

Tenant Engagement Service.
Phase 1
Tenant Scrutiny Board Review
June 2021



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Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – Increase the diversity and number of engaged tenants

Recommendation 1 – The Board support an increased use of digital engagement and recommend an online tenant forum.

Desired Outcome – Ensure all tenants have equal opportunities to tenant engagement.

Recommendation 2 – Housing Leeds need to ensure tenants not online have a means to being involved and engaged with. Combine digital with face to face for tenant engagement and scrutiny.

Desired Outcome – Provide opportunity for tenants to speak directly with senior managers

Recommendation 3 – The Board recommend the introduction of online Question and Answer sessions with senior housing managers.

Desired Outcome – Provide opportunity for tenants to engage with specific “Hot Topic” issues/discussions

Recommendation 4 – Single issue discussion groups would be a useful way of gaining tenant opinion on any particular topic. Propose Zoom meetings of interested tenants on an ad hoc basis. This discussion could lead to an online group considering this particular “hot topic”.

Desired Outcome – Increase the number of involved tenants.

Recommendation 5 – To provide added incentives to involvement with Housing Leeds should consider small rewards for tenants.

Desired Outcome – Tenant Scrutiny Board grow and develop in their role.

Recommendation 6 – Make connections with neighbouring local authorities and local Housing Associations scrutiny boards and share good practice and learning.

Desired Outcome – Design services with tenants not for tenants.

Recommendation 7 – Continue and develop the user centred design approach. Using customer insight to design services tenants want.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – A more honest and robust response to surveys

Recommendation 8 – Use automated surveys because anonymity results in more realistic scoring and more immediate results.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 9 – Commission a web design consultant to work alongside tenants in redesigning Your Voice Leeds to modernise it and make more visually appealing.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 10 – Agree a way a measuring the success of Your Voice Leeds to justify the decision to extend the 12 month pilot period if desired.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 11 – Use Your Voice Leeds for tenant approval of policy, service standards and monitor performance. Also develop projects derived from the “hot topic” and promote the engagement tool more widely.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 12 – Use a panel of tenants to proof/check language used.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 13 – Make the translation facility more obvious.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 14 – Consider alternative approaches to citywide projects. Currently tenants are mainly engaging with projects local to themselves.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 15 – Tenant Scrutiny Board to promote the work of the board through Your Voice Leeds

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 16 – Consider providing a Your Voice Leeds mobile phone app.

Desired Outcome – Increase digital inclusion

Recommendation 17 – Donate old IT equipment to engaged tenants who are not digitally connected.

Desired Outcome – Improving tenancy management efficiency

Recommendation 18 – Provide online version of annual home visits via a video call

Desired Outcome – Innovation in User Centred Design

Recommendation 19 – Continue to be innovative and take a User Centred Design approach to learning from complaints, virtual walkabouts and use an automated text service



Introduction and Scope

Introduction

1. This report regards the first phase of our review into Tenant Engagement - Wider Tenant Feedback and Insight.
2. A review of the Tenant Engagement Service had been suggested a number of times previously and whilst this was likely to be a complex review, the board felt the time was now right.
3. Due to the complexity it was decided to split the review into 4 phases.
 - **Wider tenant feedback and insight** - how the service engages and uses feedback from tenants as a whole, with a focus on digital engagement.
 - **How the service involves tenants and residents** - how best are tenants able to influence service design, policy and decision making.
 - **Housing Advisory Panels** - How HAPs and the service support wider community activities.
 - **Strategic tenant influence** – To consider the strategic influence of tenants and the impact on the tenant engagement service of the forthcoming Housing White Paper.
- make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
 - Identify ways to encourage tenant participation, increase diversity and improve the outcomes to tenants and the service of tenant engagement activity.
 - Identify any changes that will ensure that tenants are at the heart of policy and service design,
 - Recognise opportunities to reduce duplication and increase efficiency
 - Identify any potential savings to improve value for money
6. The Tenant Scrutiny Board is supported by the Tenant Engagement team. Therefore it was decided to seek external, independent support from the Tenant Advisor, Yvonne Davies in order to maintain impartiality when carrying out the review.
7. Phase 1 of the review was conducted over five formal evidence gathering sessions which took place between September 2020 and April 2021. All of the sessions took place virtually due to the pandemic
8. The Board would like to thank all those involved in this review. It was carried out in challenging circumstances due to the restrictions brought in to combat Covid 19. A full list of those who participated is detailed at the end of this report.

Scope of the Inquiry

4. The board propose to undertake this review to consider what works well and what scope there might be to improve how Housing Leeds engages with tenants.
5. The Terms of Reference for this review were agreed on 4th September 2020. when it was concluded that the purpose of the review would be to



Conclusions and Recommendations

Wider Tenant Engagement

1. The Board noted from their evidence gathering throughout the review that the pandemic had brought about new ways of working and an increased use of digital means.
2. Online engagement will allow a more diverse and greater number of tenants voices to be heard

Recommendation 1 – The Board support an increased use of digital engagement and recommend an online tenant forum is set up but are concerned that tenants not online are not engaged with. Therefore a digital forum should be an additional form of engagement not a replacement.

3. The Board support an increased use of digital engagement but are concerned that tenants not online are not engaged with.

Recommendation 2 – Housing Leeds need to ensure tenants not online have a means to being involved and engaged with. Combine digital with face to face for tenant engagement and scrutiny.

4. Access to senior management has always been valued by tenants involved with Housing Leeds and should continue.
5. The board would like to see senior management be available to all tenants.

Recommendation 3 – The Board recommend the introduction of online Question and Answer sessions with senior housing managers.

6. Research of other housing providers tenant engagement has highlighted the benefits of task and finish engagement.
7. This is a process that can also be delivered digitally with the correct platform like Your Voice Leeds.

Recommendation 4 - Single issue discussion groups would be a useful way of gaining tenant opinion on any particular topic. Doing this online would allow many different voices to be heard and could lead into a larger consultation.



Conclusions and Recommendations

8. Providing incentives to tenants are a proven way of increasing involvement.

Recommendation 5 – To provide added incentives to involvement with Housing Leeds should consider small rewards for tenants.

9. The board believe they can learn from other scrutiny boards.

Recommendation 6 – Make connections with neighbouring local authorities and local Housing Associations scrutiny boards and share good practice and learning.

10. The board believe customer insight and experience should be used wherever possible.

Recommendation 7 – Continue and develop the user centred design approach. Using customer insight to design services tenants want.

11. Surveys are only of use when robust with honest responses.

Recommendation 8 – Use automated surveys because anonymity results in more realistic scoring and more immediate results.

12. Your Voice Leeds could have a more attractive appearance encouraging increased use of the website.

Recommendation 9 – Commission a web design consultant to work alongside tenants in redesigning Your Voice Leeds to modernise it and make more visually appealing.

13. The success of Your Voice Leeds needs measuring in order to justify the extension of the contract with the providers.

Recommendation 10 – Agree a way a measuring the success of Your Voice Leeds to justify the decision to extend the 12 month pilot period if desired.

14. Broaden the use of Your Voice Leeds which will increase the use and justify the cost of the site.

Recommendation 11 – Use Your Voice Leeds for tenant approval of policy, service standards and monitor performance. Also develop projects derived from the “hot topic” and promote the engagement tool more widely.

15. Ensure language used on Your Voice Leeds is tenant friendly.

Recommendation 12 – Use a panel of tenants to proof/check language used.



Conclusions and Recommendations

16 Also ensure Your Voice Leeds is accessible.

Recommendation 13 – Make the translation facility more obvious.

17. Currently users of Your Voice Leeds are engaging with projects local to them. A new approach is needed to citywide projects.

Recommendation 14 – Consider alternative approaches to citywide projects. Currently tenants are mainly engaging with projects local to themselves.

18. The Tenant Scrutiny Board could use Your Voice Leeds to increase involvement with their enquiries, widening the tenant voice.

Recommendation 15 – Tenant Scrutiny Board to promote the work of the board through Your Voice Leeds

19. Increasing number of people use mobile phones for browsing the internet.

Recommendation 16 – Consider providing a Your Voice Leeds mobile phone app.

20. Lack of equipment is a barrier to digital inclusion.

Recommendation 17 – Donate old IT equipment to engaged tenants who are not digitally connected.

21. Annual Home Visits could also be
Recommendation 19 – Continue to be innovative and take a User Centred Design approach to learning from complaints, virtual walkabouts and use an automated text service provided digitally, increasing efficiency.

Recommendation 18 – Provide online version of annual home visits via a video call

22. The board would like to see Housing Leeds continue to learn from users experience but be more innovative in their approach.

Recommendation 19 – Continue to be innovative and take a User Centred Design approach to learning from complaints, virtual walkabouts and use an automated text service



Evidence and Witnesses

Monitoring arrangement

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

Terms of reference into the boards review of Tenant Engagement.

Witnesses Heard

Mandy Sawyer – Head of Neighbourhood Services

Ian Montgomery –Service Manager, Tenant Engagement

Roisin Donnelly – Housing Manager, Tenant Engagement

Leonard Wright – Maintenance Contract Officer, Property Management

Yvonne Davies - Managing Director, Scrutiny and Empowerment Partners Limited

Kathryn Grace – User Centred Design

Callum Ricketts - Neighbourhood Services Officer – Customer Insight

Katie Bell – Neighbourhood Services Officer – Tenant Engagement

Dates of Scrutiny

Tenant Scrutiny Board meetings were held on:

3 rd July 2020	20 th January 2021
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17 th July 2020	19 th February 2021
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31 st July 2020	16 th April 2021
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25 th September 2020	12 th May 2021
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Evidence and Witnesses

23rd October 2020

21st May 2021

20th November 2020



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – Increase the diversity and number of engaged tenants

Recommendation 1 – The Board support an increased use of digital engagement and recommend an online tenant panel.

Response – Recommendation accepted

The service has shared with the Board an outline of what a new single online (or largely online) tenant panel could look like and look forward to sharing more detail about this as part of phase 2 of the boards' review. Along with input from the board, we are also keen for input from involved tenants in Leeds, examples from other landlords and input from sector professionals such as TPAS to help us design an effective online tenant panel.

The service will continue to develop other aspects of our digital engagement i.e. using Your Voice Leeds, online surveys, texting, emailing and social media activity.

Desired Outcome – Ensure all tenants have equal opportunities to tenant engagement.

Recommendation 2 – Housing Leeds need to ensure tenants not online have a means to being involved and engaged with. Combine digital with face to face for tenant engagement and scrutiny. Digital should be an enhancement not a replacement for face-to-face engagement.

Response – Recommendation accepted

We accept engagement activity is strengthened when we combine in person and digital methods. Our engagement framework now takes a more mixed approach, so that a broad range of tenants, residents and others can engage with us. Our non-digital offer in terms of engagement includes, but is not limited to:

- Ongoing in person and remote support for tenants, residents and community groups
- Support and coordination of estate action days
- The use of telephone and postal surveys (in addition to online) – to understand general tenant satisfaction with services, as well as to help with specific service design.
- A mixed approach to the delivery of annual tenancy checks (online, by phone and in person)
- Face to face walkabouts in specific areas in response to local issues



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – Provide opportunity for tenants to speak directly with senior managers

Recommendation 3 – The Board recommend the introduction of online Question and Answer sessions with senior officers at Leeds City Council.

Response – Recommendation accepted

The service can trial this type of engagement.

Initial suggestion would be to include senior officers in a webinar style panel meeting, using Zoom, giving a brief description of what do, any current priorities or issues and then responding to questions. Questions can be presented in the message box and/or invited beforehand. This could be a recorded session so can be shared more widely with tenants afterwards. We see this as something we are able to include as part of the forward plan of the new Tenant Voice Panel going forward, and at key points, for example, when consulting on the Housing Leeds Service Plan for the year ahead.

Like any new way of working, we'd like to evaluate this activity to see if this was working for tenants and the service alike, and keep in mind the practices from other landlords that might help us develop further.

Desired Outcome – Provide opportunity for tenants to engage with specific “Hot Topic” issues/discussions

Recommendation 4 – Single issue discussion groups would be a useful way of gaining tenant opinion on any particular topic. Propose Zoom meetings of interested tenants on an ad hoc basis. This discussion could lead to an online group considering this particular “hot topic”.

Response – Recommendation accepted

The service supports the recommendation to hold single issue discussion groups with tenants. We consider this a good way to get feedback from tenants with recent experience of a specific service that we are needing to improve or change.

The service would like to consider our approach to this as part of the boards phase 2 review, to help clarify how hot topics are selected, and the relationship between ad-hoc specific issue discussion groups and the wider role of the new over-arching tenants voice panel.

Desired Outcome – Tenant Scrutiny Board grow and develop in their role.

Recommendation 5 – Make connections with neighbouring local authorities and local Housing Associations scrutiny boards and share good practice and learning.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Response – Recommendation accepted

The service currently has several connections with other local authorities and HA's. We are members of TPAS which includes access to a staff online network on which advice and good practice is shared on all aspects of Tenant Engagement. We attend 'Scrutiny.net', bi-monthly meetings at which officers from across the north of England share good practice with a focus on Tenant Scrutiny. We also have connections with Gateshead Housing Scrutiny Board who have met with Leeds TSB but accept more of this nature can be done and will attempt through our networks to increase connections with other Tenant Scrutiny Boards in order to increase our learning. In-communities HA (Bradford), Kirklees and Harrogate have all been approached.

The service would like to share more information about the resources the board themselves can also use and take part in, such as registering for updates from TPAS directly. We are happy to share a short note to this effect.

Desired Outcome – Design services with tenants not for tenants.

Recommendation 6 – Continue and develop the user centred design approach. Using customer insight to design services tenants want.

Response – Recommendation accepted

We are keen to progress and carry out further service improvement using more user centred design approaches. Our knowledge of the different ways we can apply and carry out user centred design with tenants and teams is growing and improving over time. We see this as key to improving the overall customer experience of day-to-day services. Using user centred design to innovate and improve is something we have committed to within the Housing Leeds Service Plan for 2021/22.

Desired Outcome – A more honest and robust response to surveys

Recommendation 7 – Use automated surveys because anonymity results in more realistic scoring and more immediate results on which the service can act and inform in order to increase customer satisfaction.

Response – Partially accepted

During the review, the service shared with the TSB the benefits of the automated satisfaction survey trials that were being used within the repairs service, allowing tenants to respond by text about the experience of their recent repair. This gave the service access to quick and cost-effective feedback so that interventions could be made to remedy any problems more quickly. This trial ran in parallel to existing voice telephone surveys.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

The trial used software that was in use by Customer Services (known as 'Bright'). Since the trial and the time of reporting to the board, the council has rationalised the software in use, and so to be able to continue with automated texting activity and the benefits this brings, the repairs service is now planning in the longer term on using software called 'SMART'.

However, the TSB will be aware that customer satisfaction data is used as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for repairs and maintenance services across the city and in the case of external contractors, is a contractual KPI with targets which have been set through the procurement process. As such, any changes to the methodology of collection needs to be agreed as a variation to these contracts. The TSB will also be aware that customer satisfaction data is benchmarked both inside and outside the council and as such, it is important to fully understand the impact on levels of satisfaction any changes in approach in using automated surveys may bring. As such, the service would like to trial a period of collecting customer satisfaction data using the 'SMART' software, in parallel to the traditional voice surveys, ahead of reporting customer satisfaction KPI data through solely digital means.

An equality impact assessment is also required to understand if there are some tenants who are more or less able to access and participate through the use of a digital approach and the impact this would have on the data collected, which may mean we develop a more mixed approach of using voice telephone surveys and automated methods in the future.

The service is therefore partially accepting this recommendation. We are appreciative of the support from TSB to help modernise the services and get better/more timely feedback using automated surveys, however, this needs to be implemented within the context of the above. We are happy to keep the board updated with progress.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 8 – Commission a web design consultant to work alongside Tenant Engagement in redesigning Your Voice Leeds to modernise it and make more visually appealing.

Response – Recommendation partially accepted

Due to the nature of the how the software is owned and managed (by a national supplier with an annual licence agreement) the service is unable to commission an external website design consultant to make individual changes to Your Voice Leeds. However, the Tenant Engagement Team as part of the existing agreement with Bang The Table (the suppliers of the Your Voice Leeds software) will benefit from an annual benchmarking report. This includes quantitative



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

information about the usage and activity of Your Voice Leeds compared to other comparable users, and also commentary and advice for how we can improve and develop the access, appearance and the overall quality of Your Voice Leeds in the future. A follow up session to discuss with Engagement HQ their recommendations for improvement and how we take this forward is being held on the 11th October 2021.

The service has shared the boards recommendations relating to Your Voice Leeds with Bang The Table who will also give specific advice and reply to the points raised by the board so we can maximise the functionality and the benefits of the website that is available to us.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 9 – Establish a way of measuring the success of Your Voice Leeds to justify the decision to extend the 12-month pilot period if desired.

Response – Recommendation accepted

The service has access to a large range of usage data from within Your Voice Leeds. We use this to understand how many people are visiting and actively participating in giving feedback for the site, and for individual consultations. We then use this data to evaluate the overall success of Your Voice Leeds.

Since the first project was launched at the beginning of November 2020, we have published 24 different consultations, achieving:

- 10,200 visits to Your Voice Leeds homepage – tenants and residents who are aware that we offer engagement via Your Voice Leeds.
- 7,600 ‘aware’ tenants and residents – viewing a specific consultation page.
- 2,000 ‘informed’ visitors – viewing more information about a consultation
- 306 registered participants – those following consultations and able to receive feedback and updates on the consultations they took part in, and wider Your Voice Leeds activity, helping create an online engagement community.
- 361 engaged participants – tenants and residents actively taking part in one or more piece of feedback, like leaving a comment on an ideas board, or completing a survey.

Given usage and engagement with Your Voice Leeds is continuing to grow, we have recently committed to a licence for a second year. This will allow us to continue to share consultations, keep learning about how to maximise the benefits of Your Voice Leeds and to enable a much wider range of tenants and residents to take part in consultation activity.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 10 – Use Your Voice Leeds for tenant feedback on policy, service standards and monitor performance. Also develop projects derived from the “hot topic” and promote the engagement tool more widely.

Response – Recommendation accepted

We are committed to using Your Voice Leeds to engage tenants on operational and strategic policy design, service standards and other operational or strategic issues in line with the Housing Leeds Service Plan. The service will share with the board during stage 2 of their review suggestions for how we can also use Your Voice Leeds to include an element of performance monitoring via the activity of the new ‘Tenant Voice Panel’. This would supplement the local performance monitoring undertaken by local Housing Advisory Panels also.

We have so far promoted and invited tenants to take part in the various Your Voice Leeds consultations by:

- Posting consultations in the Housing Leeds and local Tenant Engagement Officer Facebook pages,
- Promoting consultations in the citywide tenant email
- Sending an invitation and link within bespoke targeted text messages and emails
- Highlighted Your Voice Leeds in any communications with tenants, residents and community groups.
- Updated the main website to link to Your Voice Leeds
- We also share regular Your Voice Leeds updates with staff in the internal staff bulletin and have attended team meetings and connected with various council teams to raise awareness of Your Voice Leeds as an engagement tool.

We will continue to use the above approaches alongside introducing:

- A suite of Your Voice Leeds marketing materials, such as business cards, flyers and posters to help raise awareness of Your Voice Leeds and where/how people can take part, e.g. a flyer delivered to a local community, along with a poster(s) in a community notice board.
- A more regular newsletter sent from within Your Voice Leeds to all registered participants so we can keep in touch, share new projects that have gone live, and give updates on the feedback and outcomes from closed projects.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 11 – Use a panel of tenants to proof/check language used.

Response – Recommendation accepted

We are proposing that one of the functions of the new 'Tenant Voice Panel' is to act as an editorial panel to help give feedback on the presentation, accessibility, language etc of consultations prior to their launch. We welcome the boards views on this as part of stage 2 of the boards review.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 12 – Make the translation facility more obvious.

Response – Recommendation rejected

Within the existing Engagement HQ Software the functionality currently exists to be able to present on the home page of Your Voice Leeds a 'Google Translate' box, allowing users to turn the wording on the screen into a different language.

We have shared this recommendation with council's web team, and the advice from them is to not add Google Translate to the Your Voice Leeds website.

It is accepted that translations using tools such as Google Translate have improved, however, they are not wholly reliable or accurate and can sometimes cause confusion rather than assurance to the user. Translation tools such as Google Translate can also interfere with other assisted technology such as screen readers which are able to convert text into other languages. Other users will have the ability to switch to different languages built into the functionality of their browser, for example, users of Chrome will be offered translations based on their chosen language settings.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 13 – Consider alternative approaches to citywide projects. Currently tenants are mainly engaging with projects local to themselves.

Response – Recommendation accepted

At the time of the boards review into Your Voice Leeds we had launched consultations that were mainly focussed on getting feedback from within specific communities. For example, the online walkabouts in Burmantofts and Cottingley, and the Greener Gipton Campaign consultation.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Since such time we have ran consultations on Your Voice Leeds that are relevant to tenants citywide. We have consulted tenants on the design of the rent statement and also asked tenants views about managing their tenancy online to help influence the move to a new self-service portal. Feedback on these consultations is now presented on the consultations themselves for tenants to see what was said, and what we have been able to action and undertake as a result.

We have also recently undertak a citywide tenant consultation seeking to gauge tenants priorities for our service for the year ahead which will help inform our budget setting proposals for 2021/22.

We do accept that we need to make available and use Your Voice Leeds for a mixture of local and citywide consultation so as many tenants as a whole have the opportunity to give their views and influence the services we give. We also continue to learn from our usage data and feedback about how best to present and share consultations so that they are relevant to tenants and is something that people are happy to take part in.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 14 – Tenant Scrutiny Board to promote the work of the board through Your Voice Leeds

Response – Recommendation accepted

We welcome the opportunity to use Your Voice Leeds to help the board engage with tenants more widely, sharing the work of the board, giving tenants more access to and understanding about board activity. There are different ways we can do this, and we look forward to working and designing something with the board that helps achieve this. The ability to use Your Voice to engage with residents on behalf of a tenant scrutiny function is something that has attracted interest from other scrutiny boards and we are keen to develop good practice in this area.

We are also able to promote the activity of the board using social media and by sharing updates and links to a TSB page on Your Voice Leeds for example, in the monthly citywide tenant email.

Desired Outcome – Increase Your Voice Leeds visits

Recommendation 15 – Consider providing a Your Voice Leeds mobile phone app.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Response – Recommendation rejected

Bang The Table, the company which supply the software have confirmed they no longer have plans to develop a separate app for mobile phone users. The commitment is that the software be built and designed in such a way that it resizes and becomes as accessible and user friendly as possible on all devices – laptop, tablet or mobile phone. Thus not needing to develop a separate app and for the user to have one site/place to engage with.

Desired Outcome – Increase digital inclusion

Recommendation 16 – Donate old IT equipment to engaged tenants who are not digitally connected.

Response – Recommendation rejected

All Leeds City Council hardware, PC's, laptops and tablets which become unusable or no longer needed are sent back to our supplier for secure data wiping and safe hardware disposal.

Many of these devices are not suitable for re-issue as they are generally over eight years old, cosmetically damaged with the majority having hardware faults. The reusable parts from old, faulty, or redundant devices are recycled.

Some of the older devices and parts are sold by the supplier at minimal cost to various charities and good causes. This in turn creates a small income stream for the council which helps pay for the legally required data wiping and disposal, making it cost neutral for the council overall.

LCC are sensitive to and have been trying to tackle the issue of the lack of a device being a barrier for tenants, residents and families across Leeds. Our ICT service, working with Childrens Services gave over 1,800 laptops, 300 MiFi devices and 350 iPads during the pandemic to those who were digitally excluded. This is in addition to the work of [100% Digital Leeds](#).

The Tenant Engagement team in April also loaned six tablets to tenants across different forums and groups to allow them to engage and participate in tenant involvement activity more easily. Feedback from these residents has been positive, and we hope to widen the access to loaned tablets for tenants involved in formal tenant involvement in the year ahead.

Desired Outcome – Improving tenancy management efficiency

Recommendation 17 – Trial an online version of annual home visits via a video call



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Response – Recommendation deferred

Over the last year we have been carrying out 'annual tenancy check-ins' in different ways according to customers circumstances, either through a home visit, a telephone call, or an online survey. The online survey has just been piloted and we are currently evaluating the success of this to inform how we move forward across this year and next.

Careful consideration will need to be given on how any video contacts could work in practice, for example, the video conferencing software used and the costs of this, how staff and tenants would feel about this approach and in what circumstances it would be suitable for it to be offered. This consideration will need to be in the context of some of the more personal or sensitive topics that may be covered in an annual home contact conversation between customers and staff.

On this, we are able to draw upon experience from within the repairs service who piloted a 'Remote Assistance' solution - allowing a video call between the tenant at home with a member of staff in Property Management to help diagnose repairs effectively without the need for a home visit. The repairs service has undertaken an evaluation of the pilot which is valuable in terms of informing how any video conferencing could work for annual tenancy contacts. Overall, from 102 calls made during the pilot: -

- 72% of tenants were willing and able to participate in the Remote Assistance call.
- 86% of tenants who participated confirmed they would be happy to use the system again.
- 61% of calls initiated established a successful video stream with the tenant. With failure rates of 39% across the pilot.
- Where the video stream was successfully established, 65% of calls were able to resolve the issue without the need for a physical inspection.
- 90% of staff rated the system as "Good" or "Excellent" in helping them to do their job.

At this stage we are unable to fully accept or reject this recommendation. However, we understand the ambition of the board to want to offer this type of contact to improve the customer experience for tenants who may prefer to be contacted in this way. We are happy to keep the board updated with our future proposals.

Desired Outcome – Innovation and continual improvement



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Recommendation 18 – Continue to be innovative in Tenant Engagement and feedback to Tenant Scrutiny Board the results, positive or negative, on new innovations.

Response – Recommendation accepted.

Housing Leeds will continue to innovative to seek to improve its approach to Tenant Engagement so with tenant input we can design the best possible services. The recent Social Housing White Paper sets out the need for landlords to continually improve the way they engage with social housing tenants. An innovative approach, using Your Voice Leeds for example, will help assure the Social Housing Regulator that we are meeting this expectation. We are happy to share progress overall with how we develop the tenant engagement service with the Tenant Scrutiny Board.