

REPORT TITLE: TENANT INVOLVEMENT – APPRECIATION AND INCENTIVE SCHEME

30 JANUARY 2019

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Housing - Cllr Caroline Horrill

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

Set out an incentive scheme to encourage under-represented households to give their time and tell the Council their views.

Formalise the existing arrangements used by the Council to encourage involvement and in appreciation of time and commitment given by involved tenants who work with the Council for the benefit of all tenants.

Recognise that measures which encourage meaningful involvement enables the Council to make informed decisions about service delivery and improvement based on an understanding of tenants' views and priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Incentive Scheme be approved.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

1.1 Strategic Outcome Two - Delivering quality housing options

Be proactive in our tenant engagement, achieving effective representation and insight across all tenant and customer groups.

1.2 As part of the Winchester City Council's digital transformation programme – offering online opportunities to engage with the Council.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The cost of additional incentives will be met through rental income. Total cost will be minimal and cost effective in comparison to other engagement activities.

2.2 Annual cost of additional incentive elements are estimated approx. £1,500 per annum. See breakdown below:

Involvement Activity/Incentives	Cost
Digital Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £50 shopping vouchers x approx. 6 surveys per annum One annual prize to the value of £200 	£300 £200
Tenant Satisfaction Survey (STAR) – Prize draw (<i>once every two years</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPad mini (£400) £50 shopping vouchers x 3 (£150) 	£200 £75
Focus Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love2Shop vouchers Refreshments/ Catering 	Approx. £150 £200
Future incentives Allowance for future view gathering initiatives. e.g. entry into a prize draw for return of repair customer care cards, Tenancy Sustainment Satisfaction (Money and Advice) survey	Max. £300

Total	£1,425
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- 2.3 Through the consultation process tenants and officers highlighted that while this scheme proposes incentives linked to digital surveys specifically that it should be recognised that rewards and reimbursement already takes place. These costs, outlined below, are additional to those set out in 2.2.
- Reimbursement – it's a commitment from Winchester City Council that no tenant should be out of pocket as a consequence of taking time to actively work with the Council. The outcome of Tenant Finance Scrutiny exercise in 2015 was to set out procedures and policies to reimburse expenses incurred such as travel, parking and child care costs etc.
 - Appreciation – for the time and energy a small group of tenants commit to working with the Council to improve services to the benefit of all tenants; Winchester City Council funds catering, social events and gifts for involved tenant groups i.e. TACT, Service Delivery Groups, Scrutiny exercises, Readers Panel, Tenant Conference, Mystery Shoppers.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A general set of terms and conditions are being drafted informing tenants how the scheme will operate.
- 3.2 The opportunity to look at the terms and conditions will be communicated to tenants at the point at which tenants are told that entry into a prize draw is available. Access to the terms and conditions will either be through links included in emails or by going on the Winchester City Council webpages. The location will be set out in covering letters or newsletters.
- 3.3 A free draw (where there is no payment to enter) is exempt from statutory control under the Gambling Act 2005. Furthermore, the Gambling Commission's Guidance indicates that an arrangement whereby organisations reward those who complete a survey does not involve a payment (i.e. it is a "free" draw).

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It will be the role of the Tenant Involvement Team to administer the scheme. Time investment has been necessary to research and design the scheme. The scheme proposed is not complex and if approved should be straight forward to operate within existing resources; especially as it can be seen as an extension to other incentives, rewards and reimbursements already in existence.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

6.1 Officers from the Tenant Involvement Team met with the TACT Support Group and the Joint Service Delivery Groups leads in June 2018 to discuss a possible incentive scheme and collect the views of involved tenants.

6.2 A digital survey was emailed to all tenants for whom the Council held an email address. This survey was also made available online to all tenants to complete through the Council's consultation page Citizen's Space. The objective of this survey was to collect the views of as many tenants as possible in addition to the feedback received from the meetings with involved tenants. Involved tenants were also able to complete the digital survey. The questions included on the survey were informed by the discussions held with involved tenants and were checked with the Readers Panel.

6.3 The survey was open from 2 August to 7 September 2018.

- 453 responses were received.
- 17% response rate (those who returned the survey as a percentage of tenants for whom the Council has an email address)
- 7% of all tenants responded.
- The respondents represented a good cross section of tenants in terms of age, location and sheltered/general needs split.

6.4 The results of those who answered the question are presented in the table below.

- Question - 'Would you be more likely to return a survey if you received a reward?'

Age group	yes	no	Want to know more first
overall	43%	38%	19%
16 – 34 years	78%	9%	13%
35 – 44 years	58%	26%	17%
45 – 54 years	53%	25%	21%
55 – 64 years	40%	29%	30%

65 – 74 years	26%	61%	13%
75 years plus	17%	71%	10%

The overall response to the breakdown by age was interesting. While overall the views were fairly evenly split; when the results were viewed by the age groups the initiative is aiming to target i.e. under 55s, an incentive scheme was clearly identified as worth investigation as an initiative to increase the likelihood of a tenant aged 55 years or younger returning the survey.

Given a significant number of 'wanting to know more' responses running a scheme as a pilot may be worthwhile.

The results were also considered by area. Tenants of Stanmore responded that they would be more likely to return a survey if they received a reward. The views of Stanmore tenants are of particular interest as the biennial Tenant Satisfaction Survey results indicate that tenants from this area have lower levels of satisfaction compared to other Winchester City Council districts so an approach which engages with Stanmore tenants is of value.

- 6.5 Tenants who responded were asked whether they would be interested in taking part in Focus groups to discuss proposals further and these groups were held in September. This also give those 'wanting to know more' the opportunity to discuss what a scheme that would work for them would look like.
- 6.6 Through the consultation outlined above the Council asked for incentive ideas. Interestingly incentives that provided opportunities for tenants to share with others came out strongly; such as -
- Something to share with other residents / tenants
 - A social event in sheltered common room
 - Something for a shared space / common room
 - Family experiences
 - Dining out experiences
- Other suggestions included
- Shopping vouchers
 - Handyperson time / internal decorations
- 6.7 The results of the survey and feedback from the focus groups were discussed with tenants at TACT – 12 September 2018. Feedback from all the sources

was used to prepare a scheme proposal which was discussed with TACT again on 16 January 2019.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 None.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

8.1 The consultation process helped inform the scheme design to make it as accessible as possible. An impact assessment looked at the feedback received and made further amendments to improve accessibility. These measures centred on providing the opportunity to complete a digital survey and therefore access the incentive scheme.

8.2 Measures include:

- To address households for whom the Council does not hold an email address/ or who have no access to home internet - surveys can be accessed online from the tenant involvement page as well as being emailed direct. Tenants can get online at Winchester City Council reception and local libraries.
- To address issues around level of IT skills – facility for survey to be completed by an advocate – Wi-Fi champion, family member, neighbour or friend can complete the survey on behalf of a tenant. The system has been set up to confirm that someone completing the survey on behalf of a tenant is doing so with the tenant's permission and asked to give their email address.

It is possible that the surveys and incentives may encourage tenants to improve their IT skills and look to the support being offered by the Housing service to help with this. The consultation process has already made useful links with people who may be interested in becoming digital champions to help others get online.

- To ensure the survey meets plain English standards - the questions are either designed through a focus group of currently uninvolved tenants or in conversation with involved tenants through the traditional meeting structure and where necessary checked by Readers Panel.

In recognition that this will be an increasing need not just due to the surveys but the importance of accessing information online it's proposed that a Digital Readers Panel be set up in addition to the existing Readers Panel. This new group will review online information only.

- There will be some unable to access the surveys but it must be remembered that are other options for tenants to share their views which don't require internet access or IT skills such as meetings and

the postal biennial tenant satisfaction survey which also has incentives attached.

- Designing the scheme to allow the flexibility to consider additional incentives should ensure that all groups have equal opportunity to find an incentive they value.
- The opportunity to complete the survey will be promoted through email, tenants' newsletter, corporate twitter and Facebook pages as well as the Tenant Involvement page. The scheme will be added to the Council's tenant involvement web page.
- The scope of the annual prize to be restricted to only those surveys open to all tenants to give all tenants an equal chance in the prize draw.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 While a full Data Protection Impact Assessment under data protection legislation is not necessary the proposed scheme does flag up potential data protection issues.
- 9.2 The Council is a local housing authority under the Housing Act 1985 and undertakes surveys as part of its statutory function. This provides a lawful basis for processing personal information in the course of conducting a survey for housing purposes.
- 9.3 However entering a tenant into a prize draw requires their consent before entering them into the draw and their consent for using their personal data for this purpose. The best way of doing this is to include an "opt in" box in the survey for those who complete the survey.
- 9.4 Incentive winners are chosen by a random number generator. The number range of respondents is entered onto the generator. These numbers are not attached to any personal or special category data. The number chosen by the generator is matched to a tenant listed on a spreadsheet held only by Winchester City Council.
- 9.5 Other incentives are covered through existing systems, privacy statements and retention schedule timescales. The privacy statement for Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2019 will be updated following legal advice. The privacy statement for new incentives will be based on legal advice.
- 9.6 The digital surveys are conducted through the corporate Citizens Space programme.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property none</i>		
<i>Community Support none</i>		
<i>Timescales None - as this paper formalises a scheme which has been set up and tested in advance.</i>		
<i>Project capacity None – TIO Lead engaged to lead on initiative, this paper is the conclusion of the project.</i>		
<i>Financial / VfM No risk - financial implications are outlined in the report.</i>		Offering incentives should ensure that the value of resources invested in collecting views should be maximised.
<i>Legal Ensure the terms under which prizes are offered are clear and represent what is available and protects the Council from committing to more than is being offered.</i>	WCC legal team are preparing terms and conditions. The policy and procedure will set out how tenants will be made of aware of accessing the terms and conditions. Attendance at sector workshops to adopt good practice recommendations.	
<i>Innovation</i>		New way of encouraging wider spectrum of households to share views; in addition to existing involvement activities.
<i>Reputation</i>	Good practice researched and attendance on training event around Citizen Space and operating prize draws. Links to research references are available in	

	background documents.	
<i>Other Scheme fails to engage target group</i>	Pilot scheme to be reviewed against scheme objectives. Research to ensure good practice reflected.	
<i>Data received of no value as responses not honest.</i>	Surveys supplemented by focus group work to validate data gathering exercises.	

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 Background

Committee paper CAB2987 (HSG) presented the Tenant Engagement Strategy, which aimed to ensure the views of all tenants informed service priorities and business decisions. The strategy recognised that while Winchester City Council has a strong legacy of active tenant involvement; the profile of involved tenants failed to match that of all tenants, especially younger households. The paper outlined initiatives which would be investigated to address the imbalance. One of those initiatives was to introduce an Incentive Scheme.

11.2 Research & Consultation

11.2.1 It is understood from sector research that one of the barriers preventing younger households from giving their views is lack of time. Organisations need to consider how to address that barrier if they want service decisions to be based on the views of all tenants.

11.2.2 Tenant involvement activities are generally centred around a meeting structure which may represent a barrier to involvement for several groups; not just younger households – but also those for whom attending meetings is not attractive due to location, home/work commitments, disabilities. Digital surveys have been introduced as an additional option for tenants' to give the Council their views. This option is seen as being specifically attractive to younger households as long as the survey design is kept quick and easy to complete and the time commitment minimal. A further measure to address the time commitment barrier and to maximise the number of responses is to offer incentives.

11.2.3 The higher the response rate; the greater the value of the data collected. Therefore an initiative that helps increase the number of returns adds value

not only to the data but also to the time and resources invested in collecting those views making the process more cost effective.

- 11.2.4 It should be noted that the view of some tenants is that incentives should not be offered. In discussion with involved tenants the reasons given for this were that tenants should give their time freely and there were concerns over the value of the views submitted as a result of incentives offered.
- 11.2.5 Some housing officers have been actively seeking out surveys from other organisations to learn what will encourage people to give their time to complete them. Officers found that incentives worked for them where it was felt there was a greater chance of winning the prize and officers would still complete honestly. Other elements were also key such as short surveys, being told at the beginning how many questions there were and how long it was likely to take to complete.
- 11.2.6 The Housing service have run 2 digital surveys so far with the offer of incentives and the response rate has been good with the profile being representative of all tenants.
- 11.2.7 To reflect the feedback from some tenants that their reasons for being involved is so all tenants benefit and they are not happy to profit from their involvement; the scheme includes a community element. Research into the approach of other organisations found that schemes included the option for those tenants to be able opt to have prizes donated to schemes that benefited the community. To fit with Winchester City Council's corporate priorities the incentive scheme includes the option of donating prizes to 'Spare change for real change'.

11.2.8 Details of the proposal - The Incentive Scheme

The scheme itself has been structured as follows:

- Open to WCC current tenants only – no need to opt in or out (unless the incentive is promoted as a prize in which case consent will be required).
- Prize draws - One entry per tenant (not per tenancy – to respect that joint tenants may have different views) for each survey return. Duplicate returns will be identified and only one permitted.
- Digital Survey - Topic Specific Draw – one entry per tenant who responds into a draw for one prize of a £50 shopping voucher. All respondents who complete each WCC Tenant Involvement Service digital survey which is either open to all tenants or specific tenant groups will be entered into a draw relating to that specific survey with one prize winner only.
- Annual prize draw – an entry into an annual draw each time a tenant completes a WCC Tenant Involvement Service digital survey open to

all tenants. (I.e. if a survey is closed to only specific households groups – returns to this type of survey will not be included). There will be only one annual prize draw winner who will receive one prize.

- Annual prize to the value of a maximum of £200 to choose one (or mix and match from (i) – (v)) from the following:

(i) Family ticket Paultons Park

(ii) Netflix subscription

(iii) Dinner vouchers for local restaurant

(iv) Love2Shop Shopping vouchers

Or

(v) Donation to Spare change for real change

Or

(vi) 2 x 2 hour slots with the Handyperson

Or

(vii) Residents of a sheltered scheme a bespoke social event for them and their fellow residents – tea party, film afternoon, arts and crafts session, cake decorating. Please note - this will be dependant on the scope of the event and the capacity of the team to facilitate.

- Other prize options

The scheme will be flexible in that further suggestions will be considered as prize options.

- Other tenant involvement activities

Incentives will be considered as a way of maximising responses for other activities where tenant views are collected. Especially when it is recognised that significant barriers exist to encourage people to take the time to tell us what they think. An example of this is the Tenancy Sustainment (Money & Benefit Advice) Satisfaction Survey.

11.3 Conclusion

11.3.1 Comprehensive research and consultation has informed the proposed incentive scheme. Recent digital surveys which have offered prize draw incentives have delivered good response rates and collected meaningful data. In addition they have been successful in engaging households previously underrepresented through traditional involvement activities.

- 11.3.2 It's important that flexibility exists within the scheme to allow for new suggestions for prizes and incentives attached to other involvement activities to be considered.
- 11.3.3 Feedback from one tenant was to suggest that it would be worthwhile talking to the children of younger households about what would be an attractive prize to them so that they motivate their parents to complete the surveys.
- 11.3.4 Pilot – the scheme will be reviewed after 12 months.
- 11.3.5 Work continues to address the other barriers to involvement which includes the belief of some tenants' that their views won't be listened to.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 On the basis that feedback from some existing involved tenants was that it wouldn't lead to honest answers to digital surveys and would mean that tenants are giving their views for the wrong reasons i.e. for reward rather than for the benefit of all tenants; one option was not going forward with a proposal to offer an incentive scheme. However the scheme has been introduced on a pilot basis to test the view that the information collected wouldn't be of value. The digital surveys conducted so far have been supplemented by focus group discussion which works to provide a qualitative response and validate the statistical data. The face to face work has shown to support the digital data collected. It is recognised that there may well be element of returns that aren't completed honestly but the number and profile of responses indicate that a scheme is worthwhile investigating.
- 12.2 In response to it 'shouldn't be necessary' tenants should give their views to benefit all tenants or the area and not for individual gain – while it is accepted that this is a legitimate view of some of our involved tenants and appreciate the time and energy tenants give to the Council's current involvement activities which are primarily meeting based; it is also recognised that there are short comings in that approach and the Council has a responsibility to try innovative ways to reach those households who it doesn't hear from and overcome the barriers that prevent them from sharing their views such as time commitments, meetings not being an attractive forum for everyone.
- 12.3 A more complex scheme of points for different types and levels of involvement was considered – it was decided not to proceed with this option on the basis that
- The best schemes are simple and straight forward,
 - There was a potential administrative burden that may be required for such a scheme of this nature. The preference that better use of officer time would be to offer other involvement activities such as focus groups.

- Tenants involved in other activities are still able to complete the surveys and have equal chance to win the prizes.
- Appreciation measures offered for attending meetings – such as refreshments and catering should be highlighted.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB2987 (HSG) – Tenant Engagement Strategy – 22.11.17

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

None