 22,000)
  + ask if it is local neighbourhood or wider involvement that floats their boat
* Questionnaire – ASB consultation, brought in some people with specific interests to give feedback
* ASB complainants – recently asked complainants – had some success
* Admin team – send out information and that produces a visit list
* Links to Employability Team – local for vol or work skills
* They have a champion in N Team for neighbourhood involvement, which promotes CI in the team
* Attend 8 Team meetings

Vela

Under review with new CI Strategy – look at Customer Satisfaction Forms and respond to those

Dale and Valley

* Invite interest and follow up those who respond to the STAR Survey
* Customers on Bus - hired for week and drove it around estates

EDH

* Follow up with Complainants
* Customer referrals – set targets for neighbourhood staff
* Volunteers – offer shadowing first
* Dog chipping – by street with the Dog’s trust
* Also have customer champions who promote involvement

Fabrick

* Voids & lets list used for mailing
* Door knocking in neighbourhood plan areas
* Com rooms – sheltered – mailshot & opened
* Young mums for children in school - targeted at school gate
* Estate & Participatory Budgets
* When targeting Financial Inclusion
* Seek out those who are representative

Cheshire Peaks and Plains –

Targeted 70 people on 3 estates

**2. How involved are your senior managers in influencing the scope of scrutiny and the final report. How do you define independence?**

YD

Independence of mind and not in actions, as scrutiny is a partnership

Dale &Valley

* Underperforming areas as per KPIs
* Customer Satisfaction
* Complaints
* Service Mgrs – briefing session
* Managers Response
* 6 Month review with Mgr – also generated ideas for Scrutiny

Cheshire Peaks & Plains

* Voids – Assistant Director Property Services suggested the tenants could not look at voids as everything had improved
* Tenancy sustainability – Finance Director – pointed us at that – right people in right homes scope – support to stay for new tenants was scoped

Magenta

Scope Document - Independent panel – the tenants decide and draw up the project plan

EDH

* Report Writing – interference from EMT – Board Final Version
* Suggestion – review the TOR and consider the sign off of the final report process and get the group more involved in the shape of the action plan (maybe worth speaking to Jonathan at Thirteen on this)

Incommunities

Managers thrash out the actions with the Panel

Thirteen

* Tenants decide on what they will accept from managers comments
* Some managers keener to influence the scope than others
* Must be of interest to the tenants doing the work

**3. How does your scrutiny group link in with your Board?**

EDH

* Attend Board Away Day
* Have a discussion + reach agreement on what to look at
* Need to get to know the Board
* Tenant BMS – do not play any different role than other BMs
* Board champion reports back to Board on scrutiny and involvement

Magenta

* Chair used to meet the CEO monthly meet scrutiny
* Chair keen to start this again

Northstar

* aware they have more informed sessions between SP + Board

Dale and Valley

* Hold a Thank you event at year end
* Bring people together
* Get Customer Panel/Boards/TARA’s involved

Cheshire Peaks and Plain

* Chair of Panel used to meet Chair of board – fizzled out since
* TBM – Sits on scrutiny us an observer
* Joint Training – shared between panel and board – e.g. on Welfare Benefits
* Scrutiny Panel have more of a business level with the Boards

Incommunities

* HA Board Members is an involvement champion
* Changes to local committees, which are no longer part of the governance structure have taken a while to settle – some still have issues with the Board
* Starting to bed in + report each way

**4. Value for Money – Compliance statements – what did you do?**

Incommunities

* Explained to tenants about how they are trying to make their assets go further
* Looked at the 3 E’s
* Consulted with about 20 People on the document – from various groups

East Durham Homes

* Have a service review group on VFM
* Have a VFM champion
* They supported the self-assessment
* Commented on the board report
* Not a regulatory requirement yet for ALMOs
* Joint presentation from the finance director and CI team
* Did a Staff + tenant self-assessment
* Mix of Back & Front line staff involved In the group
* Held the landlord to account - What have you done with savings?
* Made links to the other SIG groups

Dale and Valley

* In the process of completing a VFM SA
* not a regulatory requirement for the ALMO
* Yvonne speak to the tenants groups with a day’s training – tenants keen to get engaged in a group next year
* Not yet looked at costs involved

Cheshire Peaks and Plains

* Aug event led by the Finance Director
* Cancelled meeting in Oct to follow up

Magenta

* Combined Audit, Risk + VFM
* Presented statement at AGM last night
* No consultation with Residents

Pierhead HA

* VFM steering group of tenants – looked at draft
* Went to scrutiny Get them thinking about tenants

Thirteen

* 43 pages – 10 pages the same for the group, the remainder different based on 4 different landlords
* 2 meetings – first one was training on VFM and took draft statement home
* Tenants of 4 landlords together
* Got them thinking about the statement on session 2 separately as tenants of specific landlords
* tenants made comments, some changes made to statement
* to be involved as this is on the monitoring of the statement will now be done quarterly by the consultative panel
* Tenants suggested a cut down version for tenants in easy read – based on what tenants would want to know – Liked Helena partnerships information on the website for tenants last year – this was agreed but will be produced after the statement goes in.
* Right of reply – summary of the tenants thoughts to also appear on the website

**5. Measuring success in involvement**

* Recruitment campaigns and success
* Expressions of interest
* How long do the new people stay on the groups
* Meetings attended
* Area of interest
* Snapshot - who involved and how many times
* Method of involvement

Adrian Foster Staffordshire Housing created his own version of tracker – cheaper and useful

**6. Participatory Budgeting**

East Durham Homes

* Resident groups get £300
* Also give £300 Quick Fix Grants to any Com Group
* Panel decide – present in area/tenants
* Neigh SIG – make decisions, using strict criteria, there is a bit of a mismatch in usage – but must benefit wider community - max £10,000

Dale and Valley

* Better Homes/Better Lives – them
* Try and get money from Contractor
* £500 available – usually up to 200
* have to submit a letter - what they want and why they want it
* decision taken by Board Members and CEO
* Starter £50 grant
* TARA s get 300
* Customer Panel get 500

Cheshire Peaks and Plains

Community Inv Grant

* Strict Guidelines
* Evidence must be given of the Community Benefit
* How you will involve the community
* TARAs - £500

Magenta

* TARA – 400 (strict guidelines)
* Comm grant no cap
* Must benefit community
* Officer decides – no panel

Pierhead

* Scrutiny Panel - £4000 managed by them
* staff might be able to access a best value pot of £6k
* no other panels at PHA

Tristar Homes and Housing Hartlepool

* No budgets at Hartlepool – about to have their first
* got £20k one off payment in a previous year when Vela joined both together

Tristar

* 4 ROAP’s - reaching out area panels £25K a year for the 5 years of the transfer promise – now in the last year – of which up to £5K for youth groups
* Everyone could bid - criteria a bit loose
* Fill in form + make decisions at the ROAP – made up of local residents
* £40K – Buzzin fund for youth activities – in last year of promise – involved tenant and young people decide on shortlist, 10 did presentation
* Got scored by tenants and YP

Erimus Housing

* 4 x area Forums £25k each – of which £5k for YP projects
* Area Forums of tenants decide – Environmental slant in the criteria

Tees Valley Housing

* £29k – across stock – small HA
* £10k - Panel gives small grants for TARA
* Work must not be part of maintenance plans or obligations
* Panel drew down up to £200 for TARA’s.
* TARAs draw down their expenses from that pot

Incommunities

* Interim arrangement for small pots of money to be allocated on walkabouts
* Support for growing grants and gardens
* Tenant representation in choice
* Internal Audit suggested staff to look at processes
* training given to tenants involved

**7. Neighbourhood Committees – do you and how?**

Incommunities

Neighbourhood Committees

* Local Areas x 4 spread over 22,000 Homes
* Neighbourhood Planning at scheme level
* Was for a Neighbourhood Officer patch or bigger – so scaled up and now hard for communities to get the imposed boundary
* Neighbourhood Managers ’s prioritise
  + - Worst first
    - Neigh issues
    - On the questionnaire
* Trying to align Neighbourhood Team to Involvement Team
* Report on local Neighbourhood Standard by area
  + - WR
    - Progress
    - Bits of money
    - Consult – policies(some)
* Bring together the views at a local conference
* Identified where we look at for scrutiny
* Get lots of local training for getting involved - Also training available to board members
* Might follow up Actions
* have an Issues log
* Have a board champion role at each NC

East Durham Homes

No NC, stock in villages and towns

Dale and Valley

* Similar to EDH – much work don through TARA’s
* 3 com hubs – just taken over from Council – 2 being Refurbished
* Trying to increase usage
* Have play groups + core groups meeting there
* have them available to hire in the community
* New groups interested in set up

Cheshire Peaks and Plains

TARAs only

Stockport

* Great digital projects – making se of free facilities in unused community rooms
* Sponsored by the TARAs – given them and the rooms a new lease of life
* Brought in young mums to use the centre

Magenta

Tara – use community facilities

Thirteen

* Neigh Committees will replace the existing panels at the 4 landlords
* Large boundaries at present, may need to review
* One CI officer linked to each boundary and out of town tenants closest to this also brought in to that local neighbourhood

END