Residents Conference 2014

Feedback Report
The annual Lambeth Residents Conference 2014 took place at Lambeth College Centre in Clapham on 25 October 2014. We would like to thank all 108 residents who attended for giving up their Saturday and making it a successful event.

Opening Speeches

Councillor Matthew Bennett (Lambeth’s Cabinet Member for Housing) opened the proceedings and spoke of housing being at the heart of Council services and outlined his three priorities in housing: better homes, building new homes and a new housing service. Cllr Bennett stated that this is one of the most important times for housing in Lambeth, with four hundred and ninety million pounds being invested in home improvements through the Lambeth Housing Standard (LHS).

Councillor Bennett told of the difference LHS has made to the residents of Gipsy Hill ward who have had work carried out and now have a greater sense of pride in their homes and feel safer. The average cost so far has been £16,000 per property but this varies depending on the works required. He also spoke of the Council’s aims to build 1,000 new homes for the first time in a generation. He ended his introduction by encouraging everyone to get involved in the consultation process.

In response to queries raised on the LHS at the conference there will be a detailed report going to Tenants’ Council on 15 January for discussion. For more information on the LHS programme please see: http://www.lambethliving.org.uk/lhs-programme
Next followed a presentation given by Dinah Roake, Trustee, Brixton Green. Brixton Green is a non-profit, registered community-benefit mutual society with 1,000 members who live or work in Brixton. Dinah explained the proposals being worked on for Somerleyton Road, where all the new homes will be for rent, rather than being sold off to developers. A range of rents will be charged with at least 40% being at council (target) rents, available for people to bid for through Choice Based Lettings. Somerleyton Road is being delivered by the officers and the community working together to co-produce the project. Homes will be managed by a housing cooperative. In response to questions from the floor, these homes will count towards the commitment of 1,000 new council homes and will have a high level of environmental sustainability.

**Workshop discussions**

Below follows a summary of the discussions from the workshops. If you would like a full copy of the notes or more details please contact us at: housingconference@lambeth.gov.uk or 020 7926 4166.

**Running a successful community organisation**

This was designed for TMOs and TRAs that would like to know more about managing local services. Facilitated by Liz Michael, Community Consultant, the workshop gave an overview of the tools needed to start up and successfully run an organisation.

Attendees found the workshop very useful. One group were interested in setting up a play group / crèche and will be supported to do this. Advice was provided on general TRA governance issues and some residents were unclear on the arrangements for managing community halls.

**Next Steps:**

*Any resident who would like further information should contact their Resident Participation Officer. Support, guidance and training is available in setting up social enterprises and managing facilities.*

*Lambeth Living is working with the Council to agree a new Community Facility Strategy.*
Estate Regeneration Principles

This workshop gave attendees an opportunity to help shape the principles for future estate regeneration schemes and outlined Lambeth Council’s commitment to residents.

Some delegates expressed their concerns – the term ‘regeneration’ is viewed quite negatively by many people. Others felt it may be a good option for their estate, and this will be followed up with a visit to their TRA to discuss options. On the ‘tenant offer’ there were a number of areas which it was suggested could be made clearer, particularly on what the new rents would be charged at. Delegates were concerned they would be charged at 80% of market as happens with some new housing association properties. This isn’t the case; rents will be based on the same formula used to establish the rent for existing council properties.

A number of points were raised on the ‘Homeowner Offer’. The main concern is that leaseholders may be unable to afford to access the new properties being built, and what options could be offered by the Council.

The conference was an important part of the consultation process for developing this document.

Next Steps:

Discussions with Tenants and Leasehold Council.

Adopt agreed Estate Regeneration Principles in February.

Recycling on Estates

This workshop addressed the key issues of looking at how we can increase recycling on estates, encourage residents to recycle and how residents’ groups can get involved in this.
Delegates suggested making information on local rubbish and recycling facilities more prominent in the new Tenant Induction pack and having more information in newsletters.

TRAs also have a role to play in reminding residents to use facilities more effectively. Residents stated that there should be a more effective bulk collection strategy.

**Next Steps:**

*All comments are being taken on board as Lambeth Living develops its approach to waste management.*

**Revisiting the Resident Engagement Strategy (RES)**

In January 2013, Lambeth Living produced the RES which outlined how they are going to support resident involvement. Eighteen months on we wanted your views on how the commitments are being implemented and how we can improve it.

This workshop reviewed progress on the 12 promises made in ‘Getting involved’ which is the resident engagement strategy launched March 2013 following consultation at the 2012 Resident Conference. Tenants were supportive of the six key promises identified: More support for Tenants and residents associations (TRAS), more training for TRA’s, more opportunities for TRAs to run activities, more employment opportunities for residents, developing and improving community facilities, and more resources.

Other issues raised included: Support for TRAs wishing to provide new facilities, Consistency of Area Housing Forums (AHF) for raising issues, capacity building for TRAs to get new and more diverse groups of residents involved and communication – many people were not aware of the TRA newsletter although on the website.

**Next Steps:**

*TRA’s wishing to explore options for new facilities should contact their RPO.*

*Area Housing Forums will increasingly be used to determine local service priorities as well as strengthening the scrutiny role.*

*The suggestion for a network meeting of chairs would be taken up.*

*Anyone interested in signing up to the TRA newsletter distribution list should contact their RPO.*
The Lambeth Housing Standard (LHS) – two years on

We are now in year three of the LHS programme of major works. This workshop looked at what has worked in the programme and where areas can be improved. This workshop was facilitated by 4i Consultants.

Where LHS works had been completed residents were generally happy with the results, in particular the choice and design options were appreciated, however there were issues with snagging, some quality issues and delays between design and completion of the works.

As far as communication was concerned there was a high degree of dissatisfaction in this area where issues of follow up, lack of information and not being kept informed of progress were raised.

There were also issues around responsibility and residents seemed unclear as to whom they should contact to resolve problems.

Next steps:

*Improved communications, keeping residents informed throughout the process.*

*Improved post inspection and snagging with a view to improving quality*

*Better liaison to Lambeth Living for residents.*

**Money Matters: What does financial resilience mean to you?**

Residents learnt more about what is meant by ‘financial resilience’ and what we can do together to support residents who are facing difficulties. A suggestion was made that it would make good sense to have free computers available in Job Centres for
members of the public to use to go online. It was asked if there were any projects that would subsidise residents in buying a computer. Residents invited the Financial Resilience Team to attend TRA meetings to give a presentation as it was felt that the available projects would be of great interest to residents. Residents asked if a specialised Lambeth Moneysaving website could be set up to advise of good deals within the borough.

Next Steps:

Kennington Park Jobcentre has just installed public access computers and Streatham has plans to build a digital hub

We do not have a project to subsidise residents buying a computer and unfortunately do not have funding to do so.

The financial resilience team would be very happy to attend TRA meetings, please contact your RPO to arrange.

There are no plans for a specialised money saving website, but we would recommend www.moneyadviseservice.org.uk

We are about to start a programme of Universal Credit workshops for frontline staff working in the borough. These will be practical sessions looking how Universal Credit will impact residents and how to provide support.
The Future of Lambeth’s housing management

This workshop offered an opportunity for residents to share their views on the future of housing management in Lambeth. From a list of options, the three things delegates said they wanted from the service was communication, general repairs and staff – of sufficient quality and quantity.

Value for money is also a top priority.

When discussing how residents would like to be involved a range of preferences was expressed including online, forums and consultation meetings. There was a strong feeling that the single most important thing was that they receive feedback after consultation has taken place.

Next Steps:

This is the start of the consultation process. The next stage will include discussions at area forums over November – January.
Community Initiative Awards

This year we asked residents to vote on community initiatives that have been running for the past year. We’re really pleased that so many community groups took the time to prepare and share success stories.

In total there were 5 nominees. They were:

| Blenheim Gardens TMO – After School study club |
| St Matthews – Resident Led Needs Survey |
| Tulse Hill Est – Summer Play Scheme |
| Woodvale Est TRA – Edible Living |
| The Point – A range of projects |

The winner was Blenheim Gardens TMO who received a prize of £600.

St Matthews and Woodvale Est TRA were runners up and each received a prize of £300.
Event Feedback

This year’s Residents Conference took place on Saturday 25 October 2014 at Lambeth College in Clapham. In total, 108 residents attended out of the 160 registered, slightly higher than previous years. The event was promoted to Lambeth’s tenants and leaseholders through their TRA or TMO.

Overall the conference was positively received, with 81% of attendees rating the conference as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. This is however a reduction on the 92% received last year.

Lambeth College has again proved to be a successful venue with a 93% approval rate. This is a slight increase on the 2013 conference rating (91%). The catering and venue hire costs are very reasonable compared to other options in Lambeth.

There has been a significant improvement rating for the refreshments provided on the day. A ‘Good / Very Good’ rating of 80% was achieved compared to last year’s rating of 57%. Further to comments received, next year we will have two serving stations to reduce the queues.

Once again, the awards ceremony has proved a highly popular and positive feature, scoring 81% (the same as last year). The quality of videos supplied by nominees was of a high quality and provided an upbeat way to end the conference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very poor %</th>
<th>Poor %</th>
<th>Neutral %</th>
<th>Good %</th>
<th>Very good %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Estate Regeneration</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Running a successful community business</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Future of Lambeth's housing management</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Lambeth Housing Standard - two years on</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Recycling on estates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Revisiting the Resident Engagement Strategy (RES)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Money Matters: What does Financial resilience mean to you?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERALL</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There has however been a reduction in the satisfaction with workshops from 81% rating as ‘Good’ or ‘Very good’ last year to 61% this year rated as good or very good.

**Other Comments**

Other feedback comments were generally positive but there were some mixed views. Our responses to these are in brackets below.

*“Early booking of venue is essential and that early advertising of the event needs to happen.”*

[We can do this – this year invites were sent out late pending the decision on the future of Lambeth’s housing management]

*“Who came up with the topics? Were residents asked to put forward ideas?”*

*“Very prescribed”*

*“Question format was too controlling”*

[Topics are agreed between residents representatives, Lambeth Living and Lambeth Council. Staff are always open to new ideas. We need to get a balance between having an open conversation with residents but at the same time getting something tangible from the discussions that can be used to shape services]

*“Work shops good, but too little time”*

*“Disappointing late start”*

[Things did slip a little at the start, something we will work on for future events]

*“Staff very helpful and polite”*

*“The training was all that we needed. Excellent”*

*“Felt I was given the opportunity to speak out”*

*“Overall was a very good day”*

*“I thoroughly enjoyed and benefitted a lot from all the workshops I attended and will take
home very useful information with me especially to my TRA which is now established”

“This conference has been an eye opener for me especially with Housing Services offered by Lambeth Council”

[Thank you!]

“I do hope the feedback from Residents makes a difference”

“It would be nice if all the comments that were made will be dealt with by Lambeth”

“Lots of work to match words with action”

[This feedback report describes some of the next steps. We will be monitoring outcomes with Tenants Council Exec to make sure we realise the full potential benefits from the conference.]