



MDH/9

Medium density housing assessment of CORT's development

**A report prepared by Beacon Pathway
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About This Report

Title

Medium density housing assessment of CORT's development

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Reference

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1 Introduction

CORT Community Housing engaged Beacon Pathway to assess the Sutton community housing development using Beacon's medium density assessment tools.

These tools were developed to assess good practice in medium density housing development as part of an 18-month Building Research Levy- and MBIE-funded project looking at how good quality medium density housing might be defined in New Zealand and the elements that make it up.

The tools are based around the core outcomes which New Zealand would want to see in its future medium density developments. These core outcome principles are:

- 1) **Character, context and identity** - To develop a site and buildings that integrate with or relate to existing building form and style in the surrounding neighbourhood
- 2) **Choice** - The development provides for, and enables occupancy by, a diverse range of residents that can benefit from and support a thriving local economy with the understanding that high levels of diversity and optimum residential density make the development viable in terms of marketability and cost per unit
- 3) **Connectivity** - Connecting infrastructure enables safe, universal access using active, mobility, shared and private modes of transport within and through the site to identified key destinations
- 4) **Liveability** - Providing quality facilities and facilitating positive interactions between residents and the wider community
- 5) **Sustainability** - Efficient and cost-effective resource use through design, behaviour and technological advancement

The outcome principles were developed into an assessment framework, which provides a structure for the tools to assess developments against the desired outcomes. Each core outcome principle is divided into areas, each of which has its own outcome-focused principle – it is at this level that the tools assess each development.

The framework forms the basis for the development of assessment tools. Each outcome has an associated set of assessment questions which are answered through a combination of approaches.

- A site review
- A developer's interview
- A residents'/occupants' survey.

Taken together, these tools give an integrated picture to developers, enabling them to consider what works and doesn't work in their design, and where improvements might be made either to the existing development or in future developments. It enables comparison of what the developer believes they have achieved, with an independent site review and with residents' views of what has been successful.

A tenancy managers' interview and survey has been added at the request of CORT.

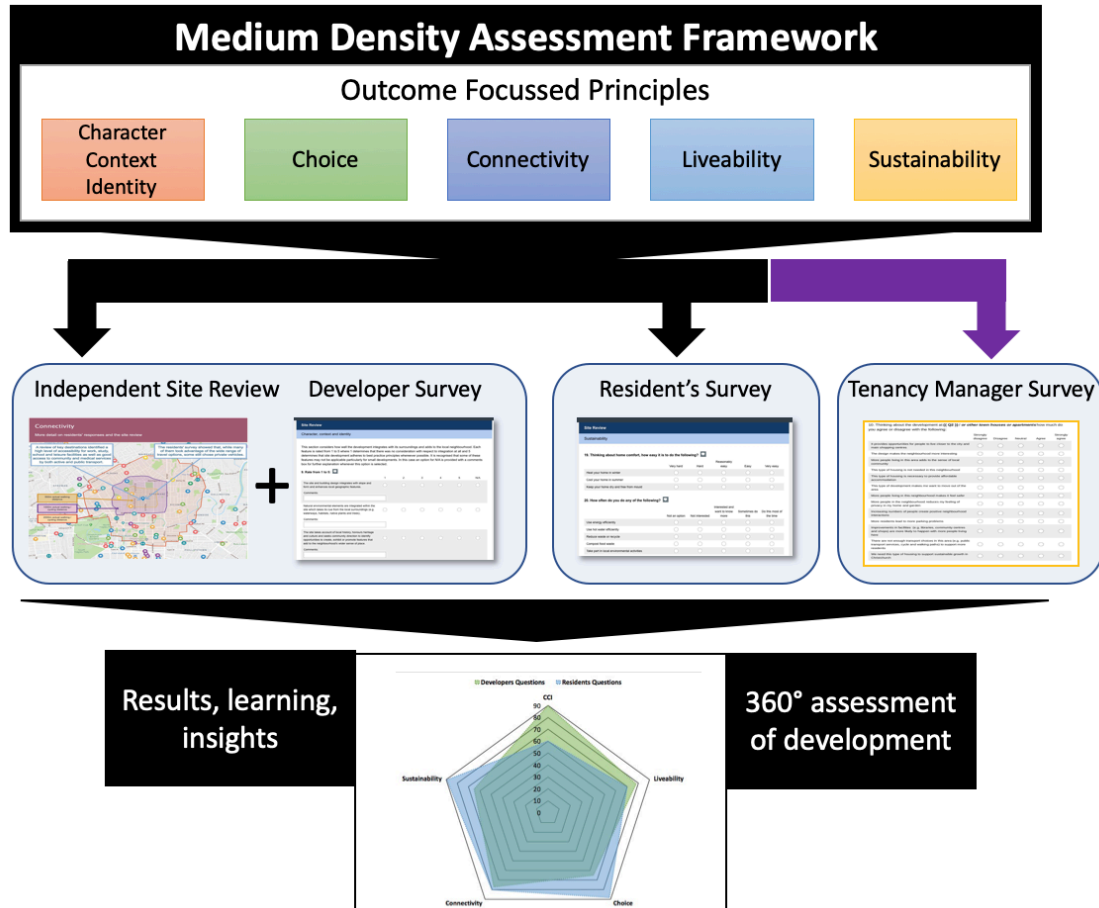


Figure 1: The Medium Density Assessment Framework, Tools, and Process¹

¹ Ryan & Smith (2018)

2 Process for assessment

The assessment tools were applied to CORT's Sutton development in Papatoetoe. This development is one of the larger CORT developments, with 27 units including:

- 22 x 1-bedroom units
- 5 x 2-bedroom units.

2.1.1 Tenancy managers and resident surveys

At the time of the Sutton assessment, New Zealand was in the red and orange COVID-19 settings. Health concerns arising from COVID-19 resulted in a change in the way the assessment was delivered. Rather than the interviewer being introduced to the residents in person and face-to-face interviews being conducted as in previous CORT assessments, resident surveys needed to be conducted by phone, hard copy or online. Prior to the assessment commencing, the two CORT tenancy managers contacted the residents either by text, phone, or letter to let them know the assessment was being undertaken, provide an opportunity for the tenant to ask questions, and to ascertain how the tenant wished to be contacted. Following this, hard copy surveys were delivered to all resident letterboxes on 11 February, except to those residents who had opted to be phoned or have the survey link emailed to them.

Residents were provided with a \$30 supermarket voucher for undertaking the survey. This was delivered to the residents at the same time a reminder note was delivered to residences where no response had been made. All residents were told that the survey was voluntary, that they did not need to respond to any questions they felt uncomfortable with, and this would not impact on their voucher. Despite this, survey completion was high; unanswered questions were largely due to their complexity. There were thirteen responses from the 27 units at the Sutton development. A fourteenth survey was returned after the data had been analysed.

The tenancy managers' interview was conducted on 21 April. Again, due to COVID-19, these were undertaken online rather than face-to-face.

2.1.2 Site surveys and developer interviews

On 11 February, Bill Smith, Ian Mayes and Glenda Lock undertook an independent site review to gather data and make assessments of key criteria. On 29 April, they met with Julia Te Hira of CORT via a Zoom meeting to undertake a developer interview about the Sutton site.

2.1.3 Analysis and reporting

The data from the resident survey, interview and site review were combined and analysed, and presented as infographics. Additional qualitative data from the interviews with residents was broadly analysed to give as rich feedback as possible to CORT Community Housing. The tenancy managers' responses have been compared to resident responses to highlight areas where perceptions differ. Their comments have been included and compared to resident comments where relevant.

3 Results – Sutton

Thirteen residents completed the resident survey, with most being returned in hard copy. One additional survey was returned after the analysis was completed and was not included in the report.

3.1 Application of assessment tools

Living at Sutton Crescent

A comparison of resident and developer perspectives

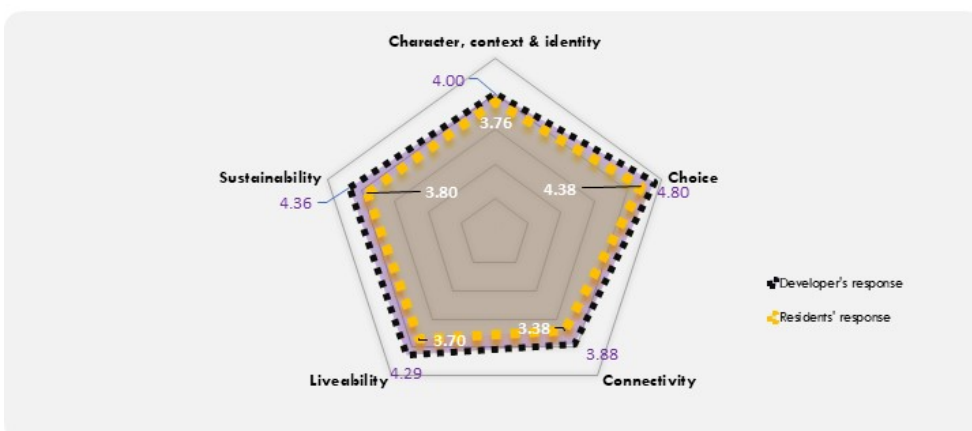


Residents and developers were asked to rate a range of aspects relating to their site, building, living spaces, and access to key destinations. The residents' average score for each topic has been adapted from their survey responses, while the developer's scores were collected during an interview and informed by the independent site review process. Scores are from 1-5 and are presented for the following five sections:



- 1
Character, context and identity
- 2
Choice
- 3
Connectivity
- 4
Liveability
- 5
Sustainability






An overall comparison of residents and developer scores for each category can be seen below:



The following sections outline the results in more detail with additional information that was collected from residents, the developer, or during the independent site review.

Character, context and identity







To develop a site and buildings that integrate with, or relate to, the existing natural and physical environment as well as building form and style in the surrounding neighbourhood

	Residents	Developer
 <p>Environment and physical landscape</p> <p>Natural environmental elements are integrated within the site which aligns with slope and form and enhances geographic features.</p>	3.75	4.50
 <p>Heritage and culture</p> <p>The site takes account of local history, honours heritage and culture, and seeks community direction.</p>	3.42	2.00
 <p>Identity and sense of place</p> <p>Site design and layout, key features, and artistic works have been developed to create an identity and 'sense of place'.</p>	3.88	4.50
 <p>Building character</p> <p>The building design and materials integrate with, and enhance, the surrounding neighbourhood character.</p>	N/A	5.00
 <p>Streetscape</p> <p>Entranceways and frontages are designed to be welcoming, accessible, and are in context with and enhance the overall character.</p>	4.00	4.00
<p>Survey responses were received from 13 residents (48%) from a total of 27 households.</p> <p>The graph shows more information on their responses:</p>	<p>Average 3.76 4.00</p>	



Choice

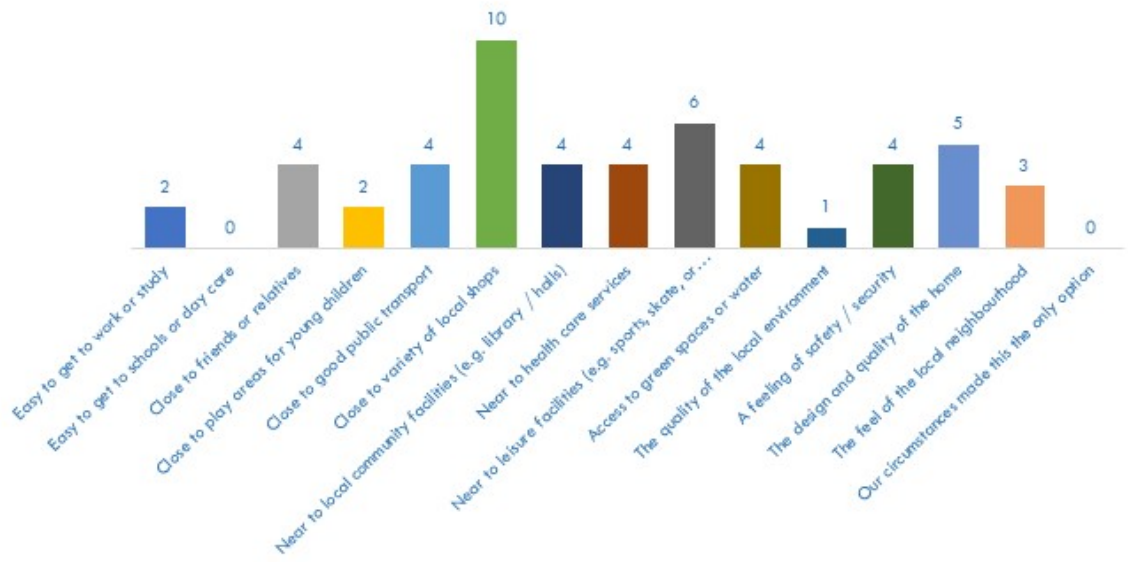
The development provides for, and enables, occupancy by a diverse range of residents who can benefit from, and support, a thriving local economy

	Residents	Developer	
 <p>Opportunity</p> <p>Proximity to local centres and other key destinations enables residents to live, work and play in their surrounding neighbourhood.</p>	5.00	5.00	
 <p>Residential dwelling typology</p> <p>The provision of dwelling typologies offers an appropriate choice with regards to existing neighbourhood demographics as well as the demographics of targeted residents.</p>	4.23	5.00	
 <p>Affordability</p> <p>A range of dwelling options and supporting financial instruments provide residents of varying means with the ability to live in quality accommodation (e.g. starter home / buy to let / financial assistance).</p>	3.92	5.00	
 <p>Tenure</p> <p>Diverse and flexible tenure arrangements provide opportunities for residents to either own or rent quality accommodation.</p>	N/A	N/A	
 <p>Building adaptability</p> <p>Building designs exhibit a range of adaptability and floor plan flexibility responding to changing requirements, and the potential for mixing use over time (e.g. the ability to adapt a residential building to incorporate commercial activity).</p>	N/A	4.00	
 <p>Population density</p> <p>The number of dwellings per hectare and population density are in line with existing and planned infrastructure and services (e.g. transport, stormwater, local amenities).</p>	N/A	5.00	
Average		4.38	4.80

Choice

A more detailed look at residents' responses...

The first question in the section on 'Choice' asked residents to select the reasons that their household chose to live in the area. The graph below shows the numbers of respondents that selected each option.









The 13 residents' responses on suitability and affordability are shown below:



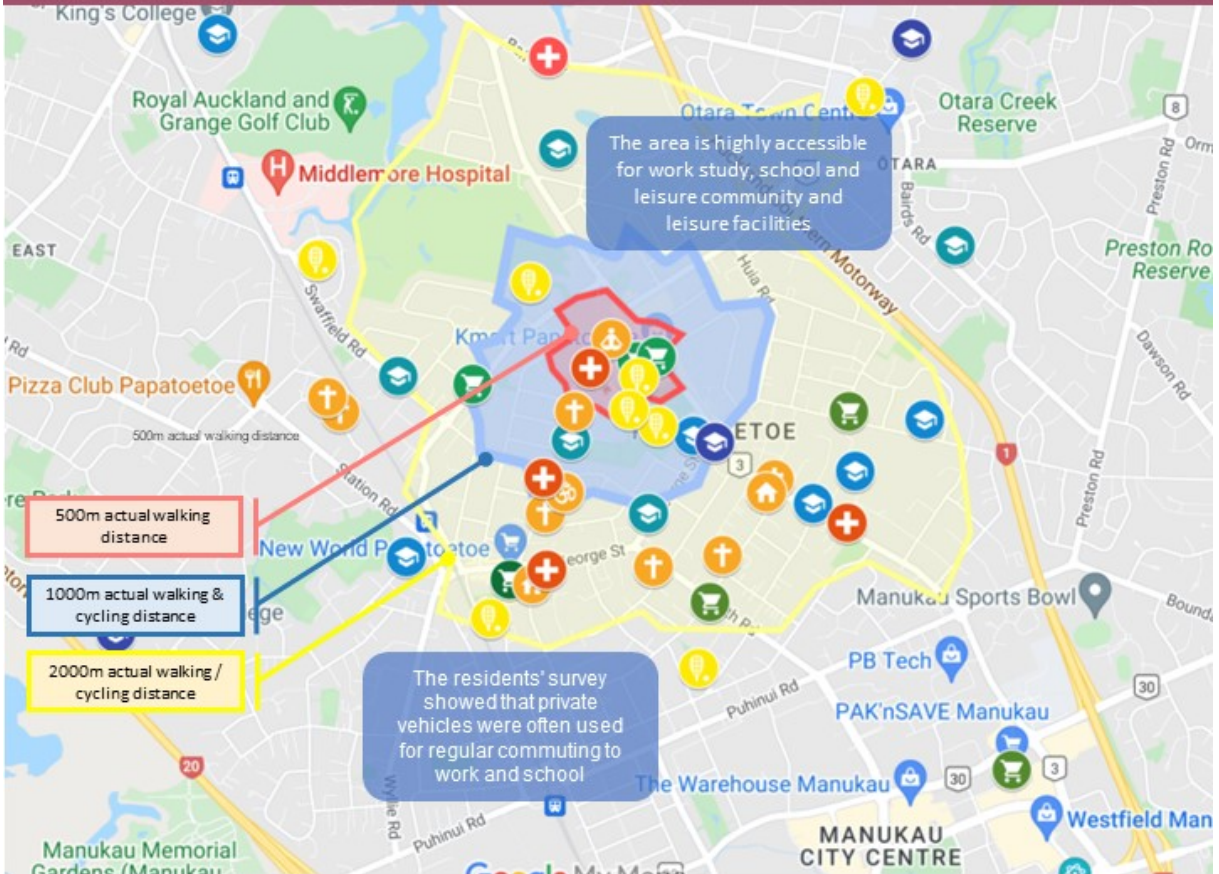
Connectivity

Connecting infrastructure enables safe, universal access using active, assisted mobility, shared, and private modes of transport within and through the site to identified key destinations

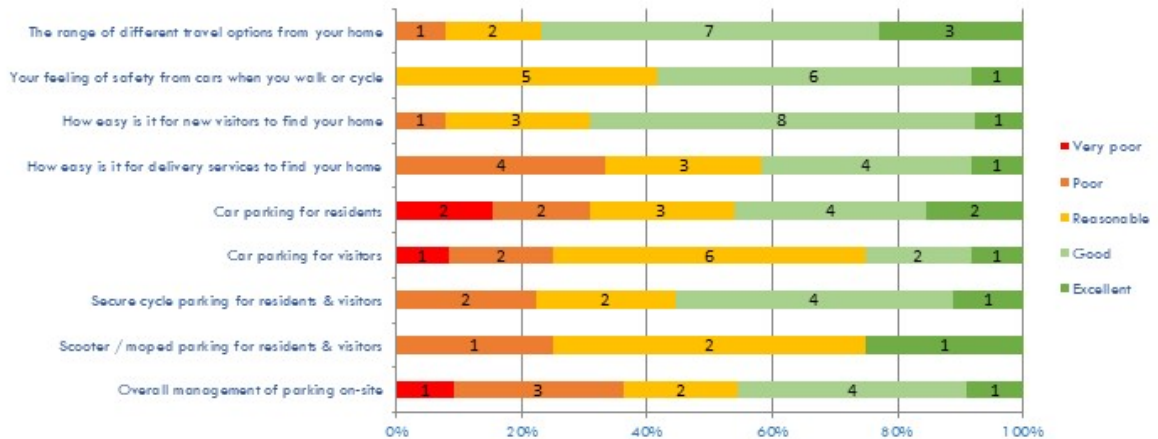
	Residents	Developer
 <p>Accessibility to key destinations</p> <p>The extent of accessibility to key destinations is based on distance, infrastructure and services that enable safe travel on foot, by cycle, on frequent public transport, by car, or with mobility aids.</p>	2.71	5.00
 <p>Permeability</p> <p>Permeability within and through the site supports wider neighbourhood connectivity and facilitates access to surrounding destinations. (Note: May be N/A for smaller sites where this is impractical)</p>	N/A	N/A
 <p>Transport choice</p> <p>Residents considered the range of transport choice from their home, while the developer scored the extent of proactive measures to encourage active and shared transport.</p>	3.92	2.00
 <p>Safety from vehicles</p> <p>Design considerations reduce physical conflict between cars and other users within the site and at access points.</p>	3.67	5.00
 <p>Wayfinding and access for services</p> <p>Wayfinding and signage to and around the site facilitates visitor movement and the identification of resident dwellings, while ensuring that designs and naming are appropriate to the site's overall identity.</p>	3.43	3.00
 <p>Parking provision and management</p> <p>The residents ranked a number of factors including vehicle, moped, and cycle parking for residents and visitors, and overall management of the site.</p>	3.19	4.40
Average	3.38	3.88

Connectivity

More detail on residents' responses and the site review










Additional questions on travel options and parking helped to determine residents' average scores:



Liveability

Providing quality facilities and facilitating positive interactions between residents and the wider community

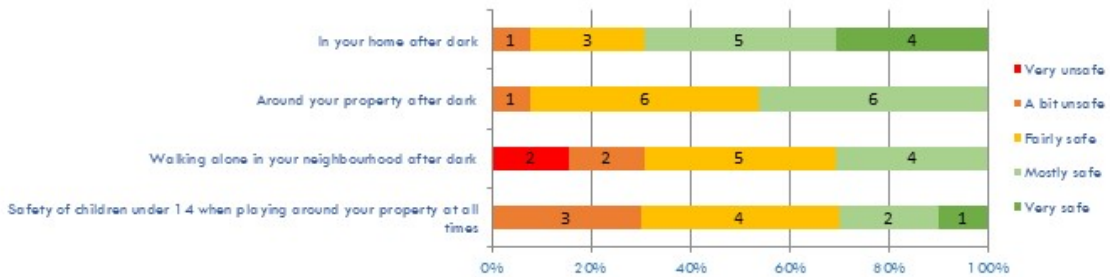
	Residents	Developer	
 <p>Building quality</p> <p>The building design and use of materials provide quality homes that are durable and easy to maintain.</p>	4.36	3.00	
 <p>Personalised dwellings and storage</p> <p>Dwellings and private spaces can be personalised or modified to account for changing needs over time and have appropriate storage for lifestyle requirements.</p>	3.95	4.50	
 <p>Technological integration</p> <p>Utilities are easily accessible enabling the integration of new technologies into buildings.</p>	N/A	5.00	
 <p>Noise control and privacy</p> <p>Design and ongoing management reduce noise to acceptable levels between dwellings as well as between dwellings and public spaces, while overall dwelling design provides adequate, quiet, private space allowing residents a sense of retreat.</p>	3.92	5.00	
 <p>Interactive and outdoor space</p> <p>Provision and maintenance of high quality internal and outdoor spaces where people are likely to interact (e.g. laundry, shared rooms or other communal spaces).</p>	3.85	4.67	
 <p>Security and emergency preparedness</p> <p>Provision of security features, lighting, active and passive surveillance provides a safe environment for all residents within their homes and throughout the site.</p>	2.88	3.50	
 <p>Engagement and satisfaction</p> <p>Residents are encouraged to engage with issues affecting site operation and maintain active interactions with each other and the surrounding community. Resident satisfaction is regularly monitored.</p>	3.22	4.33	
Average		3.70	4.29

Liveability

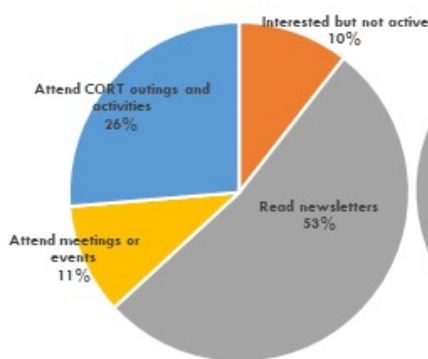
Providing quality facilities and facilitating positive interactions between residents and the wider community - A closer look at residents' responses



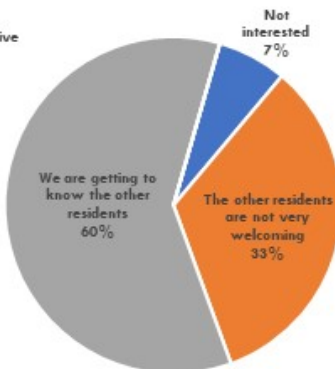
They also gave feedback on their feelings of safety and security:



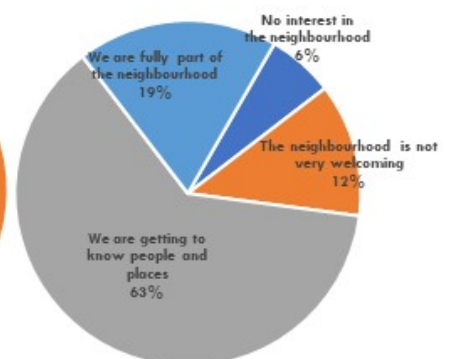
They were asked what best described their involvement with residents' activities and issues



...what best described their relationship with other residents









...and their relationship with the wider community



Sustainability

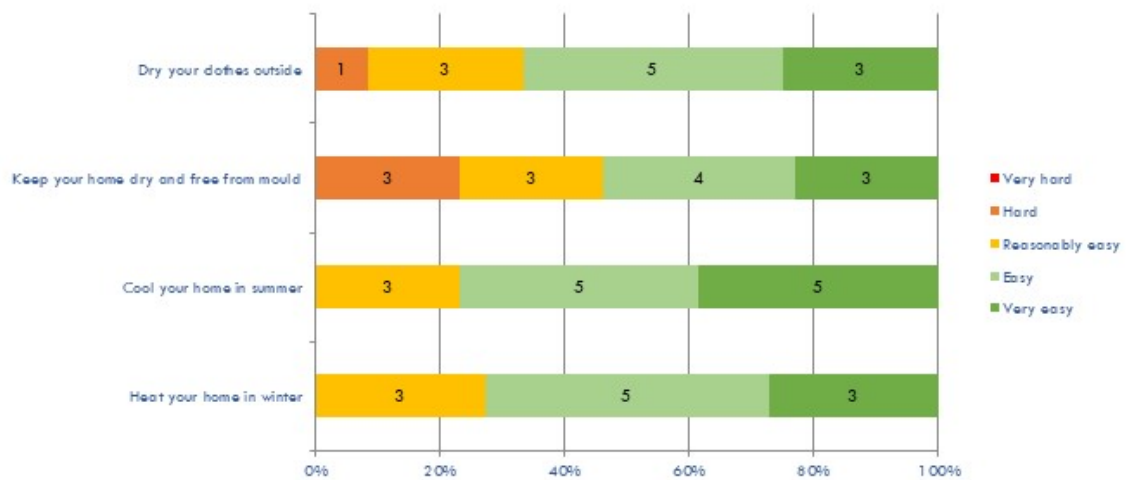
Efficient and cost-effective resource use through design, behaviour and technological advancement

	Residents	Developer
 <p>Climate adaptability and stormwater management</p> <p>Design considerations account for extreme weather variations (e.g. temperature, rainfall, wind), changing sea levels, flooding and wild fire where appropriate.</p>	N/A	5.00
 <p>Building materials</p> <p>Building materials demonstrate durability and third party eco-labelling or responsible sourcing, while ensuring that any waste is recycled and any soil contamination on site is remediated.</p>	N/A	4.00
 <p>Solar gain</p> <p>Building orientation takes account of seasonal variations to minimise heating, cooling and lighting requirements.</p>	4.23	5.00
 <p>Warmth and dryness</p> <p>Building design maximises thermal efficiency and comfort, and effectively controls moisture through insulation, glazing and ventilation.</p>	3.88	5.00
 <p>Energy and water efficiency</p> <p>Energy and water management maximises the use of renewable supply as well as the use of efficient appliances where appropriate.</p>	4.77	4.00
 <p>Recycling and composting</p> <p>Provision and active management of waste, recycling and composting facilities to ensure appropriate site placement and ease of use.</p>	3.90	4.00
 <p>Native ecology, gardening and food production</p> <p>Proactive attempts to enhance environmental quality and biodiversity and provision of outdoor space for gardening, and food production.</p>	2.23	3.50
Average	3.80	4.36

Sustainability

More information on residents' environmental behaviours

Residents stated the ease with which they could control temperature and moisture in their homes:

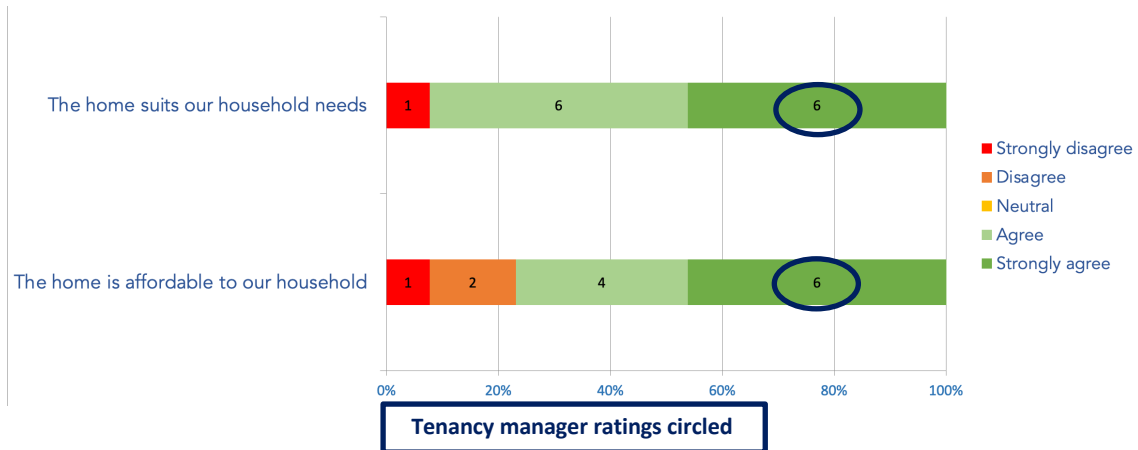


... and how often they engaged in some sustainable actions:

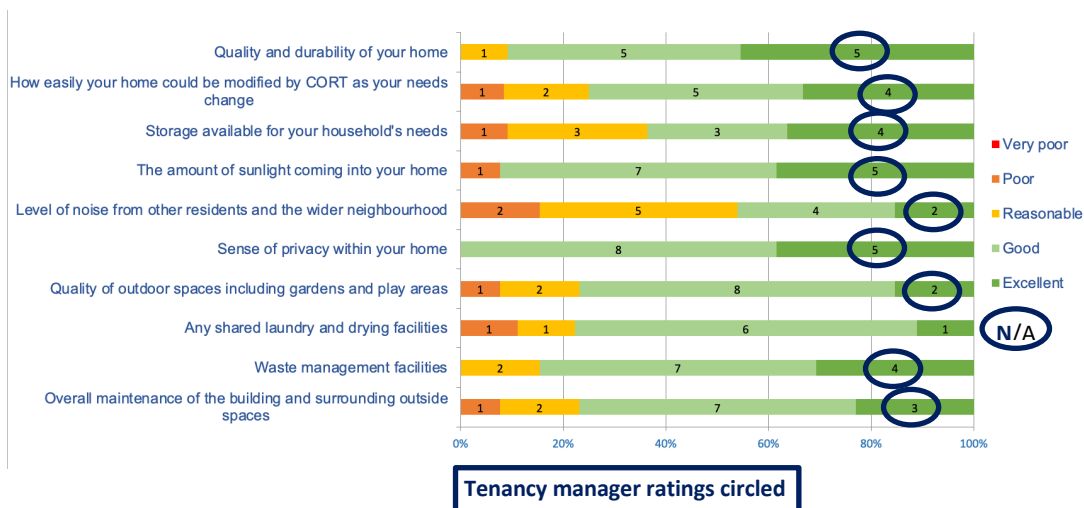


3.2 Feedback from tenancy managers

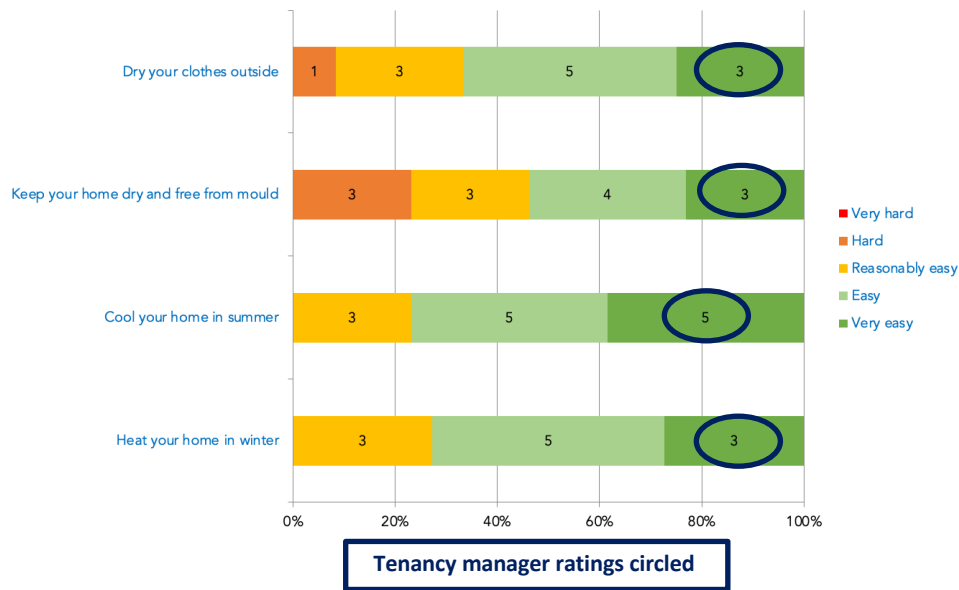
This section covers feedback from the tenancy managers for Sutton. The tenancy managers' survey responses are circled on the graphs generated from the residents' responses, to enable a visual comparison between tenancy manager and tenant responses.



The tenancy managers strongly agreed that the Sutton homes suited household needs and were affordable for the residents. This was slightly higher than tenant ratings; however, 92% of residents either agreed or strongly agreed that the home suited their household needs, and 77% that their home was affordable to their household.

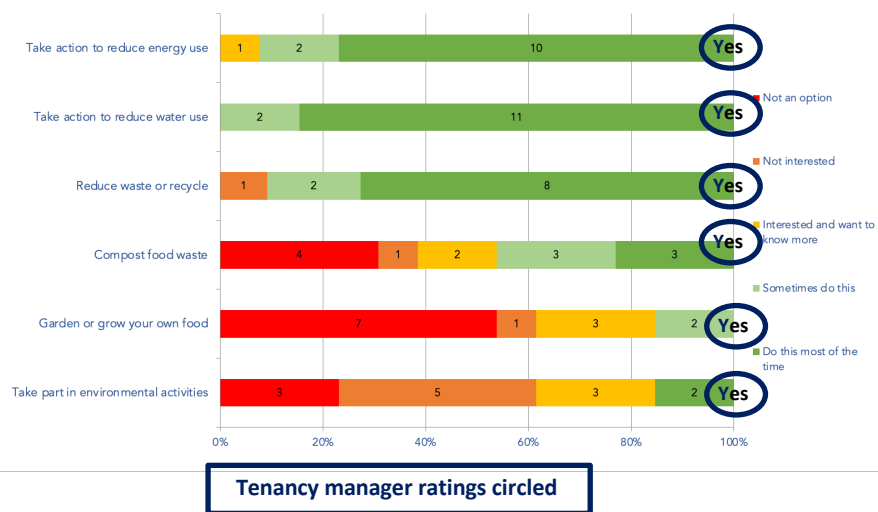


The tenancy managers rated most aspects of the house slightly higher than the residents, with the ratings most closely aligned and positively rated for the quality and durability of the homes, sunlight, privacy and waste management. Sense of privacy within their home was rated as good or excellent by all residents and excellent by the tenancy managers, despite being a larger development in a busy and dynamic locality. The main area where residents and tenancy manager differed was over noise; the tenancy managers were more positive than most of the residents in rating this 'excellent', while over half of residents rated this as poor or reasonable.



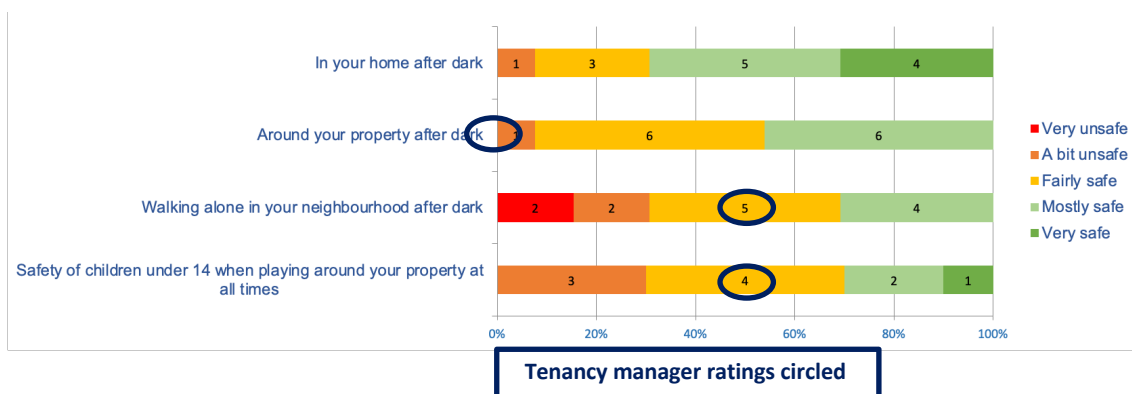
Residents moved in to the development from March 2020, so some have lived two winters and one summer in the apartments. In December 2021, heat pumps were installed in each of the apartments. While tenancy managers rated heating the homes in winter and cooling the homes in winter as 'easy', approximately a quarter of residents found this to be reasonable, with the remainder rating it as easy or very easy.

In terms of keeping homes dry and free of mould and of drying clothes outside, the tenancy managers' rating of 'very easy' was higher than that of most residents. Three of 13 respondents rated keeping your home dry and free from mould as hard and one rated drying your clothes outside as hard.



Tenancy managers identified that opportunities are provided to garden, compost and take part in environmental activities, alongside reducing waste, water and energy use. All residents responded that they sometimes or mostly take action to reduce water use with 12 of the 13 respondents stating that they take action to reduce energy use. Ten of the 11 respondents sometimes or mostly reduce waste or recycle. Composting of food waste was undertaken sometimes or mostly by six residents with another two interested in knowing more. There is less interest in environmental activities and gardening.

There is no site-specific emergency plan in place.



Both tenancy managers’ and residents’ ratings for perception of safety were lower than for a number of the other areas rated. Residents were more positive than the tenancy managers about safety around the property after dark. When responding to the question around safety of children under 14 when playing around the property, the tenancy managers rated this as fairly safe, with the proviso that children shouldn’t play in the carpark.

When asked what they liked most about Sutton, the tenancy managers said “*Location, works really well*” and “*everything’s on the residents’ doorstep, doctors around the corner, pool leisure facilities nearby.*” When asked what they liked least about Sutton, the tenancy managers said “*Nothing.*”

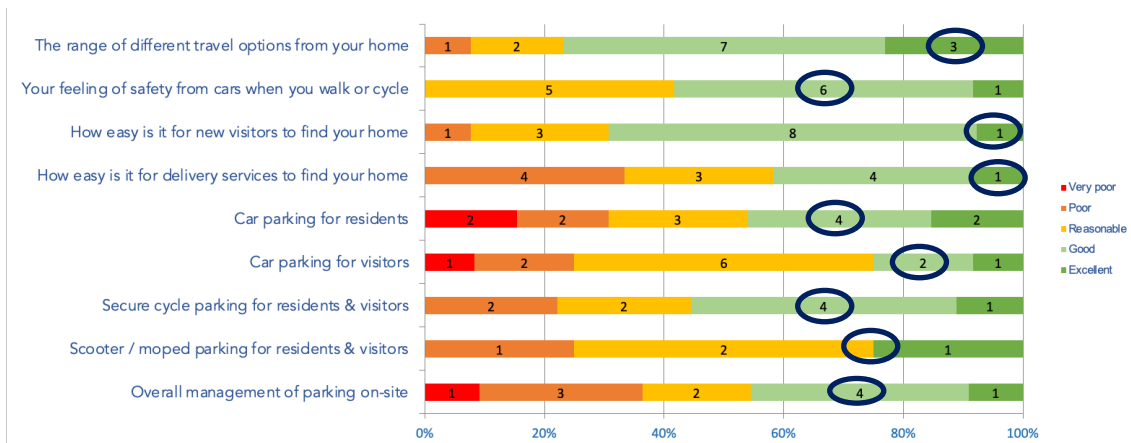
The tenancy managers indicated that they wouldn’t want to change much in the development ; however, “*would like to turn middle space into a green area, replacing carparking with a park/greenspace*” and “*would move rubbish bins and bikes – they don’t need the sunlight.*”



Tenancy manager ratings circled

The tenancy managers ‘strongly agreed’ that the development feels welcoming, and they have pride in the development, at the more positive end of the residents’ largely positive ratings. The tenancy managers also strongly agreed that the development works well with the natural environment, has a sense of local history, heritage and culture, and an identity that adds to the local neighbourhood, generally more positive than the residents.

In terms of the tenant activities, the tenancy managers noted that CORT tenant activities had been disrupted by COVID-19; however, they were hoping to be able to start providing some. They noted that Sutton was the last development to hold any activity.



Tenancy manager ratings circled

The tenancy managers were positive about the location in terms of provision of travel options “The development is walking distance to public transport, shopping mall with supermarket, public swimming pool, banks etc.” The tenancy managers were also more positive about parking than residents.

3.2.1 General tenancy manager comments

Sutton is managed by two experienced tenancy managers, with each responsible for different residents. COVID-19 has impacted how CORT tenancy managers work, with two teams of tenancy managers operating separately to restrict the spread of COVID-19 across the entire team.

Sutton is built on a smaller land parcel so there were restrictions on how it could be developed, and the design was based around space available. The design was also influenced from learnings from previous CORT developments. It was also designed to not overwhelm the street, for example, it could have been built higher in the front but was not.

Sutton first became tenanted from March 2020 and has been the block with the least defects requiring remediation since opening. It is a larger block so requires a bit more tenancy management; however, a lot of the management is around managing the residents' visitors. Units are tenanted on need and CORT does not pick and choose their residents; however, they do think about where residents are placed; for example, do they need a quieter place to live?

The tenancy managers like the location of Sutton and believe residents also like the location. They noted that everything is on the residents' doorstep; a doctor is around the corner, pool leisure facilities nearby. It is within walking distance to schools and the supermarket, with a bus stop close by. There are also local shops close to the development.

They also noted that the residents have settled in quite quickly and wondered if this was because of the location which encourages them to go out. The tenancy managers are also receiving a lot of tenancy applications asking for Sutton, from both new and existing residents.

When asked what they would change, the tenancy managers said that they wouldn't change much, but noted these possible improvements as:

- Would like to turn middle space into a green area, replacing carparking with a park/greenspace
- Would move rubbish bins and bikes – they don't need the sunlight.

Other comments made by tenancy managers were:

- The gates on the driveway solved the issue of people not associated with the development wandering in and out
- Not many residents have bikes and unsure how many would want to cycle if they had access to a bike. The tenancy managers a bit surprised about the size of the bike cage when they first saw it.
- Because of the lack of space in the units, they have good in-built shelving, e.g. in wardrobe which works well.

3.3 Feedback from residents

3.3.1 Home comfort

No respondents to this question found it 'hard' or 'very hard' to heat their home, with three finding it 'reasonably easy' and eight 'easy' or 'very easy'. Two respondents did not answer the question. Heat pumps were installed in the apartments late 2021, so residents have not spent a winter with this heating device in their home. Respondents commented:

"My apartment is very easy to heat and dry."

"I got a heat pump installed December 2021. The house is pretty warm in winter even without a heater."

"Was cold during last winter but heat pumps have been put in recently so haven't had over winter."

All respondents found cooling 'reasonably easy' to 'very easy'. Given the timing of the survey in late summer, there were far more comments about cooling rather than heating. Respondents commented:

"I basically sit by the sliding door and enjoy what ever breeze comes my way and most nights I sleep with the door wide open and I only use the fan and heater when the going gets tough and when it gets too muggy or sticky-e and thanks to the guys who put 'em up for the residents...."

"My apartment does get overheated in the summer but will cool down with aircon on or have doors open."

"My home overheats, sometimes I turn air condition on"

"Not anymore"

"Yes please, one of the room just got one window and it is very hot even though we have an air condition, it still the same if we turn it on."

"Bedroom can get hot so use a fan in room"

"With the heat pump, it been good this summer being able to keep the house cool"

"Does overheat a bit but can open windows and turn aircon on or sit outside in the wind"

"Thank you so much for the air condition, that helps us a lot when is too hot. Good service."

While three respondents reported that it was 'hard' to keep their home free of mould, none commented about this. Of the remaining respondents, three rated it as 'reasonably easy and seven as 'easy' or 'very easy'.

One respondent found it 'hard' to dry clothes outside; all other respondents reported that it was 'very easy', 'easy' or 'reasonably easy' to dry their clothes, using either a drying rack on the balcony or the clothesline outside. Residents commented:

"Will not use shared clothesline due to items being stolen."

"Need like a small folding washing line on fence."

"Have a laundry hanger so even if raining can bring this inside and leave the door open."

3.3.2 What the residents like about living at Sutton

3.3.2.1 About the home

When asked what they liked most about their home, respondents were very positive about their experience:

“My [...] space”

“It is perfect for me. Sunny and warm. Feel safe”

“B safe and watch...”

“Security”

“A place to live”

“Nice and private and good size for me”

“Without the heat pump its warm in the winter. Very close to the township shops and supermarket, park, bus stop, and swimming pool”.

“Like the apartment - it's suitable for me...”.

“Quiet and comfortable”

“It's been over a year now and I really love living here anyway, cheap rent, waters paid, powers paid and rents paid and what more could you ever want and just but whatever you want to eat and drink.”

3.3.2.2 About the development/neighbourhood

Nine residents rated the neighbourhood as ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ to live in, three as ‘reasonable’ and one as ‘very poor’. Residents commented that they enjoyed the following the most:

“I really enjoy a cuppa [and....]standing by the gate or at night seeing multiple people hundreds or coming out to the friday night markets in Papatoetoe, music, food, laughter, boyracers...”

“The neighbours seem quite friendly - stick to themselves. Neighbours in development seem quite good. One neighbour calls police which has settled things down.”

“Our neighbourhood are good and lovely people, we're talking sometimes if we see each other.”

3.3.2.3 About CORT

Residents were positive about CORT as their landlord and the opportunity CORT had offered:

“I like everything in this place, thank you for treating us well, health and safety are well organised. Thank you so much.”

“I'm happy with my home and the service court provides.”

“I'm so thankful I actually have my own permanent place I now call home.”

“This is a perfect apartment. Cort has done excellent in design and building.”

What residents don't like about living at Sutton

3.3.2.4 About the home

"Having no-one to share it with."

"Nothing about my apartment."

"No carpet in living area."

"Should have had more open windows another side of unit."

"Very dark inside in the day in the living area."

"The outside of the complex can look very messy. Cleanliness of the front foyer and inside stairs can be really smelly and dirty. Not cleaned very often."

"Yes I do have a slight problem, my floor is starting to unpeel itself - meaning its coming apart, can someone come and fix this???"

"Really happy I got home but I beg for a [larger] house" [for family circumstances]

3.3.2.5 About the development/neighbourhood

Respondents made few negative comments on the neighbourhood and development area. They mostly focused on security and parking:

- Security

"Sometimes noisy sometimes people knock on door bang."

"Security issues. Get harrassed when out. Got prostitutes out there and they attract attention to the area."

"There can be a lot of violence going around this area. There have been people hanging in the corridor and trying to break in. A few domestic fights in broader neighbourhood. Area attracts a lot of attention, drinking in carpark where swimming pool is. Apparently one of residents' cars got pinched from within the development after the security fences were put in."

- Parking

"The cars allowed parking in the building under mobility condition but in fact they are not. I feel unfair."

"Parking and noises."

- Other

"Just about the rubbish bins, some people are just threw anything in the bin, some not sort their rubbish like bottle to go the both of it own, please give us all a reminder letter."

3.3.2.6 About the design

When asked specifically about improvements to the design of the bathroom, laundry and kitchen, respondents comments were focussed predominantly on the bathroom:

- Bathroom

"Yes bathroom should've had a separate entrance other than going through bedroom"

"Everything are designed better just a guess about any door to be in the middle of the kitchen and bathroom because is so disgusting if you go toilet and you can see by others"

“Bathroom have a larger sink and a better shower room”

“The bathroom shouldn't be connected to the bedroom, visitor having to enter the bedroom to get to the bathroom to use the toilet.”

“The lino in the bathroom gets very dirty and its hard to clean. Floors in living room aren't meant to be mopped except with a special mop and respondent can't find this”

- Other

“More storage, but very good at the moment. Bathroom needs more storage”

“No room at home for laundry wash machine”

3.3.3 Involvement in residents' activities and community feel

Respondents moved in to Sutton from March 2020, so tenant activities and interactions have been restricted at times during their tenure. However, nine residents said they were ‘getting to know the other residents’, while five said that ‘the other residents are not very welcoming’ and one was ‘not interested’. One tenant commented that they were *“Not involved with residents due to covid”*

Sutton residents were very involved in the life of the development and CORT with ten residents reading the newsletter, two attending meetings or events and five attending CORT outings and activities. Two residents described themselves as ‘interested but not active’.

When asked if they had any further comments about living in a CORT home, the following comments were made:

“I'm so privileged to stay and live in harmony with my new neighbours and respect them. Unconditional, know your true friends and the people who love and care a great deal about you, your family...”

“I like the place is safe [...], but I'm sure why we didn't get along with other residents ”

“Need more security. Surveillance cameras in corridors and at gates, entrances”

One resident made comments about the need for carparking which related to the specific circumstances of their household.

3.3.3.1 Safety

Most respondents felt ‘fairly’ to ‘very’ safe at home after dark, with four feeling ‘very safe’. One respondent felt ‘a bit unsafe’ in their home after dark. Respondents felt less safe around their property after dark with no-one rating this as ‘very safe’, six as ‘mostly safe’ six as ‘fairly safe’ and one as ‘a bit unsafe’. Perceptions of the safety of walking along in their neighbourhood after dark were lower with four respondents rating this as “very unsafe’ or ‘a bit unsafe’.

“Need more security, surveillance cameras. Its not the people living here, but other people. The residents have had enough of it.”

3.3.4 Transport and parking

Despite being close to a range of public transport options and within close walking distance of many services, one resident rated the range of different travel options from your home as ‘poor’, two as ‘reasonable’ and ten as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.

Six residents identified as owning a vehicle with none owning a bicycle. Carparking for residents was rated ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by four residents, with three rating it as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ and six as reasonable. Six residents rated carparking for visitors as ‘reasonable’ with the remaining housing evenly split being rating it better or worse than ‘reasonable’.

Most respondent comments were related to carparking:

“I would like to thank Cort Housing for taking our concerns and concerns over parking and safety and putting in a gate. It is much appreciated.”

“Yes hard to park outside”

“Yes, secure parking and access is limited to certain residents. No access for ambulances to get in”

“I just want to say thank you about our car parking, more space to park”

“Visitor should be able to come in and park in disability parking to pick me up”

3.3.5 Sustainability and emergency preparation

All respondents were engaged in activities to save water, while twelve of the 13 respondents took actions to save energy and ten to reduce waste, either most or some of the time. One respondent was not interested in saving water or energy.

Composting of food waste was undertaken sometimes or mostly by six residents with another two interested in knowing more. There is less interest in environmental activities and gardening.

Three respondents had made preparations for an emergency, six had made no preparations, and four didn’t know.

3.3.6 Welcome Home pack

Residents were asked if they received a Welcome Home pack when they moved into their development, with five responding ‘yes’ five ‘no’ and two that they were ‘unsure’. The lower response number of respondents reporting having received the pack could be, in part, due to the survey being undertaken remotely. In previous face-to-face surveys, residents frequently had to be shown the cover page to link the name with a resource which, in some cases, they used frequently.

Three residents reported that they used the pack, and the following comments about the pack were made:

“I have read it but not the whole package and when I do, I will let you know for sure so”
“Cannot remember.”
“I don't have a welcome home park because this is our first time we have been stay in your house.”

4 Conclusions

The comparison of the resident and developer perspectives shows a reasonably close relationship between the developer rating and that of residents, with developer rating all the five domains slightly higher than the residents. Overall, both the residents and the tenancy manager were very positive about the development, and the connections and support between the residents were obvious in terms of the responses provided in the survey and the general comments made as part of interacting with the residents.

Residents rated living at Sutton highly. Nearly all (twelve of thirteen) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the home suited their household needs, while one resident strongly disagreed. Nine of the thirteen residents responding agreed or strongly agreed that the development felt welcoming, with the remaining four rating this as neutral; while eleven residents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt proud to live in the development, with the remaining two responses being neutral. Most (ten) respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the home is affordable for their household, while two were neutral and one strongly disagreed.

The development is located in a busy and dynamic neighbourhood, across the road from a mall - Hunters Plaza and near to park and recreation facilities. The tenancy managers noted that it was a popular location and they were receiving a lot of requests to live in the development from both current CORT tenants and those hoping to secure a CORT home. Most tenants also liked the neighbourhood, with nine residents rating it as ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ to live in, three as ‘reasonable’ and one as ‘very poor’. Despite being a larger development in a busy and dynamic locality, sense of privacy within their home was rated as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ by all residents and excellent by the tenancy managers. One area where residents and tenancy manager differed was over the level of noise from other residents and the wider neighbourhood; the tenancy managers were more positive than most of the residents in rating this ‘excellent’, while over half of residents rated this as ‘poor’ or ‘reasonable’.

Despite being located close to many facilities and a bus service, responses around transport were car dominated. Ten respondents rated the range of different travel options from their home as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ however two rated this as ‘neutral’ and one as ‘poor’. Six households responded that they owned a vehicle, while none owned a bike. Carparking featured in terms of the comments made and residents rated this lower than many of the other areas. Carparking for residents was rated as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ by six residents, ‘neutral’ by three, and ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by four residents. Likewise, carparking for visitors also elicited a number of comments and

was rated lower – three residents rated it as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, six residents rated it as ‘neutral’ and three as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

The units have been built with higher levels of insulation than building code minimums and good ventilation throughout; and heat pumps were installed in late 2021. All respondents rated ease of heating their home in winter and colling their home in summer as ‘reasonably easy’ to ‘easy’.

Being in a busy locality, both residents and the tenancy managers reported that there had previously been problems with anti-social behaviour from people not associated with the development. Electronic gates on the carparking entrance had recently been installed to restrict access to the site to only those with the pin-code. This was reported to have reduced the incidence of anti-social behaviour. Most residents felt safe in their home after dark with nine rating this as ‘mostly safe’ or ‘very safe’, three as ‘fairly safe’ and one as ‘a bit unsafe’. Safety around the property after dark was rated slightly lower with twelve rating this as “fairly safe’ or ‘mostly safe’ and one as ‘a bit unsafe’. Walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark was considered less safe by residents, however nine still rated this as ‘fairly safe’ or ‘mostly safe’ and four as ‘very unsafe’ or ‘a bit unsafe’.

Residents began moving in to Sutton from March 2020. The tenancy manager noted that this was the last development to have any events, however the impact of COVID-19 on getting to know the local community and residents in the development was noted by residents across the two developments assessed in 2022 and all three developments assessed in April 2021. Although COVID-19 impacted the ability to get to know other residents and the ongoing events provided by CORT, nine residents reported that they were ‘getting to know the other residents’ and five that ‘the other residents are not very welcoming’, with some selecting both response categories. One resident reported that they were ‘not interested’, and one commented that they were not involved with residents due to covid.

In general, respondents were extremely positive about living at Sutton, and commented favourably on their interactions with CORT as an organisation. On many of the crucial aspects of post-occupancy feedback, CORT scores very highly.

“I’m happy with my home and the service [CORT] provides.

“This is a perfect apartment. Cort has done excellent in design and building.”

“I’m so privileged to stay and live in harmony with my new neighbours and respect them..”

5 References

Ryan, V. and Smith, B. (2018). *Medium Density Housing Assessment Tools: Summary Report*. Report MDH/4.2 by Beacon Pathway.