

COUNCIL: 19 JULY 2018

HOUSING & COMMUNITIES STATEMENT

Into Work Services – Volunteering Team

I am delighted to report that the volunteering team from Into Work Services recently achieved second place at the Digital 100 Leaders awards in the “Digital Skills or Inclusion Initiative of the Year” category. The winners were announced at an award ceremony where the team gave a presentation on the service to a panel of judges in London. The judges were impressed with how the team supported citizens to become digitally included in all our Hubs and other community locations across the city. They were also impressed by how many of the volunteers had then used their experience to gain employment. Even though the team did not win, it was a significant step forward in recognition for all the hard work that the team does.

Pop Up Business School

Earlier this summer, the Pop Up Business School held 10 days of workshops to help people start businesses quickly and at a low cost. The event was attended by people from all over the city. More than 50% of those attending were either already in employment (full or part time) or self-employed, showing that people are keen to upskill. Following on from the event, 19% of those who attended are already trading with 76% almost ready to begin trading, and Into Work Services are continuing to support them. The event was jointly funded by Into Work Services and Economic Development within the Council, as well as Wales & West Housing Association and Wates, the Cardiff Living partner.

Support for Veterans

The Money Advice Team has been successful in securing additional and increased funding from the Ministry of Defence’s Community Covenant to support veterans.

Since being in post from autumn 2017, the current Veteran Officer has supported 206 veterans in areas such as housing, debt, benefit and into work advice. All Hub staff have received training about the project and how to identify and refer a veteran. Specialist drop-in surgeries for veterans are held on a timetabled basis across the city. Relationships have been built with veteran charities in Cardiff, such as the Royal British Legion, and the Veteran Officer regularly visits local barracks to raise awareness of the support available to officers starting the discharge process and transitioning into civilian life.

This additional funding will enable the service to develop further by increasing the number of staff working on the project. More links with partners will be established including Job Centre Plus, Cardiff Prison and Housing Associations where awareness sessions and referral procedures for staff will take place.

Neighbourhood Renewal

I am pleased to announce that a new round of the Neighbourhood Renewal Schemes programme will be launched at the end of this month. All Councillors will be invited to put forward bids for local regeneration projects which will make a difference in their neighbourhoods. To date, the Neighbourhood Renewal Schemes programme has delivered over 100 regeneration projects across the city ranging from renewal of local shopping parades to community space improvements. This is a great opportunity for Members to put forward ideas which will be of long-lasting benefit to communities. An information pack will be circulated and I look forward to receiving bids in the coming months.

Annual Tenants' Survey Results

Each year we carry out a Tenants' Survey, asking a number of questions about contact with the landlord, satisfaction, repairs and maintenance and their local neighbourhood. The survey was a random sample of 30% of Cardiff Council tenants and the survey could be completed online or on paper. 853 responses were received.

Some highlights from the survey can be seen below and demonstrate the positive improvements we have been striving for. An action plan will be formulated to ensure that we continue to improve in all areas.

Repairs & Maintenance: Tenants' satisfaction with the way their landlord deals with repairs and maintenance was the highest since the survey began in 1999 with an increase of 4.2% to 85.6%. Customer satisfaction with the quality of repairs is also at the highest recorded level at 88%. Satisfaction levels had also increased with regard to the attitude of workers, the time taken before work started and the speed in which work was completed (which was a survey high of 90.8%). This is a positive result from the survey and we strive to improve this further next year for repairs and maintenance.

Condition of Property: 80% of tenants described the general condition of their property as either fairly or very good. In addition 81.2% of tenants were either fairly or very satisfied with their landlord; this is an increase from 77.9% in 2016.

Contact with Landlord: 83.6% of tenants found staff who dealt with their enquiry to be helpful. Satisfaction levels also increased for tenants who said they were fairly satisfied with the outcome of their enquiry and tenants being satisfied with their landlord keeping them informed about matters that might affect them.

Tenant Participation Bus Tour

The Tenant Participation team run an annual bus tour for Council tenants to have an early viewing of the Council's regeneration projects across the city and an opportunity to give us their opinions on improvements to Council services. During this year's tour, tenants will be shown around some of the city's newest housing projects such as at Captain's View and Captain's Walk in St Mellons and Silverdale Park in Llanrumney. The tenants will be given a first chance glimpse of the regeneration efforts and will have the opportunity to ask the project manager questions about the new projects. The bus tour ends with the Tenant Participation team facilitating a lunch at the newly-built Powerhouse Hub and a final opportunity to give their opinions on the operations of the Cardiff Hubs, as well as their views on the new builds in St Mellons and Llanrumney.

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
13th July 2018