

# Top of your list!

**Residents' Business Plan 2010–11**



This is the fifth Residents' Business Plan that we have produced. Every year it improves and more residents take up the opportunity to take part.

This year, over 150 people (at the Older Persons and Disability Forums and at meetings in Calne, Cricklade, and Chippenham) fed ideas into the plan, along with a group of young people by way of the 'Voice-It Project'. We also carried out a phone survey of residents with families which resulted in another 185 views being obtained.

A working group of residents met with staff to discuss residents' aspirations and work out what could be achieved and put into Westlea's corporate plan. They also presented residents' ideas to Westlea's Board of Management.

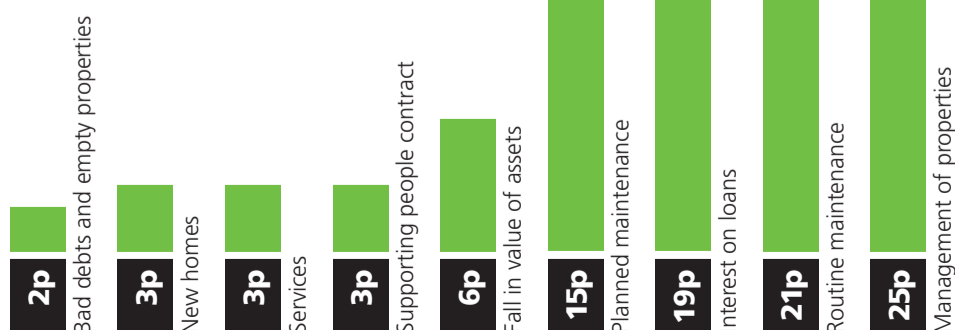


The Residents' Business Plan working group

*Inside...*  
**residents' priorities**  
for the year ahead:

- > communication, customer service, and resident involvement
- > heating
- > repairs & maintenance
- > adaptations
- > housing development
- > the environment
- > value for money
- > young people

## How the money goes round...



Leaving 3p for a rainy day

# Feedback from Westlea on last year's plan...

## Done

Hit our targets for collecting information on our residents' needs.

Energy advisors have started work, and had made 70 advice visits between April and December 2009. Only 5 homes fail the Decent Homes Standard because of their heating.

Revitalised the resident design panel to give residents a say in how our homes are designed. We have recruited four resident design advisors, and given them specialist design and development training.

Published our planned maintenance programme on the website and in HOME. Employed an alternative sports coach to provide more summer holiday activities.

Got two more years' planning permission for the POD at Hill Rise.

## Doing

Introduced Home Movers team, but now reviewing how to best offer these services in practice.

Working towards the "Cleaner, Greener, Safer" Kitemark award at Hill Rise.

Although we haven't launched a family forum as such, we are continuing to work with partners such as local children's centres to find suitable ways to engage with families.

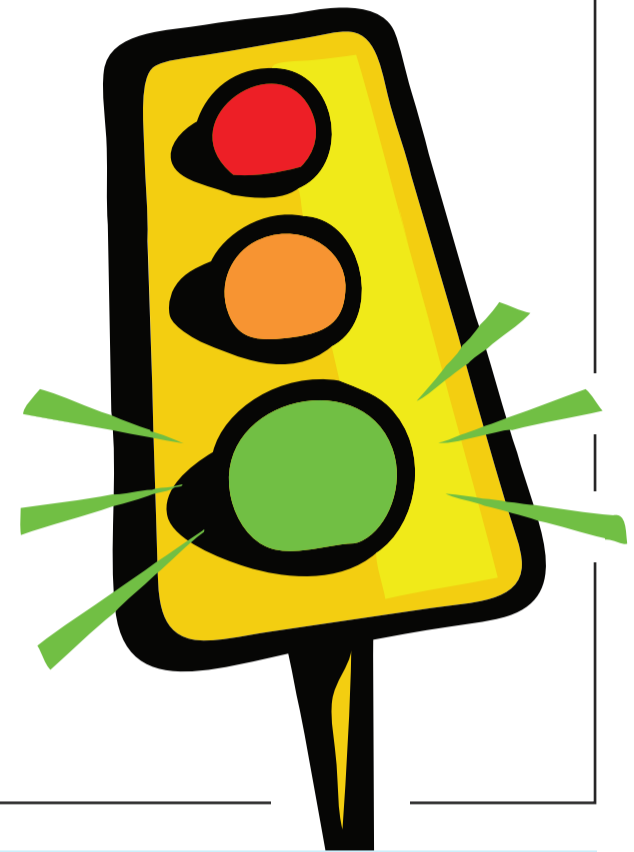
Completing our review of grounds maintenance services. This will include piloting an affordable handy-gardener service to offer more help to people with disabilities.

Attracting more young people to sign up to our Facebook page.

Running some inter-generational activities for example a cooking project.

## To Do

Making financial information easier to understand – we are planning some articles in HOME.



## Heating

### Residents would like

- Westlea to replace outdated and expensive heating systems; and
- advice on how to get the best deal from the utility companies.

### What Westlea will do

We have now appointed two energy advisors who will be giving energy advice and prioritising the people most in need (i.e. with the oldest most expensive systems). We will continue to support and promote the Citizens Advice workers who assist in helping people find the best tariff for them. **Residents can contact energy advisors Marc Booker or Darcy Pace (pictured) on the usual repairs line number of 01249 466100.**



## Repairs and maintenance

### Residents would like

- contractors to work to the same quality as Westlea staff. If there are going to be delays in work they want to be kept informed; and
- tips on how to keep their homes in good repair, and to be given instructions on how to clean new appliances e.g. showers.

### What Westlea will do

We will put handy hints in feedback newsletters and HOME magazine as requested.

## The environment

### Residents would like

- Westlea to promote garden-sharing and help in providing allotments;
- more help with their gardening and grass and hedge-cutting; and
- residents' gardens to be checked more closely on walkabouts to make sure they are being kept tidy in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

### What Westlea will do

Westlea are currently reviewing their Grounds Maintenance service and will be consulting with residents regarding 'Decent Homes Plus' and the way estates are maintained. It is planned to engage extra staff to expand the Handy Help scheme to cover gardening.



# Adaptations

## Residents would like

- it to be easier and quicker to get small adaptations such as replacement taps, installing hand rails and relocating power sockets; and



- more publicity about what adaptations are available and the different ways of getting them.

## What Westlea will do

We have added extra money to the adaptations budget and are reviewing the adaptations service, in consultation with residents.

When the review is completed, the service will be widely publicised and an information leaflet produced on the different ways to obtain the service.

**Residents can find out more about help with adaptations by calling either Shirley Davis or Jo Taylor on 01249 466061.**

# Communication, customer service, and resident involvement

## Residents would like

- all communication to be jargon-free and in plain language;
- good communication between residents and Westlea;
- a customer tracking number given to them when they call in with a housing/tenancy enquiry (like the repairs order number). This would enhance customer service as they would be able to quote the number when talking to different staff.

## What Westlea will do

The idea of having a tracking number (or 'case ID') is agreed and will hopefully be introduced in early 2011.

## Residents would like

- Westlea to tell them what they find on the walkabouts and what they are going to do to resolve problems;

- neighbourhood housing officers to be more visible on the estates – perhaps with uniform and name badges;
- to be involved in the walkabouts – they want to take part and want reminders of when they are taking place;
- other agencies such as the Police and local councils to be invited and encouraged to join the walkabouts; and
- notice boards put in the communal areas of flats, and for walkabouts to be advertised there on a standard poster, which could also be put in local shops

## What Westlea will do

Members of the Residents' Forum are invited to all walkabouts as are any interested residents. The staff will arrange a definite time to meet them when the walkabout is taking place. Reminder telephone calls will be made by customer service advisors a week beforehand. A standard poster will be produced to advertise the walkabouts.

# Housing development

## Residents would like

- a wider choice of accommodation, especially larger family homes and retirement properties, to take into account the needs of different families and an ageing population; and
- new-build homes to have downstairs toilets and no steps.

## What Westlea will do

We have highlighted the need for larger family homes to our Development team. The local council look at the mix for developments, but we are planning to apply for permission to build more 4-bed properties and bungalows. We are also exploring the possibility of building on to the sides of some properties, or converting dining rooms, to allow people to stay in their local neighbourhood should they need a larger home.



# Value for money

## Residents would like

- Westlea to continue to provide low-cost, high-quality services, and focus on the "3 Es" – Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness!

## What Westlea will do

We are undertaking a number of reviews to ensure that residents are getting the services they want in the most cost effective manner. These reviews will be conducted in a way that will give residents an opportunity to have an input into the way services will be run.



## Residents would like

- lots of ways for residents to have their say – resident involvement is important as it improves Westlea!

## What Westlea will do

We will continue to look at new ways to involve a wide range of residents and hard-to-reach groups.

# Young people

Young people who were originally involved in the Voice-It Project were invited to a meeting to explore how they could work together to present their main concerns and solutions to Westlea.

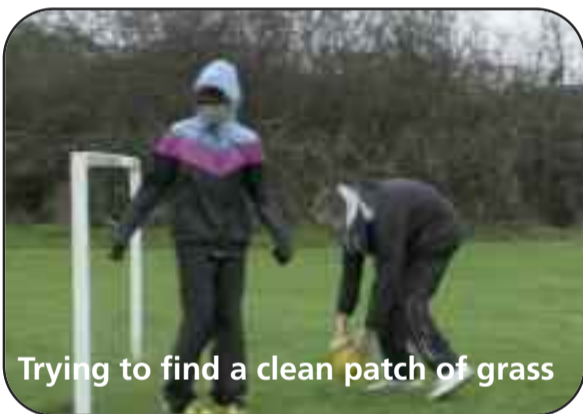


They decided that they would make a short film illustrating the issues. The film tracks the story of how a group of young people are drawn to some antisocial behaviour – and some of the possible solutions that would have a wider impact. Although this film covers a particular area, the concerns echo those made by young people in other areas. The film shows their concerns about their local playing field, lack of facilities, and dog fouling, and the wider repercussions for these issues not being tackled. There is a very real knock-on effect from community members allowing their dogs to foul, as young people are being excluded from their playing areas, which limits their access to facilities.

The group suggested ways that things could be improved in their area. This included an area for relaxing, such as a pond. They also want a bigger park which would include an all-weather playing surface, and a shelter to make the park usable when it has been raining. The film was presented to Westlea's Board of Management in January 2010 and will also be used to apply for funding to various committees and charities to try to make their ideas a reality.

**Here are some stills from the film that help to show what facilities are in place (or rather not in place!) now; what this might lead to; and what the young people would like to see more of...**

## What we have...



Trying to find a clean patch of grass



Thinking about a new park...

## What could happen...



Bored, getting into mischief



...and nearly getting caught!

## What we'd like to have...



The ideal park...



complete with a shelter!

**To find out more – and have a say about what goes in the next plan...**

### Contact

Neighbourhood Involvement Team at Westlea Housing on 01249 466163 or email: [susan.rendell@westlea.co.uk](mailto:susan.rendell@westlea.co.uk)



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