

## Customer Involvement Impact Assessment 2008/2009

### 1. What is a Resident Involvement Impact Assessment?

Our regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) requires all Housing Associations to assess the impact resident involvement is having on service delivery and performance. This is our fifth Impact Assessment and covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. Previous reports have covered 2004/5, 2005/6, 2006/7 & 2007/8.

### 2. Organisational Commitment to Customer Involvement

Eastlands Homes is committed to enabling the full involvement of its customers in all that we do. The Customer Involvement Strategy, adopted in December 2006, states that we will aim to make sure customers are fully involved by:-

- Providing a range of accessible ways for customers to get involved and provide feedback
- Providing opportunities for customers to get involved and influence decisions at a level that suits them
- Removing obstacles that prevent some groups getting involved
- Providing help, advice, information, support and training so that people feel they have the knowledge, skills and confidence that they need
- Having governance and management structures that reflect the need to involve and listen to customers
- Identifying the impact of customer involvement on the effectiveness and value for money of our services and activities.

This report aims to show how far we have moved towards achieving these aims during 2008/9 and the impact this has had.

The report is divided into the following sections:-

Levels of involvement

Feedback from customers who have been involved

Customer Involvement Statement Performance 2008/9

Formal Participation Structures

Working with Hard to Reach Groups

Tenant Training

Working with Tenants, Residents and Community Groups

Annual Events

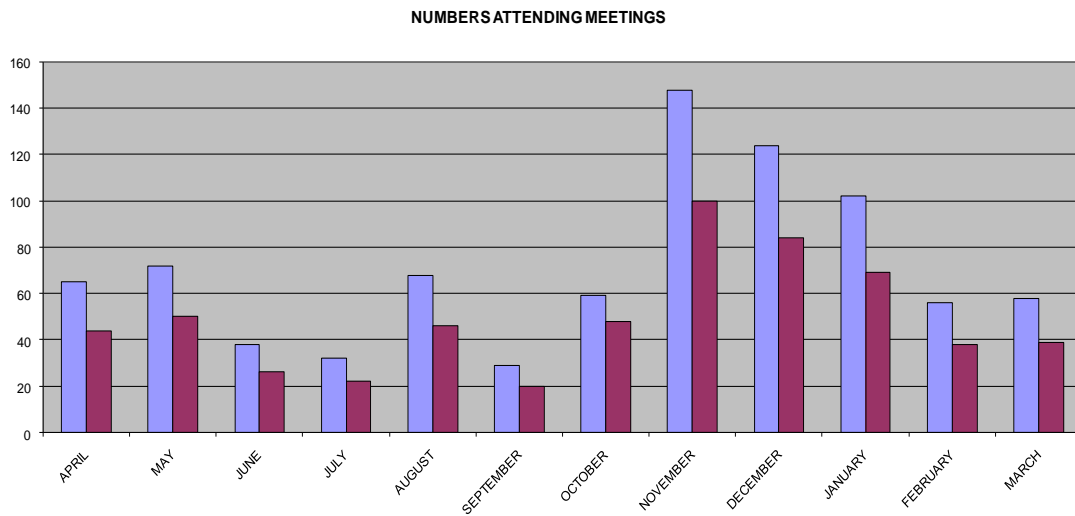
Other Customer feedback

Summary and conclusions

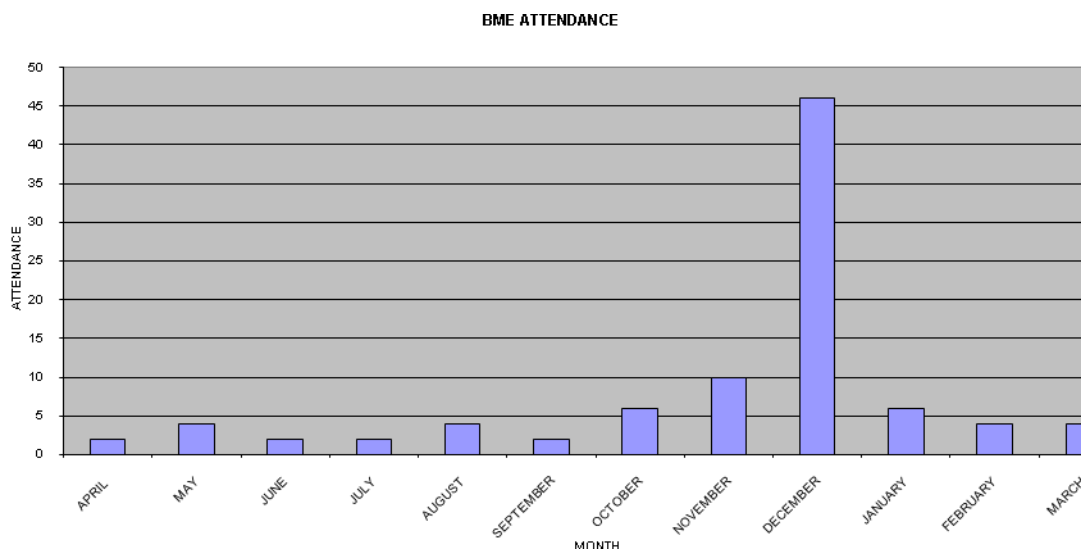
### 3. Levels of Involvement

Attendance levels were maintained during 2008/9. The figures below show the total number of representatives at formal meetings and training events.

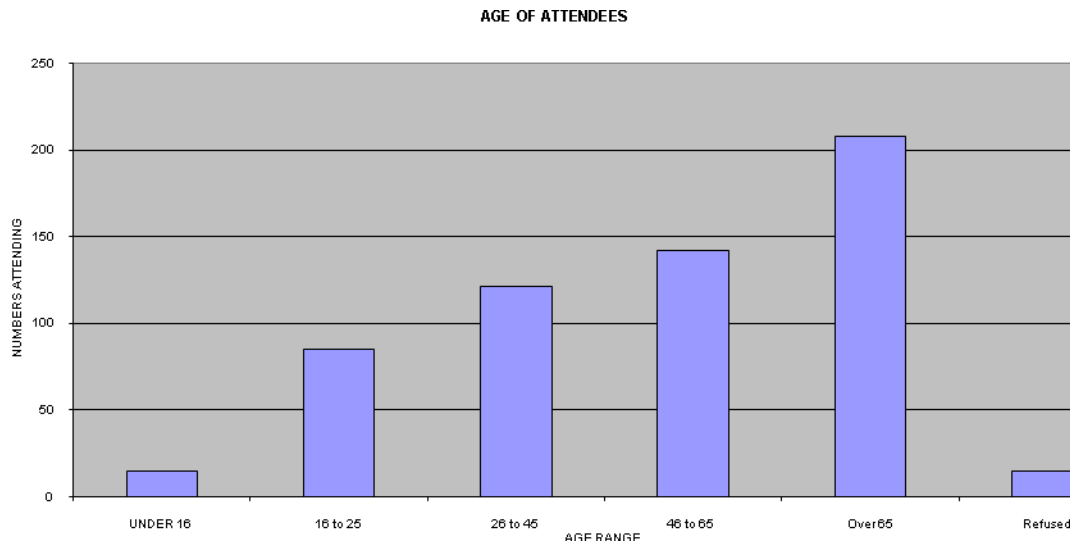
The first chart below shows the number of attendees. The blue column shows the total number of attendances at all meetings that month. The column in purple shows the number of individual customers attending, some of whom attended more than 1 meeting or event



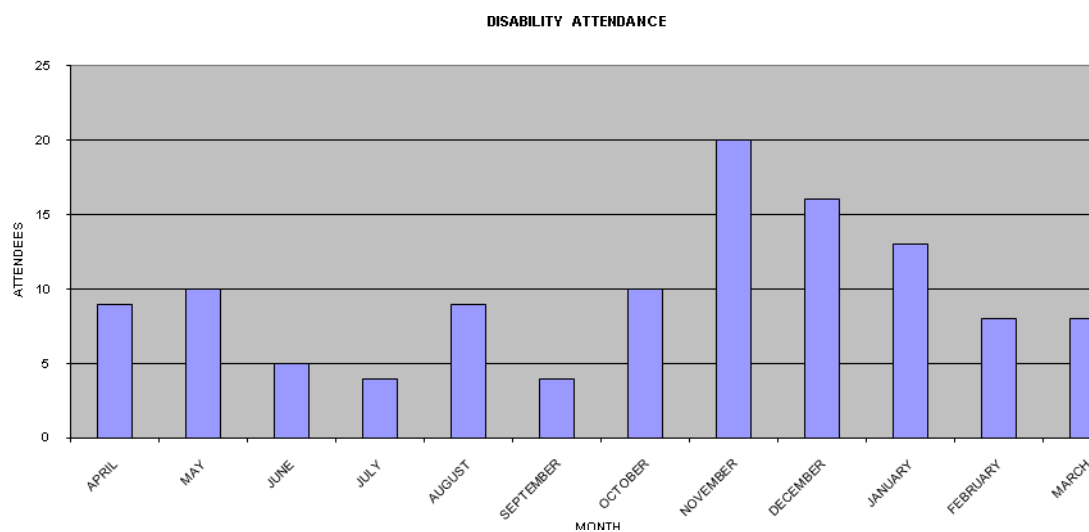
Below is a table showing the number of customers that have attended each month from the BME Community



The table below shows attendance by age range in total throughout the year.



The table below shows the total number of customers attending meetings that considered themselves to be disabled.



#### 4. Feedback from customers who have been involved

Comments regarding the impact that customers feel they have made from attending the various meetings they have attended and what difference they feel they have made to any service improvements.

A summary of comments made is listed below.

<p><b>Young People Activities including</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Youth Forum</b></li> <li>• <b>Eastlands FC</b></li> <li>• <b>Task Team</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people felt empowered</li> <li>• Attitudes of older people have changed towards young people</li> <li>• Confidence has improved</li> <li>• More awareness of Equality &amp; Diversity issues within the community</li> <li>• Strong sense of team working and mutual trust and respect</li> <li>• Being listened to and having a voice</li> <li>• “Its kept me out of trouble and taught me right from wrong”</li> <li>• Learning new skills for everyday life</li> <li>• Increased participation in sport</li> </ul>
<p><b>Young At Heart Club for the over 60's</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have made lots of new friends</li> <li>• Increased social skills</li> <li>• Increased confidence</li> <li>• Lots of variety of trips</li> <li>• Something to look forward to</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service Improvement Panels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rents Panel</b></li> <li>• <b>Repairs Panel</b></li> <li>• <b>Investment Panel</b></li> <li>• <b>Housing Management Panel</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater understanding of the Day to day running of Eastlands Homes</li> <li>• Having a real input into improving the service delivery</li> <li>• Take time to listen to our views and act upon them.</li> <li>• Staff are very friendly and approachable</li> <li>• Having a say about the future improvement works and being involved with all processes</li> <li>• Feel confident to feedback information to other customers on progress</li> <li>• Shows respect to customers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Formal Consultation Methods, which include</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Forum Meeting</b></li> <li>• <b>Forum Sub Group</b></li> <li>• <b>Editorial Sub Group</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kept well informed on key issues that affect the community</li> <li>• Increased confidence skills</li> <li>• Meeting other groups and seeing what their achievements have been</li> <li>• Increased knowledge of Eastlands Homes and feel confident to inform others about areas of the service</li> <li>• Able to share any concerns and to be listened to and not feel uncomfortable</li> <li>• Meeting new friends and staff</li> <li>• Able to have a big input into policy decisions</li> </ul>

## 5. Customer Involvement Statement Performance 2008/2009

The Customer Involvement Statement for 2008/9 included 16 commitments that were made to our customers. All commitments and are summarised below.

	<b>What we Said</b>	<b>What we achieved</b>
<b>1</b>	To review the sign-up and post-let procedure to include introducing new customers to the local area, neighbours, facilities etc.	Post let visit schedule now being set up to identify new customers moving into the area and for officers to call and welcome them to the area and introduce them to the opportunities to become involved in the various activities established by Eastlands Homes
<b>2</b>	To create Youth Panels to discuss issues affecting them in the areas in which they live and organise a Youth Conference as a starting point.	Youth Conference held in October 2008 and attended by 44 Youngsters from a variety of backgrounds – aged between 9 and 19. Discussed issues surrounding what they perceived to be issues that related to them including – What do you do to get others involved, What might stop young people involved, What is good about you group and how do you keep yourself safe. Youth Forum now established to look at issues affecting young people in their area and work will continue to build on this
<b>3</b>	To review the involvement strategy to make it easier to become involved including a review of the dates and times of meetings to make involvement easily accessible. Create 6 monthly meetings for new customers to promote getting involved.	Customer Involvement Strategy reviewed in early 2009 and the dates and times of meetings have also reviewed to ease accessibility although this will continue through the introduction of new panels members following the East transfer and the creation of the six monthly meetings for new customers to showcase the work of the Customer Involvement Team and how they can become involved.
<b>4</b>	To review the engagement of minority customers of all cultural backgrounds to have more of a say and to have more local activities and road shows involving all sections of the community in interactive fun activities.	Customers invited to Tenant Conference, Neighbourhood Services Forums and links made with local minority groups (i.e the African Francophone project) and other agencies to identify the needs and aspirations of all sections of the Community in arranging the activities of the Customer Involvement Team (i.e the Annual Fun and Feedback Day)
<b>5</b>	To engage with local schools to promote getting involved at an	Visits have taken place to several local schools as part of the Financial Inclusion

	early stage in the wider local community and the issues that affect the area i.e. regeneration, crime, sense of place etc.	Strategy to promote the benefits of saving money including the distribution of Savings Boxes. Also once the new Customer Involvement Structure is in place it is hoped to extend the partnerships with local schools to look at other areas of activity mentioned.
<b>6</b>	To promote Equality and Diversity in the community and the wider scope of what this covers and it is not just about race and religion and that it covers ageism, sexuality etc.	Promoted through the Forum and Service Improvement Panels and a series of further Equality and Diversity Training Sessions have been booked to extend the promotion of E & D with all new customers attending Involvement activities once the transfer has taken place
<b>7</b>	To create a more interactive and fun way to hold community events such as the Fun and Feedback day that will help to create better involvement and participation with involvement from all sections of the community.	Fun and Feedback Project team included staff and customers who identified the theme and activities that would attract customers to the event from all sections of the Community. The Day itself was altered to coincide with start of the Summer Holidays and was attended by over 500 customers in the most successful event to date. The Neighbourhood forum in December again was designed to be more interactive and fun and attracted over 250 Attendees in one evening
<b>8</b>	To look at creating Customers Champions in the local communities that can promote involvement and a sense community.	Promoted through the Tenants Forum, however it is felt that a more structured approach will be needed and this commitment has been carried forward into next year to expand throughout the new Eastlands area following transfer
<b>9</b>	To hold local community events at which different cultures within our community can showcase their history, life and culture to a wider audience.	Included within the Fun and Feedback Day and also attendance at various community events via the links with the groups that we are continuing to engage with in our current and new areas following transfer.
<b>10</b>	To promote Eastlands Homes within the wider community such as local clubs, scout groups, brownie packs, guides etc.	Have started this exercise within the visits to local schools and with the introduction of the Task Teams and their presence within the area and their participation in various community groups such as Eastlands FC, Manchester Storm RL club etc
<b>11</b>	To provide more intergenerational projects between the young and older members of our community by having themed events such as	Intergenerational projects have commenced with Young people visiting the Sheltered Schemes to show some of our elder customers how to use modern technology such as Mobile Telephones,

	a joint outings, talent show, coffee mornings, experience swap shops etc.	Computers. Digital Cameras etc and for the young people to listen about how things were in the “bygone” days. This project will continue to evolve and develop links between the young and older community.
12	To provide a leaflet specifically designed for young people to get information on services that are available for them for help and support in the local area.	This project is still in the design process following the transfer and the need to update all our suite of Leaflets but the Youth Forum will play a major part in the creation and delivery of this.
13	To increase the level of attendance and visible presence at meetings by members of the Eastlands Board	All members of the board are actively encouraged to attend should they wish to do so and some members are actively involved in the Forums and Service Improvement Panels.
14	To look at using more local community venues for meetings and drop- in events.	Various local schools and community buildings have been used to accommodate various activities such as the Community House on Stanton Street, St Brigids, Mills St Venture Centre, The Grange etc.
15	To increase the training opportunity for customers by extending the Current Training Programme to include;- Computer Skills, Policy and Procedures, Jargon Busting, Skill Sharing, Funding for Groups, Tenant Auditing and Mystery Shopping, Recording Neighbour Nuisance, Acting as a Treasurer.	Full Programme of training produced to allow customers the opportunity to be trained in various skills of those listed and in particular now that the Tenant Services Authority has advised for a greater participation of Customer Involvement in the Auditing and Inspection of Landlords, we have included this as part of the training package delivered during 2008/9 and ongoing into 2009/10.
16	To review the Customer Involvement Statement in October 2008 in the light of the East Transfer to incorporate any additional requirements that may be needed for Customer Involvement.	Customer involvement Statement reviewed on a monthly basis however as the Transfer did not take place until March 2009 there were no significant changes. However, East Customers have been involved, through the Tenant Conference and Customer Involvement Strategy Review. With the delivery of the Customer Involvement Strategy for 2009/10

## 6. Formal Participation Structures

### 6.1 Forum

The Forum meets every 6 weeks. All recognised groups, which also include the service improvement panels, are entitled to send up to 3 representatives to each meeting. Eric

Horton a representative of Shebang is the Chair of the Forum and Mary Farrelly is the newly elected Vice Chairperson.

The main purpose of the Forum is to “provide a two way process for information, exchange and consultation between customers, residents and agencies involved within the Eastlands Homes area”.

Attendance at the Forum during 2008/9 is shown below.

Below is a table showing the Value For Money for the Forum

<b>Event/ Group</b>	<b>Total Numbers Attending during year</b>	<b>Meetings held during year</b>	<b>Average attending each meeting</b>	<b>Hours in total</b>	<b>Officer Time</b>	<b>Cost, excluding staff</b>
Forum	103	9	11	1390	47	Total £427.49 Per Meeting £47.50 Per Head £4.15

## **6.2 Forum Sub Group**

The Forum sub group is a small group of representatives from the main Forum who meet in between forum meetings, every 6 weeks. The group provides regular and ongoing feedback to officers on general issues relating to service improvement and customer service and considers detailed issues prior to fuller discussions at the Forum meetings.

Below is a table showing the Value for Money for the Forum Sub Group

<b>Event/ Group</b>	<b>Total Numbers Attending during year</b>	<b>Meetings held during year</b>	<b>Average attending each meeting</b>	<b>Hours in total</b>	<b>Officer Time</b>	<b>Cost, excluding staff</b>
Forum Sub Group	37	9	4	666	56	Total £72.00 Per Meeting £8.00 Per head £1.95

## **6.3 Editorial Group**

The Editorial Sub group has been given delegated authority by the Forum to “prepare and agree the twice yearly East Speak publication” and to “provide feedback to officers on other proposals for printed materials”.

The group has been successful in producing an interesting and lively newsletter that has been well received by residents. The group has benefited from having a core membership of 3 people who have worked throughout the year with a real commitment to producing a quality product. The group has freedom on the content and layout of the newsletter, and is supported by the Customer Involvement Manager.

All editions of the Newsletter contain pages on Youth Involvement, Forum News, Good News Stories. The centre page is usually dedicated to events that have taken place.

Below is a table showing the Value For Money for the Editorial Group

<b>Event/ Group</b>	<b>Total Numbers Attending during year</b>	<b>Meetings held during year</b>	<b>Average attending each meeting</b>	<b>Hours in total</b>	<b>Officer Time</b>	<b>Cost, excluding staff</b>
Editorial Group	16	4	4	128	8	£0.00

The Editorial panel met on 4 occasions during 2008/9

#### 6.4 Rents Panel

Below is a table showing the Value For Money for the Rents Panel

<b>Event/ Group</b>	<b>Total Numbers Attending during year</b>	<b>Meetings held during year</b>	<b>Average attending each meeting</b>	<b>Hours in total</b>	<b>Officer Time</b>	<b>Cost, excluding staff</b>
Rents Panel	32	9	3.5	576	30	Total £415 Per Meeting £46.11 Per head £12.97

The panel met on 9 occasions during 2008/9

<b>Date</b>	<b>Resident Attendance</b>	<b>Topics Discussed</b>
02/04/2008	3	Performance Benchmarking, Rents Action Plan and Financial Inclusion Strategy – Action Plan Reviewed
14/05/2008	4	Performance Benchmarking, New Rents Action Plan 2008/09, Financial Inclusion Strategy – Staffing Updates
25/06/2008	5	Performance Benchmarking, Credit Union, East Transfer Update, Time/Date of Future Meetings
06/08/2008	3	Performance Benchmarking, Financial Inclusion Strategy, Rents Action Plan 2008/2009
24/09/2008	3	Performance Benchmarking, Direct Debit Service, Allpay, Staffing Matters
25/10/2008	3	Performance Benchmarking, Direct Debits, Action Plan 2008/2009, Comparison of Arrears
10/12/2008	3	Performance Benchmarking, Allpay, Financial Inclusion, Staffing, Rent Arrear Patch Sizes, (Servitte Homes)
21/01/2009	3	Performance Benchmarking, New Structures Post

		Transfer, Financial Inclusion.
04/03/2009	5	Rent Increase, Performance Benchmarking, New Structures Post Transfer, Financial Inclusion, Staffing

### 6.5 Repairs Panel

A group of Eastlands Homes customers established a working group to look at continually improving the new in-house repairs service. The group looked at key areas such as budgets allocation, repairs strategy, setting service standards, policies and procedures, procurement contracts and monitor key performance indicators. The group will also look at current feedback and survey forms to look to improve them too.

To date the panel has been instrumental in the following areas of service delivery and improvement

- Implemented the Repairs Manual
- Reviewed the repairs satisfaction survey
- New void standard
- Interview panels and selection of contractors
- Reviewed response times
- Job shadowing
- Prize Draw
- Monitor performance indicators
- New products – range of toilet seats, stop cock ‘sure stop’, new taps etc.
- ID cards

<b>Event/ Group</b>	<b>Total Numbers Attending during Year</b>	<b>Meetings held during year</b>	<b>Average attending each meeting</b>	<b>Hours in total</b>	<b>Officer Time</b>	<b>Cost, excluding staff</b>
Repairs Panel	35	7	5	490	112	Total £280 Per meeting £40.00 Per head £8.00

The group met on 7 occasions during 2008/9

Date	Resident Attendance	Topics Discussed
18/04/2008	6	Performance, Gas Update, Aids and Adaptations, Repairs Action Plan 2008/09
30/05/2008	6	Complaints, Response times, Levels of Service, Performance
22/08/2008	4	Performance, Gas Servicing – The Future, Newsletter article
03/10/2008	4	Gas Servicing, New Products, Complaints, Performance, East Update
10/11/2008	5	Performance, Gas Servicing, Repairs Action Plan
09/01/2009	5	Performance Complaints, Gas Servicing
20/02/2009	5	Performance, Complaints, Gas servicing, Future Meetings following Transfer

## 6.6 Investment Panel

This panel was established in October 2006 to look at the next phase of improvement works. Some of the key issues that the group have looked at so far have included

- Drafted top priorities from customers
- Looked at priorities from condition survey
- Looked at high level budgets
- Started gathering feedback from customers

Event/ Group	Total Numbers Attending during year	Meetings held during year	Average attending each meeting	Hours in total	Officer Time	Cost, excluding staff
Investment Panel	69	7	9	1104	272	Total £376 Per meeting £53.71 Per Head £5.45

The group met on 7 occasions during 2008/9

Date	Resident Attendance	Topics Discussed
10/04/2008	9	Performance, Heating Programme, Bathroom Programme, Catch-up Programme
03/07/2008	9	Performance, Bathroom Programme, Fencing Programme, Head of Investment
21/08/2008	9	Performance, Programme Updates, Catch-up Programme, Future Meetings
02/10/2008	9	Performance, Programme Updates, Catch-up Programme, Date of meetings
20/11/2008	9	Panel Dates, Performance, Development of Wade & Windermere, Programme Updates, Catch up Programme
20/01/2009	8	Performance, Merger of Repairs/Investment Panels, Update on Catch-up Programme
12/03/2009	7	Gas Safety, Performance, Investment Programme and KPIs, Bathroom Programme

## 6.7 Housing Management Panel

The panel was re - established in January 2008.

The meeting is chaired by the Customer Services Manager and will discuss topics such as Tenancy Management, Environmental Management, Eastline and Customer Contact, Right To Buy and Right To Acquire.

The group met on 4 occasion during 2008/9.

Event/ Group	Total Numbers Attending during year	Meetings held during year	Average attending each meeting	Hours in total	Office r Time	Cost, excluding staff
Housing Management Panel	12	4	3	96	16	Total £71.00 Per meeting £17.75 Per Head £5.92

Date	Resident Attendance	Topics Discussed
09/04/2008	4	Terms of Reference, Items for Discussion, Code of Conduct, Performance, Successions.
30/06/2008	2	Performance, Pets Policy. Surveys, Walkabouts, Future Topics
08/09/2008	4	Performance, Car Parking, Surveys, Walkabouts. Nominations
08/12/2008	2	Performance, Wade/Windermere, Lettings

### 6.8 Joint Sheltered Housing Meetings

These meetings are held every quarter with both Lily Thomas Court and North Road Sheltered Scheme to discuss any ongoing concerns and to keep the customers updated with services provided by Eastlands Homes.

The group met on 3 occasions during 2008/9

<b>Event/ Group</b>	<b>Total Numbers Attending during year</b>	<b>Meetings held during year</b>	<b>Average attending each meeting</b>	<b>Hours in total</b>	<b>Officer Time</b>	<b>Cost, excluding staff</b>
Joint Sheltered Housing Meetings	71	3	18	568	280	Total £662 Per meeting £220 Per Head £9.33

<b>Date</b>	<b>Resident Attendance</b>	<b>Topics Discussed</b>
20/08/2008	18	Issues at Lily Thomas and North Road for Action
19/11/2008	20	Talk by Help the Aged on Care and Repair, Issues at North Road and Lily Thomas for Action
18/02/2009	15	Lily Thomas refurbishment (Furniture and Carpets) update, Issues at Lily Thomas and North Road for Action

### 6.9 Mystery Shopping

To help identify how well services are being delivered. All staff and tenants involved attend a training session to introduce them to the concept of Mystery Shopping.

<b>Event/ Group</b>	<b>Total Numbers Attending during year</b>	<b>Meetings held during year</b>	<b>Average attending each meeting</b>	<b>Hours in total</b>	<b>Officer Time</b>	<b>Cost, excluding staff</b>
Mystery Shopping	20	4	5	160	16	Total £180 Per Meeting £45 Per Head £9.00

The group met on 4 occasions during 2008/9

Date	Resident Attendance	Topics Discussed
03/04/2008	5	Astraline
11/06/2008	5	Rents Service
11/09/2008	5	Wardens
21/10/2008	5	First Call Alarm service

Examples of some of the key improvements that have been introduced as a direct result of the Mystery Shopping are shown below: -

- Contractors to always give their name when answering calls
- Increased Knowledge of Operatives answering calls
- Quicker response times to answering calls
- Clear standards on times when services are opening and closing
- Clear contact and telephone details given to operatives

### 6.10 Summary

Set out below is a summary table showing the total number of meetings held throughout the year and the levels of attendance.

Meeting	Total number of meetings	Attendance	Average Attendance
Forum	9	103	11
Forum Sub Group	9	37	4
Editorial Sub Group	4	16	4
Rents Panel	9	32	3.5
Repairs Panel	7	35	5
Investment Panel	8	69	9
Housing Management Panel	4	12	3
Sheltered Housing Meetings	4	71	18
Mystery Shopping	4	20	5

The total number of hours that customers have contributed to these meetings is 5178

#### \* Costs

When looking at the benefits of meetings and there relative costs, it has to be taken into consideration that each level of meeting is established at the convenience of the customers attending and this will then have an affect, depending on transport, catering etc, on the costs of setting up and facilitating those meetings. So for instance the Forum Sub-group has a lower cost attached to it because of the numbers attending and the fact that they do not require any catering, the only cost is transport, whilst the Joint Sheltered Housing meeting has higher costs attached to it because we provide transport from one sheltered

block to another, catering and bingo prizes are provided in order to encourage attendance from residents of the Sheltered Housing blocks in order for us to get the necessary feedback from them to improve our service delivery.

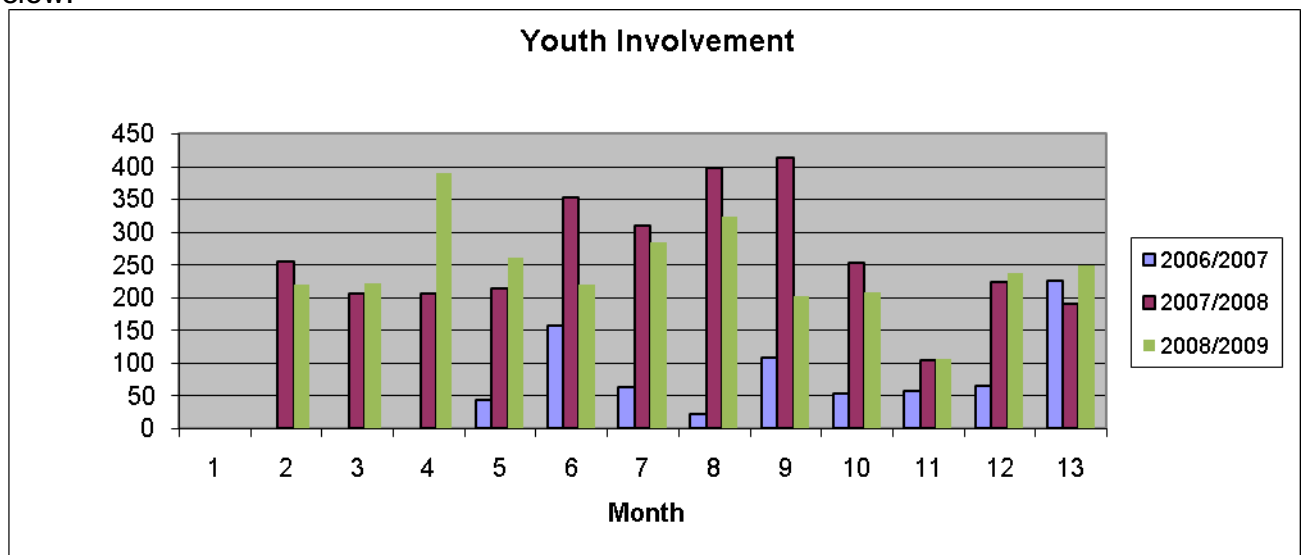
A full review of the provision and costing of each meeting, will take place during 2009/10 to establish a framework for the value for money aspect of providing each meeting and the costs benefits of these meetings.

## 7. Working with Hard to Reach Groups

### 7.1 Young People’s Involvement

Significant progress has been made during the year in extending the involvement of young people. This is a three-year VAT Shelter funded project, which started in the summer of 2005 and has resulted in a range of involvement opportunities for young people.

Numbers of young people involved have grown during the year as shown in the table below.



### 7.2 Youth Forum

The Youth Forum has been set up to encourage young people from Beswick, Openshaw and Clayton to get involved in influencing the decision-making process within their community, to look at issues that affect young people and to represent other young people at existing tenant & resident forums.

The Forum has extended its remit to become the “Voice of the Bang” group with support from Manchester City Council staff.

## Appendix A

<b>Event/ Group</b>	<b>Total Numbers Attending during year</b>	<b>Meetings held during year</b>	<b>Average attendance at meetings</b>	<b>Hour s in total</b>	<b>Office r Time</b>	<b>Cost, excluding staff</b>
Youth forum Meetings	257	11	23	514	24	Total cost £770.00 Per meeting £70.00 Per Head £3.04

15 of the youth forum members attended a residential weekend in March 2009 to the Lake District where the theme was Team Work and Peer Leadership; this was part funded by New Deal for the Communities

Members also took part in a Training workshops that concentrated on how to get the best out of meetings, how to behave at meetings, presentation skills.

The Youth Forum has also took part in a variety of other activities as shown below:

- 24 Hour 7 – summit challenge to raise money for Christies
- GMP Young People Conference
- Newton Heath Festival – Recruiting Youth Forum Members
- Drama sessions – addressing issues affecting young people
- Chernobyl Children’s Visit
- European Children’s Summit
- Visit from young peoples unit in Bristol
- Comics Project
- Circles of Influence event at Bolton

### 7.3 Task Teams

Due to a change in emphasis and the loss of premises, dream schemes have now been combined to form the “Eastlands Task Teams” which commenced operations in March 2008. The Task Team has carried out many of the functions that the Dream Schemes carried out or were involved in but there is less emphasis on the need for parental control as a leadership group has been formed with scheduled tasks such as litter picking, rubbish removal and street cleaning, in specific pre-scheduled areas, taking place. So far 20 events have taken place and over 80 youngsters aged between 6 and 12 have taken part.

The impact and success of this new scheme will continue to be monitored and built on during 2009/10 and results published

### 7.4 Eastlands FC and Manchester Storm Rugby League Club

Eastlands FC, which is sponsored and supported by Eastlands Homes, meet 3 times a week, twice for training and once for the match.

Funding during 2008/9 amounted to £750, which was used to finance a new tops for the team and other activities.

The team are currently second in the league and to reach the League Cup Final on 10 May 2009 where unfortunately they failed to retain the title from last year.

Eastlands Staff are kept informed of the Teams Progress through the Core Brief, Team Meetings and are encouraged to support the team.

Eastlands have also during 2008/9 sponsored a couple of teams from the Manchester Storm Rugby League Club which has amounted to £850 to pay for 2 new strips for the under 11 and under 12 teams.

### **7.5 East Manchester Young Advisors**

Eastlands Homes has supported the Young Advisors project and we currently have 3 advisors who are mentored and supported by the Youth involvement Officer.

### **7.6 Young At Heart**

The Young at Heart Club was set up to bring older people (aged 60 and above) together. People who are isolated are a particular target for the group, which fulfils a wider social role as well as an opportunity for discussion and feedback.

The Group has grown and now has a membership of 146. The Group has become more independent with the committee now taking a more active role. The committee organise and price the trips and events and manage the finances. The group is still receiving some admin support from Eastlands Homes, who are also provide some extra support on the actual visits.

The group will continue to organise days out and activities for older people and during 2008/2009 various trips were organised including a 4 day Mystery Weekend, Visits to Meadow Hall Shopping Centre and The Belle Vue Dogs and various Christmas activities.

The club has had a great impact on our more senior tenants by increasing their social activity and meeting new people.

### **7.7 BME Residents**

A key target in the 2008/9 Involvement Statement was to involve more residents from the BME community. This reflected a wider strategy to respond to the changing profile of the local community. This again will be a priority during 2009/10.

A partnership is being developed with the Black African Francophone Project based in Beswick (which deals mainly with French Speaking Customers) to provide a link for joint working and support in addressing issues that customers have who find it difficult to make themselves heard or understood.

Eastlands Homes has also continued to support the City Wide BME residents Network and the East Manchester Refugee Integration Forum which provides an opportunity to discuss common issues with a cross section of residents.

### **7.8 Community House – Stanton Street**

This project, to re-establish a community house, to be used by the local community as a resource to hold meetings, coffee mornings, advice surgeries etc has been jointly funded by New Deals for Communities (NDC - now New East Manchester) and Eastlands Homes and was officially re-opened on 25 March 2008.

There are two meeting rooms and a fully equipped office for use. Eastlands Homes have the remit to run the property and be responsible for maintaining its use by local groups and making sure that it is used properly in a safe and secure environment.

Currently the property is covered by volunteers on 3 mornings a week but it is hoped that this will be extended in the near future to be fully operational. Other groups have already hired or used the facilities at other times.

Funding for the property has now passed over to Eastlands Homes (previously part funded by the New Deal for Communities) and the project is being monitored on a monthly basis and an emphasis has been made through Eastlands Homes Newsletters and East Speak Newsletters to “use” it or lose it with a review-taking place in June 2009 on the impact of the Community House and its use by local organisations and its viability to continue.

**Cost Breakdown of Community House for 08/09**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>
<b>Rent NDC</b>	<b>1646.04</b>
<b>Rent Eastlands Homes</b>	<b>1685.00</b>
<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>411.11</b>
<b>Water</b>	<b>368.57</b>
<b>Gas</b>	<b>253.74</b>
<b>Electricity</b>	<b>150.38</b>
<b>BT</b>	<b>283.35</b>
<b>Volunteer Expenses</b>	<b>86.30</b>
<b>Window Cleaning</b>	<b>This year have been covered by the corporate budget, next year will be covered by the Customer Involvement Budget</b>
<b>Cleaning Materials</b>	<b>This year have been covered by the corporate budget, next year will be covered by the Customer Involvement Budget</b>

<b>Repairs</b>	<b>479.70</b>
<b>Estate action team</b>	<b>143.50</b>
<b>Grit Bin and Scoop</b>	<b>273.38</b>
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>5781.07</b>

Over the past year the House has had 530 Visitors and people who have attended meetings

Cost per visitor = £10.90

And has had 112 volunteers staff days

The Eastlands Budget for 2008/2009 was £3500 and our costs have remained under that for the year. The 2009/2010 Budget has reflected the fact that Eastlands homes will be solely responsible for the Community House from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

## **8. Annual Events**

### **8.1 Tenant Conference**

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008, Eastlands Homes held its Fourth Tenant Conference. The Conference was held at the City of Manchester Stadium.

All recognised groups within Eastlands Homes were invited along to the Conference and residents from the East Transfer Stock were also invited. 26 people attended the day from various groups.

Most of the day was spent in workshops covering high priority issues. Each workshop prioritised the top 3 actions or issues that they felt Eastlands Homes should look at in more detail. These are summarised below:

- **Community Cohesion**
- **Choice Based Lettings**
- **Equality and Diversity**

Tenants were asked to select from the choice one workshop for the morning session and one for the afternoon session, the groups then went to their allocated workshop to have more detailed discussion.

#### **Community Cohesion (Steve Coram)**

The aim of the workshop was to look at working together to make stronger safer communities

The session gave the opportunity to identify how we can work together to create and support stronger communities.

### **Choice Based Lettings (Lee Bloomfield)**

This workshop was aimed at showing tenants an alternative way for Social Registered Landlords to allocate their properties and highlight the good and bad points of this system.

### **Equality And Diversity (Sandra Morris)**

This session was based around highlighting why Equality and Diversity is important to all our communities and to discuss Equality focusing on people with disabilities.

### **Stronger Communities**

#### **1. Concern**

- Feeling safe, walking the street at night (Evenings)
- Lack of Police
- Racial Abuse (Evenings)
- Crime (Evenings)
- Lack of Wardens to cover the streets and some areas that are not covered by the warden scheme at all (Rusholme, Levenshume)
- Areas of criminal activity
- Noise

#### **2. Actions**

- Extend the Warden service
- More Police/ PCSO's
- Stronger Enforcement
- Target Truancy
- Encourage Engagement with Young People
- Community connection needs strengthening
- Parking
- Safety

#### **Top 3 Priorities**

- More Police/ PCSO's and Wardens
- Better Safety
- Parking

#### **1. Concern**

- Poor Communication
- Private Landlords
- Disrespect
- Fear
- Police/ Wardens/ PCSO's
- Lack of Cultural Understanding

- Out of Hours Cover

## **2. Actions**

- Festival of Equality and Diversity
- Extend Wardens Service
- Early Prevention Officer
- House Mot's
- Encourage Responsible Parents
- Community Champions
- Recharge on Damaged Properties

## **Top 3 Priorities**

- Community Champions
- Encourage Responsible Parents
- Extend wardens Service

## **Equality and Diversity** **Morning Workshop**

### **1) Reasons for not declaring a disability**

- Privacy
- Pride
- Stigma
- Do not perceive themselves as having a disability
- Don't like to ask for help

### **2) What can Eastlands do to change this?**

- Stop using the word Disabled
- Change wording to "do you have any conditions we should be aware of?"
- Advise people what is classed as a disability

## **Workshop Four**

### **1) Reasons for not declaring a disability**

- Pride
- Stigma
- Do not perceive themselves as having a disability

### **2) What can Eastlands do to change this?**

- Change the word Disability to Impairment
- Use a variety of formats for getting information across, have it readily available, don't just offer it

## **Choice Based Lettings**

The feedback on choice based lettings was very positive. Both sessions felt that this scheme would encourage stronger communities as people who show an interest and bid for a property are more likely to invest their time and energy into the area and become strong positive members of that community than people who are directed to live in an area under the traditional central housing list method of allocation housing.

## **Top 3 Priorities**

- To do more work around checking references
- To look at doing face to face interviews with prospective tenants in future
- To look again in future at Eastlands providing Choice based lettings

## **The Price Is Right Game**

This game involved all the groups being given £10,000 to spend on various services, the groups had to discuss amongst themselves how much each of the 9 services should be allocated.

The services the groups were asked to bid on were

1. Crime & Antisocial Behaviour
2. Improved Environmental Management (grass cutting, etc)
3. Improved Services for Older People
4. Youth Facilities
5. Providing Community Facilities
6. Environmental Schemes (Parking, Fencing, etc)
7. Build More New Homes
8. More Internal Works
9. Training for Local People

The Groups would have funded in the following way:-

### **Group One**

Improved Services for Older People £3500

Providing Community Facilities (Improving Safety) £3000

Youth Facilities £3500

### **Group Two**

Crime & Antisocial Behaviour £3000

Improved Environmental Management (grass cutting, etc) £3000

Providing Community Facilities (for all groups) £4000

**Group Three**

Crime & Antisocial Behaviour £3000

Improved Environmental Management (grass cutting, etc) £4000

Providing Community Facilities £3000

**Group Four**

Crime & Antisocial Behaviour £3000

Improved Services for Older People £3500

Providing Community Facilities £3500

The result of the game was to prioritise

Community facilities

Crime and ASB

Improved Services For Older People

Improved Environmental Management

Youth Facilities

This is information Eastlands was taken into account when looking at the plans for the year ahead.

**8.2 Fun & Feedback Day**

On August 1 2008, Eastlands Homes held its fourth and by far its most successful Fun & Feedback event. The event was open to all residents. The venue was at St Barnabas School in Openshaw following last year's event in beswick . The event cost £4675.00 with 500 residents attending. This worked out at a cost per head of £9.35.

The aim of the day was to gather as much information about our services from our own customers and home owners in the area that have witnessed changes since Eastlands was established, this was again done by staff engaging with our customers by inviting them to complete a feedback form asking for their thoughts about the services they receive.

To encourage attendance there was a variety of fun activities during the duration of the event, and service providers from Eastlands Homes allocated staff to man stalls representing their service area.

Ninety Five feedback forms were completed which as disappointing given the attendance, a review of how feedback is obtained will be undertaken before the next Fun and Feedback event. The majority were extremely positive about the services provided by Eastlands Homes and of those that indicated any problems, these were acted upon immediately after the event. The forms provided feedback on a range of proposed service standards, which have now been incorporated into a customer information booklet with the Service Charter. A full report of the event is available from the Customer Involvement Team

A similar event will be planned for 2009 with the location being planned centrally to include all the new Eastlands Homes stock following transfer with the possibility of 3 smaller satellite events in each of the 3 geographic locations.

### **8.3 Awards Event & Exchange Of Information Evening**

A Fourth awards evening took place on the 29 November 2008 At St Bridget's Church in Beswick.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Cost of Event</b>	<b>Cost per head</b>
Awards Evening	94	£1180	£12.55

This amount covered all expenses from hire of the venue, transport, food, decoration, DJ etc. The Customer Awards were donated by Connaught's

Feedback from the event was very positive. It provides an opportunity to recognise the effort and commitment shown by community volunteers throughout the year. All recognised groups were invited to vote for the "people's Award" which recognises the specific achievements of one group. This was awarded to the Volunteers at the Community House for their work in setting the house up and providing a place where the local community can go and seek advice and assurance on a wide range of issues and be signposted to the relevant professional services. Three other awards took place and everybody who attended agreed that it was a great evening.

### **8.4 Neighbourhood "Festive Forum"**

Following a review of the previous years Festive Fayres in which there had been a low turnout (only 30 Customers attended the three separate forums evenings) it was decided to concentrate on one Forum at a central venue with a concentrated mail-out just prior to the event to gain maximum impact.

On the 15 December 2008, a Neighbourhood Festive Forum was held. The purpose of the meeting was to provide customers with the opportunity to discuss priorities and issues within their own area at a local venue and to enjoy the festive period. Local meetings to discuss local issues had been identified as a gap in our involvement options as part of developing the Involvement Statement for 2008/9.

This Forum was a huge success with over 250 attendees, 170 children who came along to see Father Christmas and 80 adults who gave the officers attending feedback on a range of issues concerns about youth nuisance and lack of provision for young people, a

wish to see stronger enforcement of tenancy conditions, greater number of options for local people to get involved, closer working with other agencies particularly the Police and environmental services, and a focus on involving hard to reach groups.

The costs are summarised below.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Cost of Event</b>	<b>Cost per head</b>
Neighbourhood meetings "Festive Fayres"	250 (170 Children, 80 Adults)	350.83	£1.40

The event will again be fully reviewed prior to making a decision about if and how they will continue to be run in future.

## **9. Tenant Training**

During 2008/9 a wide range of training was made available to customers. Initially training was offered only to our recognised groups. Future training events will be promoted through the tenant's newsletters

The Customer Involvement Manager provides the core training to support the effective running of groups.

<b>Training Course</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
Bookkeeping	None	4
Treasurer Skills	None	3
Minute Taking Course	None	2
*Audit and Tenant inspection Training	£2361.18	10 Tenants and 5 staff
Chairperson Skills	None	0

\*The Audit and Tenant Inspection training was provided by Empathy Training Ltd and was aligned to our Mystery Shopping Training in order for customers to become more involved in the Inspection and Audit of a service provider as required by the Tenant Services Authority.

## **10. Working with Tenant, Resident and Community Groups**

There are 21 tenant, resident and community groups recognised by Eastlands Homes. Together they cover the majority of areas where Eastlands Homes has an interest. A review of the groups will be done during early 2009/2010 to establish gaps within any areas to seek out establishing groups in those areas.

The recognised groups are:

**Beswick**

Havana Green Action Group  
Riverside Community Homewatch  
Newcombe Close Homewatch  
Palmerston Street TA Group  
New Beswick Homewatch  
Group name to be agreed- Spire Walk  
Group name to be agreed- Stedman Close

**Clayton**

Clayton North TA Group  
Clayton 'A'  
Trimdon Close TA Group- To be reformed  
North Road Sheltered Group  
Young at Heart  
R.A.S.A.R.A  
Lingfield Road TA Group  
Name to be agreed covers Folkestone Road Areas  
Youth Forum

**Openshaw**

Peterchurch Street TA Group  
Chisholm Street TA Group  
Shebang  
Mintridge Close TA Group  
Friendship Club  
Openshaw Village Residents Group

Housing officers play a key role in supporting recognised groups and attend local meetings on request.

**11. Other Customer Feedback**

In addition to events and meetings, customers are also encouraged to get involved by providing feedback when they have direct experience of our services. During last year a set of 10 customer satisfaction surveys were introduced covering core service areas. The customer complaints and compliments procedures "Are you satisfied?" also continued to be promoted.

**12. Summary and Conclusions**

The range of involvement opportunities and the numbers of people getting involved has seen an increase in some areas during 2008/9 and a decrease in others for various reasons. The impact of the level of involvement is clearly identified in this report particularly in areas such as the Service Panels and the effectiveness of the Forum.

During 2009/10 the focus will change to target other hard to reach and under-represented groups including people with physical disabilities, mental health issues and learning difficulties as well as the 25 to 49 age group as well as continuing to establish contact

with BME groups. However, it will be important to continue to support the other groups to make sure their involvement does not reduce.

A priority during 2009/10 is to review the medium to long term funding and objectives for Customer Involvement in light of the current levels of operation and the effects of the East Stock Transfer. Opportunities for joint working and sharing of resources (particularly in customer training) with the other lead RSL's in east Manchester will also be explored as well as a partnership with the Tenant and Residents Organisation of England (TAROE) in developing a strategy for Resident Involvement appropriate to the needs and aspirations of Eastlands Customers and our Business Plan.

A further priority in 2009/10 will be to establish and support a framework to deliver engagement and participation, following the East Transfer, with the Tenants and Residents Groups in the East and integrate east customers into established service improvement panels and create area forums and sub-groups equivalent to the Eastlands Tenants forum

Involving customers in value for money considerations and benchmarking our approach and outcomes on customer involvement with other organisations are other areas where further work is required.

In developing the Customer Involvement Statement residents have identified an interest in exploring a wide range of volunteering opportunities. This includes playing a greater role in organising local community events including drop ins and coffee mornings, supporting the work of the Customer Involvement Team, as well as involvement in specific projects such as a good neighbour scheme.