

## **ORWELL RESIDENTS GROUP MEETING NOTES**

**16 June 2021 6.30pm Video Conferencing meeting**

**ORG Members Present:** Mary Ager, Stuart Appleby, Sabrina Duncan, Sharon Cony, Arthur Clark, and Liz Morris.

**Staff Present:** Claire Monk, Diane Piperno, Chris Wyre, Amanda Sargent

**Apologies:** ORG Member Chloe Heath

### **Actions from the meeting**

- Customer Engagement Team (CET) to compile VFM strategy feedback report from ORG and send to Chris Wyre by 25 June.
- CET to send recommendations from the Safeguarding children policy review to Andrew Regent for feedback.
- CET to identify next steps for the Tenant Skillgate eLearning portal.
- CET to organise TPAS bespoke training and identify cost accessibility of the CIH Certificate in Housing course module.
- Diane to circulate potential dates for ORG July meeting, ORG members to respond with dates they can attend so suitable date can be confirmed.
- Diane to circulate example service review (scrutiny) reports to ORG members.

### **1.0 Value For Money Strategy (VFM)**

Prior to Chris Wyre (Director of Resources and Growth) and Amanda Sargent (Assistant Director of Resources) joining the meeting discussions took place to identify questions.

On joining the meeting Chris Wyre delivered a presentation on the VFM strategy and asked for feedback from the group. The questions asked and resulting discussions can be seen in the table at the end of these notes. A report to give the ORGs feedback on the strategy will be sent to Chris Wyre by 25 June.

### **4.0 Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy**

Diane shared the results from the Safeguarding Children and young people policy review. The results confirmed that the majority of those carrying out the policy review felt:

- It was very easy for staff and residents to understand.
- The length of the policy was about right.
- The format of the policy was considered excellent and that the wording good.
- Some of the words used to describe the policy were appropriate, engaging, and informative.

Five changes were recommended, these to be sent to Andrew Regent the member of staff responsible for the policy for comment.

Although those carrying out the policy review agreed the online presentation was an easy and convenient way of carrying out a review half of those involved felt they would prefer to review a policy at a focus group. (online or face to face)

## 5.0 Tenants Skillgate eLearning Portal Trial

Most residents trialling the courses felt they were about the right length and were interesting and engaging. Three out of the seven trialling the portal didn't feel they had learned a lot. All felt that the portal was easy to navigate, through a minority found it difficult to find specific courses. All said they would like to do further courses and would recommend the portal to a friend. How CPD could be recorded was queried, and it was agreed there could be some benefit from having more courses on the eLearning portal that give CPD points.

Overall, it was agreed that it would be good to continue to have the portal available for residents as it is a positive educational and support tool for Orwell tenants.

## 6.0 Any Other Business

- **ORG service review commissioning**

Claire confirmed that the service reviews currently in progress or planned for the ORG to commission are:

- What customer engagement looks like.
- Planned works – journey mapping exercises with customers, staff, and contractors.
- Pets' policy review.
- Reviewing the service standards. specifically, the customer service standard to reviewing response times and accessibility. (The internet and/or value of enabling customer access to our offices)

It was agreed to circulate example service review reports produced by both Orwell and other housing providers residents to the ORG for information.

- **Training**

The group were informed that they could take the Level 2 Understanding Tenant Support in Housing course that is available online through West Suffolk Colleague.

There is a module in the CIH Certificate in Housing specifically on involvement that could be useful for the group to carry out, however we need to confirm cost and accessibility of this.

It was felt that the group could benefit from some bespoke training from TPAS to help them developed as a group and to carry out or support service reviews. This will be organised

- **July Face to Face meeting.**

The engagement team would like to organise a face-to-face planning meeting for the ORG. All agreed it would be beneficial, Diane will circulate potential dates to identify a time where most members can attend in July.

## 7.0 Date of next meeting

July meeting date to be confirmed.

## Value For Money (VFM) Strategy Review

Topic	Query	Staff response	ORG Comment	Actions
Language and Format	Is the document suitable for the target audience	The audience is both for staff and tenants	The document is easy to read, uses appropriate wording making it accessible to the audience. It was well presented, engaging and easy to follow.	
Objective targets	Why are, no targets included for the years between 2021 to 2024	As the end target for 2024 has been established, it was felt that suitable targets for the years in-between will become evident as the strategy is implemented.	There was some concern regarding the setting of these targets, however it was agreed to be an understandable way of moving things forward.	
Benchmarking	Who are the specially selected peers that Orwell will benchmark against and will there be time to start measuring this before December 2021	Orwell used to use HouseMark for benchmarking. However, as Orwell has a lot more supported housing than the other housing providers in this benchmarking process it was not felt to be a good comparative measure. Also, being a member of HouseMark very expensive and the process of putting together the required metrics was very of time-consuming. As an alternative the intention is to use a less formal benchmarking method against other East Anglian housing providers, and specifically the members of the group Independence East. All housing providers will be undertaking similar metrics regarding VFM.	<p>The group would like to be given more information about how this new benchmarking process will work, also the specific organisations that will be involved as things progress.</p> <p>Some comparability might be gained through the good practice sharing at the Social Housing Networking Group meetings. These meetings are attended by engagement staff and residents from all over East Anglia and Orwell residents and staff regularly attend. It was agreed to raise this as a potential agenda item for the group.</p>	
VFM performance	How will the ORG manage/ monitor the VFM performance and achievement of targets?	The Board will be receiving an update on VFM at the 9 meetings they have throughout the year. Following the presentation of this at Board these updates can be received at ORG meetings for information and monitoring. The annual VFM action plan will also be brought to the ORG	It was agreed it would be useful to have information on VFM as well as updates on all the KPI information that is received by Board	

Annual Report to Tenant	Currently there is very little information about VFM included	The information in the annual report to tenants will need to be fleshed out to cover all the areas where VFM are now to be monitored.	It was agreed the current figures on VFM in the annual report to tenants is not adequate. The ORG members will be involved in putting together much more detailed figures for the 2021 annual report to tenants	
Achievement of objectives	There is limited time left to achieve the targets that are forecast for December 2021	Orwell are confident that we will make these targets, this strategy is a work in progress which will continue to be developed.	Some concern was raised regarding the timescales for achievement of the targets set for December 2021.	
VFM Roles and responsibilities	The role of the ORG is to encourage the wider customer voice in VFM and carry out 3 service reviews annually. How will the group do this, and what are the 3 review projects for 2021?	These reviews all involve a wider tenant voice and will all include an element of VFM. This is more obvious in a review about planned works, whereas there is still the need to consider VFM when reviewing the Contacting Us service standard. These topics are both service reviews being worked on, or planned for the ORG. The engagement team are currently working with customers on a review of the pet policy and the engagement strategy.	It was agreed that to have previous service review reports that have been carried out by Orwell's as well as scrutiny review reports from other housing providers circulated to ORG members to gain a greater understanding of how service reviews are carried out and reported on.	
Embedding VFM	The role of customer engagement and the ORG are seen as integral in supporting to achieve this policy. How will this work in practice and what might it look like.	The inclusion of customer engagement as integral to the strategy is in itself positive. It reflects a message of openness and honesty in engaging with customers. How the ORG will engage with this in practice will need to be developed alongside the implementation of the policy.		
VFM Objectives	The VFM strategy states that: We engage with our customers, in agreeing the VFM Strategy and in considering VFM performance. Will this just be this groups review and monitoring or will there be wider customer engagement	The all-important voice of customers is not only encouraged through our Orwell Residents Group but also through other engagement initiatives. The ORG is responsible for this VFM review, however as service reviews are progressed a wider group of residents will be involved in monitoring VFM?	It was agreed that engagement with reviewing and monitoring the VFM strategy needs to be wider than just the ORG and ongoing.	