

## Issue 8

# Tenant Services News

16<sup>th</sup> November 2010

### ***Housing Improvement Plan***

The improvement plan has had a new action point added relating to re-use of furniture and electrical items. It is on the HOME worksheet as item 2.19. The lead officer for this action is Hayley Sherwood of the repairs team who has volunteered to act as project manager. The action point essentially sets out to make use of the better quality goods left by vacating tenants rather than simply having things cleared by our contractor to landfill.

Whilst there are several organisations who deal with second hand items from homes, there are often issues around collection and, for various reasons, there does not appear to have been a consistent process developed. We now have a contact with the British Heart Foundation who (subject to quality criteria) will collect such items for free and then sell them on at very reasonable prices through their outlet at Gloucester. They are possibly also willing to put together a “starter pack” of basic items for a fixed price so that we can refer new tenants in need of such a service when moving into their new home. A number of staff will receive “quality assessment” training so that only the correct items are referred for collection. In addition to collecting items from empty properties, the service will (through Housing Officers) be made known to other tenants who may be considering updating their furniture and dumping their existing items.

The project will run for a trial period early next year and, if successful, we will be looking to extend the process to include any other organisations in the area. For further details, please contact Hayley

If any member of staff wants to be involved in any of the actions identified in the improvement plan, please contact either myself or the identified lead officer. This does not have to be an action linked to your current role in the organisation. For example, someone dealing with business support might be interested in helping to develop on some of the tenant participation issues and someone dealing with repairs might want to be involved with some estate management issues.

### ***Staff Meetings – TSA review of the service***

A follow up meeting was held with a representative of the TSA on 4<sup>th</sup> November. The meeting was split into two sessions with the first involving a number of tenants, Councillors and staff. The second part of the meeting involved the Strategic Head, the Head of Finance, the Tenant Services Manager and myself. The purpose of the meeting was for the TSA to discuss the progress which had been made since the last meeting in May and what might be the most appropriate way to move forward.

## Issue 8

The feedback from the three members of staff who attended the first session was mixed with some references from tenants to historical issues but hopefully having ended on a more positive note identifying where improvements had taken place.

Those attending the second session had a frank and open discussion during which the TSA representative commented specifically on our clear self awareness and transparency about where we are and what remains to be done. The recently produced Annual Report was given praise and some discussion took place on some of the changes identified by tenants as part of the consultation process which might be included in the next report.

The TSA raised a number of issues relating to some elements of the improvement plan which had fallen a little behind schedule. The general view was that the organisation had performed very well, achieving much in a very short space of time, especially taking into account the restructure in July/August and the associated disruption from the office move.

Whilst we are awaiting a formal response from the TSA as to their future engagement with us, we are hopeful that the positive discussion on 4<sup>th</sup> November will produce an outcome which does not involve inspection. There seemed to be a general consensus that such intervention would not serve any purpose other than to distract us from the improvements we are continuing to make.

We will let you know what the TSA have decided as soon as we receive their formal response.

Eric Sharpe  
Ext. 4460