



Customer Senate Scrutiny Exercise - Communications With Customers Around Investment Works

Autumn/Winter 2016



1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report has been written by the Senate to provide feedback from their investigation into communications with Customers around Investment works. It makes recommendations for improvement to the current process.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Senate looked at a number of areas to investigate which would not be affected by the ongoing company restructure.

2.2 They agreed that due to there being a lot of investment works currently within Inverclyde it might be beneficial to find out what customers are being told and when.

2.3 The overall purpose was to ensure that all customers were receiving enough relevant information that is clear and easy to understand by all.

3.0 The Senate

3.1 The Senators carrying out this investigation were Marion Wilson, Andrew Hurrell, Joyce Stephens, Ian McArthur, Peter Harris, Elizabeth Berry and Alice McQuillan.

The Senate were supported in their investigation by Siobhan O'Kane, Governance & Executive Team Support Manager, RCH and Anne Ross, Customer Involvement Officer.

4.0 Report Structure

4.1 The report outlines the investigative methods used and the Senate's findings. It makes recommendations based on their findings and on best practice.

5.0 Methods used

5.1 The exercise was conducted as follows:

- A meeting was held by the Senate to discuss the potential areas for investigation to be carried out.

- The group requested details of all communications used to date in a project that was about to be undertaken, one that was under way and one that had been completed recently.
- They met with the Investment Projects Manager to discuss some of their initial ideas based on the examination of the communication information supplied.
- The Senate sent two smaller sub groups to visit Broomhill to view the onsite office and to meet customers visiting there.
- The Senate requested via the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Scotland, Customer Satisfaction surveys used by other housing associations.

Group discussions

As with all investigations the group are fully aware that all comments and information are treated in the strictest confidence.

Senate members have signed a code of conduct and feedback will not be attributed to individual managers or customers who took part in this investigation.

6.0 Results

	Recommendation	Detail
1.	Standard joint initial letter to both tenants and owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This letter should contain estimated costs of proposed works that may be carried out. At this point, 'ESTIMATED' should be highlighted with a note added that the cost could vary for individual owners due to what grants, if any, might be available. • The letter should be sent out using the standard RCH template. • It should also point out clearly that a start date would be solely dependant on budget availability. • The letter should be easy to understand and not contain technical jargon. • There should be a notification of a clear contact number for the Project Officer (Technical Officer) to answer queries and this may determine that a 'drop

		in' session in the area is required.
2.	Update key stakeholders throughout the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This should include liaising with RTO's, Community Councillors and Ward Councillors and may require for all customer communications to be sent to these parties.
3.	RCH on-site workstation for sizeable projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This should form part of the agreement with the contractor and should be in place for all sizeable projects. This would allow for the RCH Project Officer (Technical Officer) to utilise the workstation on a diarised arrangement. A case by case VFM assessment would be done to determine if this is possible for smaller projects.
4.	Once the scope has been agreed and funding is in place, a standard second letter should be sent to both tenants and owners	<p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> detail the work that will be carried out, dates for this to commence, grant information for owners if available, a list of the contractors who will carry out work, contact details for the RCH Technical Officer (previously Project Officer) assigned to the project and information relating to when and where the Technical Officer will be available onsite. Included in this mailing should be a card with the Technical Officers' name, contact details and their photograph.

5.	All Communications to customers should be from RCH in our corporate style.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a Contractor requires to communicate with customers, then all communications should be from RCH. All letters, posters, cards etc., must be on RCH corporate templates and the content must always be cleared by RCH. • RCH must hold copies of all such communications on file for each project.
6.	One single Customer Satisfaction Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, customers receive multiple satisfaction surveys following completion of an investment programme. The Senate understands the requirements for both Contractors and RCH to obtain information to inform their KPI's, however, they feel that there should be one survey combining the needs of RCH and contractors and that this should be as simple as possible. • The Customer Senate would be happy to work with the Investment Team to develop a suitable form. • Three faces with a comments box as to why a face is chosen is the preferred recommendation. • It should be made clear on the form that customer's contact details are required in order to be able to act on feedback.
7.	Ensure that customer feedback is responded to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the feedback received is about common issues then it is recommended there could be a

		<p>‘Drop In’ event held or a standard response sent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If individual major issues arise, one to ones would be required. • It is also recommended that Satisfaction Surveys are rolled out as works are completed in buildings/blocks and not sent out en masse at the end of the whole project to allow for staff to manage individual responses where needed.
8.	Feedback collection boxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In High Rise flats a collection box should be made available in the foyer for feedback surveys to be dropped into.
9.	Owners to be provided with an electronic copy of the Operations and Maintenance manual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be supplied within a reasonable time after project completion and could be made available on a memory stick. Owners may require this information if / when they wish to sell their properties.

7.0 Review

7.1 The Senate will meet to discuss the Boards acceptance or rejection of any of the recommendations.

7.2 An action plan for the recommendations approved by the Board will be generated by the responsible Director and presented to the Senate.

7.3 The Senate will seek to attend any subsequent meetings of the Board or Performance & Services Committee during which the action plan is being discussed.