



The Bolton at Home Project - Geographical Information system

To develop a comprehensive Geographical Information system (GIS). This would enable Bolton at Home and Bolton Affiliation of Tenants and Residents Associations (BATRA) to geographically record and visually display information relating to tenant participation and customer involvement events, activities and projects and influence strategic planning of future activities. The project was managed jointly between Bolton at Home and Bolton Affiliation of Tenants & Residents Association (BATRA) with input from Bolton Community Homes.

A steering group was set up which met regularly to discuss the progress of the project and plan its development.

GIS training was organised and all the members of the Customer Involvement team along with four members of BATRA attended a 2 day basic training session.

The GIS equipment was installed at our head office where the customer involvement team were based and at BATRA's office.

Some of the information GIS was used for:

- All social housing stock owned by local authority and registered social landlords
- Tenant & resident associations boundaries
- Specific tenant participation projects and initiatives
- Areas of urban regeneration such as single regeneration and private sector renewal
- Boundaries of other consultative mechanisms such as area forums, local community panels and management boards
- Tenant and community premises with details of access and disability facilities
- availability of funding sources such as Neighbourhood renewal and European Development
- Tenants who have attended training courses
- Batra structures and area representation

We have been able to identify and understand where and why customer involvement is happening, at what level and on which estates.

We have directed resources and introduced new innovative initiatives in areas with low levels of involvement.

A whole range of customer involvement initiatives have since been developed to involve as many customers as possible at different levels and in different neighbourhoods and we have just been awarded Beacon status for Improving Housing Services by involving tenants.

Some of our new initiatives are;

Neighbourhood panels customer inspectors and green inspectors.

Through GIS we have been able to help our customers understand complex information such as Capital Programme, Antisocial behaviour and voids management.

We have been able to hold meaningful consultation where customers have been able to relate to and identify with their own neighbourhoods and communities from the detailed maps produced on GIS.

Some of the difficulties that we have experienced are:

The team's inexperience of using GIS and our initial expectations

Resource implication on the team's time

The Restructuring of the Organisation and how that impacted on the team's location and GIS usage

Training and funding to keep the momentum of the project and increase specialist equipment

Sustaining tenant's involvement throughout the project.

Our future plans for the project involve investigating photo and video images of events and activities and links to other web sites.

For further information contact:

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