

Reply to HEIP document

The general view on this proposal was one of disappointment. At a time when new RAs are being encouraged to form and directives are being issued for RAs to take more control, and to be more independent, this proposal effectively removes one area of control from the RA – the administration of the Estate Improvement Grant. There are many RAs who wish to administer it, and after the parameters of spending were reiterated we are now all clear on how the money can be spent, and keen to spend it.

Specifically we would raise the following queries:

- Does the Tenants' Charter still exist? Bell Farm RA spent some time in drawing up theirs and this proposal seems to contravene their priorities.
- Is the money ring-fenced? You say it gives opportunities for wider plans, and greater legitimacy, we would ask how. The EIG money has to be spent to the benefit of council tenants and not residents in general.
- We are asked to be more independent, but this scheme denies us control. We who live on the estates, working with their Estate Managers are the ones who know the wishes of the residents, and know what is needed.
- The EIG should be administered by the Estate Manager and the RA without having to beg from their councillors.
- The success of the HEIP will depend on the councillors of each ward as what response we will get to our applications. There is too much chance in this, and when councillors change, so the response will to. Each has their own enthusiasms, pet projects and bias.
- If this scheme goes ahead the process for applying for ward grants needs to be made much more

transparent. It took a long time for the Groves to be made aware that money was available and that the RA was eligible to bid for a share.

- Where RAs have a good long term plan, they should be readily able to apply for ward grants, and to be able to husband their EIG towards the plan if necessary
- Representatives from RAs should have the right to attend and speak at ward team planning meetings
- Can you explain exactly how this project will reduce administration?
- As an example of a particular benefit you cite CCTV as being a project that we could apply for under the new scheme. Both the Groves and Bell Farm have made applications for CCTV to ward grants and been refused on the grounds of invasion of privacy. We don't see how this scheme can change that reasoning.
- The wording feels ambiguous. We are told we could apply for dropped kerbs, but surely the EIG can only be spent on dropped kerbs for council tenants, and not for other individuals
- If this project is passed in spite of all we've said, we ask 'How will the committee work?' It will need to be much more than a cosmetic twice a year look-in. Volunteers so far are Hilary (Bell Farm) and Joanna and Stephen (Groves)
- You specify a bi-monthly report from RAs. What happens if they don't report back?

The Federation do not agree to this proposal in its present form. We would ask if the proposal is scrapped, what happens and where does the money go that you made available?