



Notes from the 4EF Meeting and IOD TRA Chairs

With OH Director of Operations and Engagement Manager

Tuesday 25th January 2022 7pm St John's Community Centre

Present

Residents: Candida (chair), Jill, Pam, Arthur (notes), Eliza, Jackie, Jenny, Maggie, Dan MaCabe, Kim, Peter Kristoffersson (Kingsbridge TRA Chair)

Advisor: Mike

OHG: Sandra Fawcett (Director of Operations) Yasin Ahmed (Engagement Manager),

Apologies: Lesley, Heidi, Ahmed, Daniel Lynch (Deidre, Danny Waites, Juliet, Glen)

Summary of the 5 main conclusions from the meeting

a) Pledges

These must represent a driver for change and sorting out the trust issues residents have with OH, not just a meaningless PR exercise.

b) Service offer

This must deliver more than just improvements to a very low starting point. Residents should be defining what needs improving and evaluate whether they have improved. Residents and Officers need to agree the details of the service standard goals. Residents just reacting to what OH decides is not engagement.

c) Local Management is Essential

Estate Officers (EO) are needed, and they have to be able to effect change. Residents and TRAs identify problems and Estate Officers need to be able to address the systemic issues causing them. EO need to have effective teeth. OH/Riverside staff need to be accountable to the TRAs and Area Panels. The Call Centre role is as a reporting mechanism. It shouldn't be trying to manage properties.

d) Engagement

Central to this is influence to effect change. If the residents' engagement structure doesn't have significant influence it's worthless. How can this influence be built in so residents can trust it and OH be held to account to its residents?

e) Stop treating residents like they are a rather silly inconvenience

Tell us things before they happen (e.g. merger) and allow us to influence those decisions. Openness and transparency are important to trust. We know the pledges referring to funding were misleading. They were written to imply there will be more money when there isn't. This was written to mislead residents. Why?

Residents collectively probably know more than the staff about what is needed to manage our homes and estates. A grown-up relationship will improve efficiency and save money. We should be viewed as partners and assets not "inconveniences".

Italics = OH officers comments

Normal type = Residents comments

1. The Pledges made in the Merger Offer

2. *All the pledges will be acted on and service delivery will be improved.*
3. *There should be bimonthly updates available on the progress of the pledges*
4. *All residents' groups will be asked for feedback about the Offer to Residents and OH will be responsive to this feedback.*

Improving services

5. *There is continuing work to improve services rising from the Housing Strategy developed last year*
6. *OH will discuss with residents any changes to services and their delivery but the focus is on improvement*
7. *Residents will have the opportunity to approve the final offer outlining any changes to their housing services*
8. *Most of the practical changes will be in the back office but the results should be noticed on the ground.*
9. *Services will still be delivered locally so they can be tailored to fit local needs where possible.*
10. Local neighbourhood Offices like Castilia Square are important for some residents – they must not be closed without the agreement of residents
11. It is difficult to understand why having suppliers in the north (Derby) is cost effective. *It is hoped that supplies will be available on the operatives' vans rather than having to be ordered from the suppliers all the time.*
12. The 20/21 Service charges have still not been completed. *They are with the accountants KPMG being checked now.*
13. The effectiveness of the call centre is overestimated. When there is a problem, it is often unable to sort it out. Having housing officers to resolve these issues is a Priority for residents. An officer who can cut through the bureaucracy is needed so they need to have decision making responsibilities.

14. *There is a complaints process for residents to be able to sort out shortcomings in the service. The reason why residents don't like to use it is that is intimidating and unfriendly.*
15. TRA officers used to be able to intervene on behalf of residents and have access to certain officers to resolve issues. This has been stopped so TRAs have lost their ability to help.
16. OH officers that come to TRA meetings need to be able to get things done otherwise there is no point. If they report back and say they have tried but there is nothing they can do, then that needs to be addressed.

Resident Engagement

17. *There is an ongoing survey and consultation about what kind of engagement residents want to be a part of. This meeting will be informing that consultation*
18. *The Engagement Team wants a genuine and meaningful consultation with residents that will produce a workable and successful strategy for empowering residents*
19. *There will be a menu of options for residents to engage with, from face-to-face meetings to online interactions so everyone will have an opportunity to have their voice heard*
20. *There is a Customer Experience Strategy on the OH website
https://www.onehousing.co.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/29481/Customer_Experience-Strategy_2021_2024.pdf*
21. *Scrutiny Panels and other systems for improving accountability can be developed*
22. *The Government white paper on Social Housing highlights the expectation that there should be a strong tenants voice*
23. *There seems to be a lot of wasted money and resources within OH and residents do get frustrated by the evidence they see of this. Is there a way residents can influence this?*
24. *How can meaningful engagement take place when there is so little trust in OH at the moment? Is anything that is proposed going to be credible? When we get so many empty promises about services, why should residents take this seriously?*
25. *What is the point of Engagement? Why can't OH just provide decent, clean, and well-maintained homes – then there wouldn't be a need for it?*
26. *What will give any resident engagement structure any teeth or power to change things. What will stop OH ignoring us as they have done in the past? *There are trust issues and OH has a lot of work to do to build this up.**
27. *Will OH be consulting with us about what they are thinking of doing or still telling us what they have done.? This is very disempowering. *The regulating bodies will ensure this cannot happen in the future.**
28. *Directors are accountable to the Regulator's standards. Shouldn't they be accountable to residents as well?*

29. Any new Engagement Strategy must include and identify where influence lies and how much there is.
30. We need to be clear about the principles behind any engagement strategy – what is it trying to achieve and why?
31. Any resident structure needs to be able to look at the problem and have the teeth to escalate this to another level so that it gets resolved.
32. TRAs look at issues on their estate but if the problem is caused by a systemic problem it needs to escalate to the next level, the Area Panel, and so on, until it is resolved. Every level needs to be accountable to that TRA.
33. OH Officers and Managers will now be available to come to TRA meetings if requested.
34. Some blocks don't want a TRA so there needs to be other mechanisms for including those residents. However, the discussions that take place in a group where different perspectives are reflected on are very valuable.
35. For blocks without a TRA a quarterly general meeting should be held by OH so residents can raise issues and discuss issues.
36. Sandra will provide a copy of the budget for delivering the Engagement strategy and a copy of the "family tree" showing who is responsible for what.
37. Residents being able to make a difference and getting things done, through their TRAs and other representative bodies, is the crux of engagement. This is the focus. If this does not happen, the engagement strategy is useless.
38. TRAs have had huge lists of issues that don't get resolved – whether OH and its strategy will be able to resolve this will be the test.....
39. Residents that are on Panels and Boards need to be able to speak openly without fear of losing their positions. They need to be accountable to the residents they represent, not OH or Riverside.
40. *The engagement feedback process should be in by mid February. A plan should be available by mid-July, hopefully.*

Transition to Riverside

41. Generally, the same OH staff will be delivering the services when we complete the merger with Riverside
42. Do the ideas residents' groups may be proposing to improve accountability fit in with the Riverside ethos? At the moment there is no sign that R'side has any commitment to residents being involved at a grass roots level.

