

Scope of the Audit: Scope of the Audit

The purpose of this audit is to look at the estate inspector scheme from inception to delivery and determine from a residents perspective the effectiveness and value for money through the process.

Audit team: The audit team was made up of the following residents: Steve McAllister, Tony Elsom, Andy Tucker, Sneha Dewan, Sheila Ferrar, and David Guinchard.

Facilitator: Stephen Beckett-Doyle.

General Comment from the Chair of Auditors

This report has highlighted the commitment that TVH show to the estate inspector (EI) scheme and their residents in the drive to increase and maintain satisfaction with estate services.

The scheme is very well advanced and on comparison with some similar schemes at other organisations faired at the top, with residents feeling that it is well worthwhile and value for money.

It would be good if TVH could address some of the VFM/resource issues by the introduction of a piece of direct reporting software that feeds directly and in real time into the scoring

Overview of the estate inspector scheme

The estate inspector scheme has been running for just over 3 Years now and has grown to have 78 active inspectors at the date of this report. The purpose of the Estate inspectors is to provide resident feedback and scoring on the cleaning and grounds maintenance provided by the contractors on their scheme. Their scoring then feeds directly into the scoring of the contractor. The resident inspectors act as the Eyes and Ears of TVH.

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ideally providing real time scoring as near as possible to when the cleaning and grounds maintenance has been carried out.

What Terms and Abbreviations Mean

TVH	Thames Valley Housing
CSC	Customer Call Centre: when you call TVH these are the people you speak with.
Project Cornerstone	This is the new data management system that will be installed in TVH. The project is ongoing and will be up and running in phases between November 2010 and October 2011.
TVHRA	Thames Valley Housing Resident Auditors

Red Column = this is below the level expected by residents, action on these points should improve the service and increase customer satisfaction

Amber Column = this is acceptable to residents but minor alterations could improve the service and or customer satisfaction and possibly provide a cost saving in some instances

Green Column = this is at or above the levels expected by residents.

Colour Code	No	%	Number
Green	6	40%	1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14
Amber	6	47%	3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13
Red	2	13%	2, 12
Total	14		

TVH Management General Statement Concerning Responses

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1	Do all staff involved with (EI) understand their role?	Speaking to officers			All the involved staff that we spoke to had a clear understanding of their responsibility/part into contributing to the EI process	It is reassuring to know that staff involved understand their role in this scheme.
2	Do all staff involved with Estate inspectors have a clearly defined role in the overall picture?	Speaking to all staff involved with estate inspectors			<p>We found that although everyone knew their part of involvement there was some overlap in what was being provided by individuals, meaning that more than one person was dealing with the same issues.</p> <p>As an example the six monthly visits to inspectors are generally being undertaken with two TVH staff, and currently with 78 inspectors this takes approx 1 day each a month, which we felt was duplication and a potential waste of in excess of 12 working days per year.</p> <p>We felt that if more than one person was required for the site visit then this should be the contractor as the second person, which completes</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>6 monthly visits will now be carried out with 1 member of staff from TVH and the Contractor.</p> <p>All visits will be arranged by the Resident Involvement team.</p> <p>Action: Fran Moynihan to arrange visits to commence from 1st November 2011 (following the new cleaning and gardening contracts going live).</p>

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					the loop between all 3 parties and as the contractor would be providing this resource it would potentially provide a cost saving	
3	Do all members of staff understand about what resident inspectors do?	Speaking to 10 random members of staff from within the organisation			<p>8 out of 10 knew about estate inspectors, of those 8, 5 were able to give a brief explanation of what REI's do.</p> <p>We feel that to make this even more successful and help with recruitment, retention and understanding, all members of staff should at least know what REI's are and all staff who have resident contact should be able to have a little bit more knowledge to promote it.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The following 3 areas will be targeted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception • Surveyors • CSC <p>This will be done through team meetings, the intranet and a question & answer sheet for all.</p> <p>Action: Fran Moynihan February 2011.</p>
4	What do you see as the role of the estate inspectors?	Speaking to involved staff			There was common feedback on this and it was good to see that everyone had the same or similar response.	We are pleased that everyone has the same views on the role of the estate inspector.
	Do you think that standards	Speaking to involved staff			This had mixed responses, we think in general the feeling is that standards	Agreed.

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5	improve on schemes with an estate inspector?	Speaking to resident inspectors Looking at estate inspector survey results			<p>do improve a bit, but this is more to do with satisfaction as some of the issue surrounds perception.</p> <p>As a trained inspector, The resident has a greater knowledge of both the specification and the tasks to be completed by the operatives, therefore they are scoring the works based on what is actually being paid for rather than what residents feel they are entitled to, or should be getting.</p> <p>We would like a commitment that in line with the new contracts the new maps and specification will be issued to all residents, to help ensure that some of the confusion over what is and is not included is cleared up</p>	<p>Maps have already been issued to some Estate Inspectors.</p> <p>Maps and specifications will be sent out to all residents in January 2012, Following the commencement of the new contracts and a settling in period.</p> <p>Action: Sam Johnson, January 2012.</p>
6	Are resident inspectors trained effectively to carry out their	Estate inspector survey results, Speaking to inspectors.			It was felt based on all the evidence that the initial training provided to estate inspectors is effective and adequate.	This is a good result and ties in with the feedback received from the recent estate inspector survey.

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	role?	Examining the training documents Peaking to officers			We would also assume that following the start of the new contractors that inspectors would have the opportunity to meet with and discuss with them about their particular sites	Three events will be held towards the end of September 2011 for estate inspectors to meet their new contractor and they will now be present on the 6 monthly visits.
7	Do all the concerned staff members involved know how many estate inspectors we currently have?				There was some confusion on this, We would like TVH to be clear what is being counted as active. Some current inspectors have not completed inspections for several months, are these still active, also included in the totals we were given were individuals who had indicated they would like to be inspectors but had not so far been 'signed up and received training' should these be counted as active inspectors?	Agreed. Only active residents will be recorded from April 2012. Those on the interested list will be trained ASAP. A target of 6 weeks is now in place to train all new interested residents. Action: Sam Johnson / Fran Moynihan January 2012.
8	Do residents see estate inspectors as effective and value for	Talking to a small sample of residents Results from the 2010			This is very encouraging, and was voted by residents as being one of the most effective involvement methods	This is a really positive result. We hope to increase value for money through online inspection forms, introducing

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	money?	involved residents event report				the repairs monitoring and managing visits effectively.
9	Are the scores of resident inspectors taken into account effectively?				<p>The scores are incorporated into a spreadsheet that combines scores from other parties, to give an overall satisfaction or pass fail figure.</p> <p>We were not confident that this is 100% effective and would like this looked at to see if there is a better/fairer system bearing in mind the implementation in October of new contracts for cleaning and grounds.</p> <p>Our concerns are that often REI information is out of date and then not included in the reporting for this reason, or if it is included is outside of the cut off period to make a difference.</p> <p>Also the pass fail threshold is too lenient and should be addressed, theoretically one particular task may never be carried out however the</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The current contract allows sites to pass with one area of failure, however we agreed an approach with Quadron (our current suppliers) to move to a different scoring system which prevents this. This has been used for the last couple of years and is incorporated into the new contract.</p> <p>We will be looking at electronic submission of data to speed up the response and ensure all residents scores are included in future PI's.</p> <p>Action: Sam Johnson, December 2011.</p>

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					contractor would still pass.	
10	Are residents incentivised at the correct level for their commitment?	Speaking to auditors Speaking to inspectors Speaking to staff Looking at 5 other random HA's who operate Estate inspectors			We had mixed feelings on this one, however we feel that after doing some research with other H/A's TVH reward on a similar basis (some incentivised more others did not incentivise at all)	Its good to keep up to date with what other housing providers offer and it's good to know we reward on a similar basis.
11	Are resident inspectors well enough supported after their training?	Speaking to inspectors, Personal experiences Speaking to staff			40% of inspectors would like more contact/support from TVH. We would like TVH to consider the use of a dedicated resource for estate inspectors. Both staff and residents felt that with lots of different individuals dealing with different parts of the estate inspector scheme it could potentially be a little disjointed or overlapped at times. We feel that the best enhancement	Agreed: we have used existing resources to manage contact with residents across more than one post within the Resident Involvement team, however there will continue to be a need to involved the contract management team and the contractors. We are aware of the fact that if we keep expanding the scheme we may need a

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					to this as the scheme gets bigger is to centralise the role and not tag onto existing roles which longer term will create a cost/efficiency saving.	dedicated resource if we are to maintain current levels of training and support. This will be reviewed once we have 120 active inspectors. Action: Margaret Buchan April 2012.
12	Almost 60% of current inspectors would like to be able to complete their Estate inspections online?	Estate inspectors survey Speaking to officers Speaking to estate inspectors			We would like TVH to investigate how this could be possible, ideally in a way that would enable the data to be fed directly into the score sheet to avoid double handling the information, we believe this would provide an overall and eventual cost saving, especially if the scheme is to be expanded. Possible solutions could be via a web portal, via an app, via snap? Please see our value for Money Analysis at appendix 1	Agreed. Online reports (using and SNAP format) are currently being trialled and will be available to all inspectors following the initial test period. This will speed up the time between inspection being carried out and then being entered into the spreadsheet as no postage is required, which in turn will reduce costs. This however, is a temporary solution. Results being fed straight into the spreadsheet

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						<p>would be ideal and would save time for many TVH staff and contractors. This system is already available for Neighbourhood Officers and it will be taken to the IT group to consider extending this to residents.</p> <p>Action: Margaret Buchan, December 2012.</p>
13	<p>Could greater benefits be sought by TVH from resident estate inspectors?</p>	<p>Speaking to estate inspectors Resident estate inspectors survey Speaking to staff</p>			<p>Bearing in mind our VFM report at appendix 1 we would like TVH to consider/investigate the extended use of resident estate inspectors to provide better VFM or cost savings. Perhaps through communal repairs inspections or as a point of contact A recent survey May 2011 showed that 73 % of inspectors would be interested in doing more</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>From the recent survey a large number of estate inspectors would be interested in reporting on repairs as part of their role.</p> <p>We will produce a process for delivering this and consult with resident inspectors to see how to take it forward.</p> <p>Action: Fran Moynihan, January 2012.</p>

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14	Is the estate inspector scheme value for money for residents?	Looking at costing			<p>Currently as per appendix 1 we believe that the Estate inspector scheme offers residents great value for money and this was backed up at last years involved resident's event which rated it as one of the top activities.</p> <p>However we would express some caution as the scheme develops in size above the current set target as the proportionate costs increase quite steeply based on the current system and process.</p>	<p>This is a positive result and one we hope we can continue and improve on with planned cost saving through online forms and contractor visits.</p>

Appendix 1

Resident Auditors - Basic Value for money/cost saving analysis of Resident inspectors per annum

This data is based on estimated figures only as actual cost information was not available and this assumes the **current** situation with **78** inspectors

Item	Cost	Quantity	total cost	Potential cost saving	How achieved
Incentive vouchers issued 09/10	10	377	3770	0	
pre printed envelopes	0.08	2028	162.24	97.34	
1st class return postage	0.35	2028	750.36	450.21	
Printing/paper costs Score sheets	0.06	4056	243.46	146.07	
Admin staff costs (inputting scores)	8	144	1152	691.2	
Fran/Sam/Stephen	10	768	7680	0	
Monthly visits for two people (x2)	10	168	1680	840	
Total			15438.06	2224.82	
Effective cost per resident (13400)	1.15				

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Resident Auditors - Basic Value for money/cost saving analysis of Resident Inspectors per annum

This data is based on estimated figures only as actual cost information was not available and is scaled up to this years target of 120 inspectors

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total Cost	Potential cost saving	How achieved
Incentive vouchers for 120 inspectors	10	580	5800	0	
Pre printed envelopes	0.08	3120	249.6	149.76	reduction by 60 % who would prefer electronic
1st class return postage	0.35	3120	1092	655.2	reduction by 60 % who would prefer electronic
Printing/paper costs score sheets	0.06	6240	374.4	224.64	reduction by 60 % who would prefer electronic
Admin staff costs	8	222	1776	1065.6	reduction by 60 % who would prefer electronic
Fran/Sam/Stephen/Teri	10	1181	11810	0	
Monthly visits for two people (x2)	10	258	2580	1290	only 1 staff member per visit plus new resident involvement manager from cleaning/grounds
Total			23682	3385.2	
Effective cost per resident (13400)	1.76				

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Resident Auditors - Basic Value for money/cost saving analysis of Resident Inspectors per annum

This data is based on estimated figures only as actual cost information was not available and is scaled up to the blue sky aspiration of staff of an inspector on every scheme (approx 400).

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total Cost	Potential cost saving	How achieved
Incentive vouchers for 400 inspectors	10	1933	19330	0	
Pre printed envelopes	0.08	10400	832	499.2	
1st class return postage	0.35	10400	3640	2184	
Printing/paper costs score sheets	0.06	20800	1248	748.8	
Admin staff costs	8	738.5	5908	3544.8	
Fran/Sam/Stephen/Teri	10	3938	39380	0	
Monthly visits for two people (x2)	10	861	8610	4305	
Total			78948	11281.8	
Effective cost per resident	5.89				

Summary - This VFM chart shows that potential savings in either time or money could be realised in the long term by the introduction of an IT based application that can feed directly into the score sheet for contractors. In addition to this a single person visiting the estate inspectors for the 6 monthly visits would have a 50 % reduction in staff time and or cost.. If two persons were required then perhaps this could be a role for the Contractors Resident involvement manager, who is a non cost based addition to the contract