

1 Executive Summary

Cadwyn carried out a stakeholder survey between June and September 2014. It consisted of thirty-seven face to face and telephone interviews - a response rate of over 90% - with a range of stakeholders including local authorities, auditors, voluntary partners, contractors, consultants and membership organisations. The survey used a semi structured approach using an agreed set of questions. It has produced some very positive results which show that Cadwyn is seen as an extremely important partner - it's helping many of its stakeholders with their own agenda of work and without Cadwyn their job would be made much harder. The association is held in high regard by its stakeholders, has a very good reputation, is trusted and is easy to work with. It's seen as reliable, open, supportive, friendly and more innovative than many of its peers,. The partnership with Cadwyn is valued by stakeholders who want to see it sustained, despite the stringent financial pressures. All of the different types of stakeholder praise Cadwyn for its willingness to do more for its tenants and the communities where it works. It's seen as a successful housing business that is values driven and has an open culture which helps it to be both reactive and proactive in responding to the agendas of others. The excellent reputation of its staff, particularly the directors, is mentioned by many stakeholders.

The survey identified a number of things Cadwyn does well, indeed very well. But its not perfect and a small number of stakeholders identified a range of communication and relationship management issues which need to be resolved. However for the most part they stressed that they are already having a dialogue about these issues with the association. The survey also identified things Cadwyn could be doing differently in future as well as a number of areas of potential business innovation stakeholders wanted to partner with Cadwyn on. Despite the limits on growth, Cadwyn's interest in doing more and being more commercial are acknowledged and well received.

The report sets out in detail the findings from the survey. It goes on to set out some areas for growth potential identified in the survey interviews: the Mill (a major project in Cardiff which is close to being finalised); the changing world for local government services; linking property, services and vulnerable people; citizen-driven healthcare and procurement, risk and reward. The improvement suggestions are set out under five headings: following through on existing issues with stakeholders; consultant and contractor engagement; communication and office accessibility and parking. The suggestions include reviewing some of the partnership projects with one local authority and a few voluntary partners, reviewing engagement with contractors and consultants, clarifying Cadwyn's approach to various initiatives, improving awareness of the association's approach in certain areas and investing in new ways of telling stakeholders what it's doing and wanting to do.

The report's conclusions stress that Cadwyn should take comfort from the positive responses from stakeholders knowing that on all sorts of levels it is engaging on common agendas, emulating the work of other much larger organisations and punching above its weight. There is also a message about ensuring the quality and delivery of core services in meeting needs aren't compromised by the search for growth in new business areas.

There are recommendations for Cadwyn to consider the report, agree actions, publish a summary of the report along with the agreed actions and consider the report as part of the association's self assessment.

2 Improvement suggestions

The stakeholder interviews identified a number of improvements which Cadwyn could make to improve its services and partnerships. These are grouped together under themed headings:

2.1 Following through on existing issues with stakeholders

- Hold a conversation with one voluntary partner about arrangements for improving the quality and cost of staff accommodation in a project Cadwyn owns and they manage.
- For another voluntary partner which supports tenants, complete repair issues already reported to Cadwyn, improve communications with tenants, create opportunities for tenants to get more involved in Cadwyn's business and respond to the suggestion of producing a pictorial tenancy.
- Review the operation of Can Do lettings in one local authority where a stakeholder expressed concerns with some property standards, the effectiveness of the repairs service, landlord contact information and communication - a dialogue on these issues is apparently underway. More broadly, hold a dialogue with the stakeholder about the way the scheme works and the effectiveness of the letting and support elements.
- Re-commit to participation in the BME contact group to promote its work, send members regular newsletters and encourage BME tenant membership.
- Review the link between the tenant support teams and the Realise Your Potential project to ensure tenants receive appropriate support and sign posting to others who also might be able to help them.

2.2 Consultant engagement - revisit annual meetings

- Reintroduce the annual meetings which Cadwyn used to hold with consultants.

2.3 Contractor engagement

- Review payment performance for contractors to identify and deal with any delay.
- Discuss with contractors getting schemes to site faster, reducing planning barriers (the burden of regulation) and improving performance by utilities (particularly water).

2.4 Communication

- Clarify interest in developing intermediate rent, low cost home ownership, market sale housing and mixed tenure development.
- Ensure the local authority understands allocation policies in the co-op project.
- Improve training/communication between Cadwyn's teams so that there is better understanding of how their work delivers the overall mission.
- Respond to the local authority's invitation to nominate members for its various boards.
- Invite voluntary partners to see what Cadwyn does and how it works.
- Make stakeholders aware of how Cadwyn measures and monitors its performance.
- Include in business plans more contextual information on local authority priorities.
- Tweet regular progress on development and other projects.
- Review stakeholder communications and who gets what - an AGM invite, an Annual Report, invitations to scheme openings, newsletters etc.
- Publish an e-briefing - making it brief, with links to the detail, consider linking it to Cadwyn's website and offering a subscribe/unsubscribe option.

2.5 Office accessibility and car parking

- Review the accessibility of the office and create opportunities for stakeholders to use the car parking facilities.

3 Conclusions

From the list of forty-one stakeholders, thirty-seven interviews were conducted - a response rate of over 90% which is excellent and a clear demonstration of how valuable stakeholders feel their partnership with Cadwyn is.

The association is held in high regard by its stakeholders, has a very good reputation, is trusted and is easy to work with. It's seen as reliable, open, more innovative than many of its peers, supportive and friendly. It does a lot well and even where there are issues, stakeholders are positive about putting these right.

Stakeholders were able to suggest a number of things the association could be doing differently and there were a number of areas of potential business innovation stakeholders wanted to partner with Cadwyn on. Despite the limits on growth Cadwyn's interest in doing more and being more commercial are acknowledged and well received.

The association should take comfort from the positive responses from stakeholders knowing that on all sorts of levels it is engaging on common agendas, emulating the work of other much larger organisations and punching above its weight. Whilst Cadwyn's reputation for developing new ideas, services and products is well deserved, there's another message about the need to avoid complacency in delivering on the core services to tenants and residents, refining quality and continuing to meet needs.