User’s view of the experience of using Homeswapper service

In January 2015 Ochil View asked all Ochil View tenants who were registered with Homeswapper to complete an online questionnaire to give their views on the service. 116 users were invited, and 13 did so, making a response rate of 11.2%.

While most applicants seek a local move, a solution based on local moves only would exclude a significant minority of applicants seeing an exchange.
Applications are equally split between those seeking to upsize, downsize and remain the same size.

Most applicants find the website easy to use; however a significant minority do not.
Nearly all applicants describe their intentions and being very keen to move to another house.
While about a third of applicants have had a large number of possible matches suggested, an equal number have had no matches suggested at all.

When applicants have a match suggested, they must view it to consider it for an exchange, most haven’t viewed any property and in comparison to the 70% who have had at least one match suggested, it seems that most people don’t actively follow up the matches that are suggested.
Perhaps not surprisingly, most people are not willing to pay for a service that is currently provided free of charge to them.

Views expressed by users as general comments were as follows:

*People are often not serious about moving - the suspension of right to buy in our area puts people off & there is a lack of understanding about locations (I am consistently asked about being near Devon due to Devon Village being in Clacks).*

*I have 3 offers of mutual swaps been rejected by council because other family not been eligible for my 3 bedroom house I need a 2 bedroom as only my son and I in house*

These comments indicate issues as follows:

- The issue about Right to Buy will no longer apply from August 2016 when RTB is abolished
- The partners could collectively look at their policy in terms of permitting under occupation at exchanges so that a consistent message is given to applicants

Of 114 registered and live users (not cancelled or swapped), users, 69 had “logged on” to Homeswapper in the last 3 months and a further 30 within the last 3-6 months. 15 had not logged on within the last 6 months or longer and therefore their level of activity could be considered to be minimal.