



TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on
Wednesday, 4th November, 2015 at 1.30 pm

(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 1.00 p.m.)

MEMBERSHIP

Sallie Bannatyne

Olga Gailite

John Gittos (Chair)

Christine Gregory

Michael Healey

Maddy Hunter

Peter Middleton

Roderic Morgan

Jackie Worthington

Please note: Certain or all items on this agenda may be recorded

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Produced on Recycled Paper

A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>1 To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">No exempt items have been identified.</p>	
2			<p>LATE ITEMS</p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)</p>	
3			<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
4			<p>MINUTES - 7 OCTOBER 2015</p> <p>To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2015</p>	1 - 4
5			<p>CHAIR'S UPDATE</p> <p>To receive an update from the Chair on scrutiny activity, not specifically included on this agenda, since the previous Board meeting.</p>	5 - 6
6			<p>SCRUTINY INQUIRY - ENVIRONMENT OF ESTATES</p> <p>To receive a report from the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development regarding the Board's Inquiry on the Environment of Estates</p>	7 - 24
7			<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday, 2 December 2015 at 1.30pm (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 1.00pm)</p> <p>THIRD PARTY RECORDING</p> <p>Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts named on the front of this agenda.</p> <p>Use of Recordings by Third Parties– code of practice</p> <p>a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.</p> <p>b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.</p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No

TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 2015

PRESENT: John Gittos in the Chair

Olga Gailite, Christine Gregory, Maddy Hunter, Peter Middleton and Jackie Worthington

20 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

21 Late Items

The following supplementary information was submitted at the meeting:

- Revised schedule for estate walkabouts (minute no. 26 refers)
- Mobile working update (minute no. 27 refers)

The above information was not available at the time of agenda despatch, but was subsequently made available on the Council's website.

22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted by Sallie Bannatyne, Michael Healey and Roderic Morgan.

23 Minutes - 2 September 2015

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2015 be approved as a correct record.

24 Chair's update

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided the Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board with an opportunity to update Board Members on some of the areas of work and activity since the September meeting.

The Board was advised that Jim Fergusson was taking a break from tenant scrutiny activity due to recent health issues. In addition, Jane Wilson had submitted her resignation, also due to recent health issues.

It was reported that an article was being published in the next Housing Leeds newsletter to publicise the work of tenant scrutiny.

Board Members were informed that Housing Leeds had started to arrange quarterly meetings with the Environmental Estates Team (Locality Team) to review plans and review joint working processes. It was suggested that a Board Member be invited to attend future meetings and report back to the Board.

The Chair provided a brief update on his attendance at Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board. It was reported that the meeting included a discussion on estate management, locality working and keeping estates clean and tidy.

RESOLVED – That Peter Middleton be appointed as the Board’s representative to attend future quarterly meetings involving Housing Leeds and the Environmental Estates Team.

25 Request for Scrutiny

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented a request for scrutiny which had been received from a housing tenant and former Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board, Mr Steve Ilee. The request related to the treatment of older tenants during the upgrade of wiring, kitchens and bathrooms in their homes.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Sharon Guy, Housing Manager (Customer Relations, Tenant Scrutiny, Tenant Involvement and Equality).

Appended to the report was a copy of Mr Ilee’s request for scrutiny.

The Board considered the request for scrutiny and in doing so discussed forwarding the concerns directly to the Chief Officer (Housing Management) for immediate action.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the issues identified in the request for scrutiny be forwarded to the Chief Officer (Housing Management) for immediate action.
- (b) That an update report on the Director’s response to Mr Ilee be brought to a future meeting.

26 Scrutiny Inquiry - Environment of Estates

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented information as part of the Board’s inquiry on the Environment of Estates.

The following information was appended to the report:

- A copy of the agreed terms of reference

- Details of 6 estate walkabouts covering a variety of different property types
- Health and safety guidelines regarding estate inspections.

The following representatives were in attendance:

- Sharon Guy, Housing Manager (Customer Relations, Tenant Scrutiny, Tenant Involvement and Equality)
- Sgt. Jon Glennon, Safer Leeds / West Yorkshire Police.

The Chair invited Sgt. Jon Glennon to provide the Board with an overview of the work undertaken by PCSOs, particularly in terms of their role regarding estate management.

The main areas of discussion were:

- The role of PCSOs as being the eyes and ears of the community. There were 247 PCSOs across Leeds – 165 of these were part funded by LCC. Other partners, e.g. METRO and White Rose also part funded PCSOs.
- The deployment of PCSOs and the type of issues they get concerns with.
- Potential development of a team focussed on social housing. Further details to be provided in due course.

The Chair then invited questions from Board Members and the key areas of discussion were:

- Confirmation that PCSOs had responsibility for specific areas and that information regarding PCSOs and the areas they covered could be accessed via the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) website.
- Whether PCSOs on estates were in place long enough to become familiar to tenants, or whether turnover of placements prevented that relationship being established.
- A suggestion that the contact details of PCSOs be posted through residents' letterboxes. Sgt. Jon Glennon agreed to report back with a response regarding this.
- Confirmation about reporting arrangements, attendance at PACT meetings and drop-in sessions.
- Arrangements for forthcoming estate walkabouts. Estate walkabouts planned for parts of Armley, Bramley, Moortown and Beeston and Holbeck, including a mix of property types, e.g. houses, multi storey flats, sheltered properties and bungalows.
- The potential involvement of PCSOs on estate walkabouts to identify any issues.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That further details be provided about the development of a team focussed on social housing.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 4th November, 2015

(b) That the arrangements for estate walkabouts be approved.

27 Recommendation Tracking - Annual Tenancy Visit Inquiry

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented an update on the mobile working pilot as part of the Board's inquiry on Annual Tenancy Visits (ATVs).

The following officers were in attendance:

- Sharon Guy, Housing Manager (Customer Relations, Tenant Scrutiny, Tenant Involvement and Equality)
- Gerard Tinsdale, Area Manager, Environment and Housing.

The Board noted that the pilot was working well, demonstrating increased effectiveness for Housing Officers. The Board was advised that some training needs had been identified to support Housing Officers make best use of the mobile devices and some minor IT issues remained. The Board sought clarification regarding the potential roll-out of mobile devices to sheltered housing wardens.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Board receives clarification regarding the potential roll-out of mobile devices to sheltered housing wardens.
- (b) That a further update regarding mobile devices be provided in 6 months' time.

28 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 4 November 2015 at 1.30pm (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 1.00pm)

(The meeting concluded at 3.10pm)

Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Tenant Scrutiny Board

Date: 4 November 2015

Subject: Chair's Update Report – November 2015

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1 Purpose of this report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline some of the areas of work and activity of the Chair of the Scrutiny Board.

2 Main issues

2.1 Invariably, scrutiny activity often takes place outside of the formal monthly Tenant Scrutiny Board meetings. Such activity can take the form of specific activity and actions of the Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Board.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to provide an opportunity to formally update the Tenant Scrutiny Board on activity since the last meeting, including any specific outcomes. It also provides an opportunity for members of the Tenant Scrutiny Board to identify and agree any further scrutiny activity that may be necessary.

2.3 The Chair and Head of Scrutiny and Member Development will provide a verbal update at the meeting, as required.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to:

- a) Note the content of this report and the verbal update provided at the meeting.
- b) Identify any specific matters that may require further scrutiny input/ activity.

4. Background papers¹

4.1 None used

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.



Report author: Peter Marrington

Tel: 0113 39 51151

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Tenant Scrutiny Board

Date: 4 November 2015

Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry - Environment of Estates

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 Summary of main issues

- 1.1 This is the Board's third session looking at the Environment of Estates. In between its October meeting and today's meeting, Board members have undertaken estate walkabouts in the following wards; Armley, Moortown, Bramley and Beeston and Holbeck. Those attending the walkabout have produced a written report. These are attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The Board agreed that at today's meeting the Board would discuss these visits with those housing officers who were on the walkabouts plus other attending officers.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is requested to
 - (i) Discuss with officers matters relating to the environment of estates
 - (ii) Agree the next steps.

3.0 Background documents¹

- 3.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

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REPORT ON THE WALKROUND

AREA - CEDARS AND SURROUNDING AREA
DATE - 8TH OCTOBER 2015
PRESENT- LYNN RICHARDS (HOUSING OFFICER), PETER (MANAGER) JOHN GITTOS (CHAIR OF THE TSB), CHRISTINE GREGORY (MEMBER OF THE TSB)

Problems observed on the Walk round.

- No Tenant involvement
- No Councillor involvement
- Waste being place on the pathways
- A sever weed problem in the pathways
- Maintenance of the footpaths
- PCSO's not involved
- Reported work not being done

The Cedars/surrounding area covers from the Cedars on Tong Road to Ley Lane area at the side Armley Road and all the surrounding areas. There are 5 small estates in this area. This area has a diverse housing type, from Terraced Houses to more modern estates, therefore there are different problems in each housing type.

There walk rounds are done on a regular basis, however there does not appear to be any tenant involvement in these walk arounds, nor is there any Councillor or PCSO's. We were told it is rare for tenants to attend the walkabouts, we asked how information regarding dates and times of a walkabout are relayed to tenants. It appears it is advertised through the normal channels i.e. LCC website, newsletter and there is also a noticeboard. We asked if there were any tenants associations on the estate and the response was that there is not one on this estate, but they are trying to set one up. If this is achieved then it will be a way of informing the tenants of the walkabouts, which hopefully would lead to more participation in the walkabouts. We asked if there was a location to hold a Tenants Association meeting and we told that the school may be available or there is a 'One Stop Shop' joined onto the library.

There is no Councillor who attends the walk rounds, which may need to be addressed by the TSB, as it would be useful to have their presence to see what the area is like.

The PCSO's for this area share the office with the Housing staff, therefore there maybe regular contact with them. It would need to be discussed at the meeting if the TSB feel it would be beneficial to have them there.

There seemed to be a problem with refuse collections in the Ley Lane area, this appears to be due to the design of the estate, with narrow pathways and plenty of

stops between the houses. It would not be possible to use Wheelie Bins as there are steps to negotiate to get to the road side. Due to this the tenants have to have hand collections, and there is not recycling available. The collections are on a Saturday and by Sunday black bags of rubbish appear in the pathways. This was obvious as we walked round that rubbish was in the narrow pathways. The housing office is looking at various ways of dealing with the problem, one is to have a reciprocal to allow the tenants to place the black bags in. The option is

- To continue with the hand bin collection and have somewhere for the tenants to place their black bags in
- To stop the hand bin collection and just have the container for tenants to place their black bags in
- To look at other areas with a similar problem and see how they dealt with it

As placing the bags in the pathway is technically 'fly tipping' a solution must be found. There was an area where rubbish was dumped and burned, there was a burnt out mattress and other rubbish which had been burned. The officer informed us that on the previous walk about, the dumped mattress had been reported to the relevant department, but it had not been removed and since then it had been set alight.

On walking round this estate it was clear there was a problem with weeds growing on the foot paths which can cause trip and slip hazards. Some of the weeds were growing through the fences from overgrown gardens, however it still posed a problem to tenants who use the paths. We asked was this raised with the tenants concerned, we were advised that it was but that they got a mixed response. The first letter is sent to tell the tenants to tidy the garden within 14 days, then if nothing happened a second letter was sent saying that they had seven days, if nothing happened a gain a final letter was sent saying this could affect their tenancy. It could be taken to court to ask for and eviction order but this was very rare. We were advised that the Parks Dept. had been asked to do weed spraying to clear this problem, there was also a problem with moss which was growing on the paths, which is a slip hazard but unfortunately it did not appear to have been undertaken either.

Some of the footpaths and the steps were in poor repair, creating trip hazards particularly to the tenants with limited mobility. What was evident and to the frustration of the officers was the state of the pathways, plenty of potholes, but what was very noticeable was that the tarmac being laid was crumbling and in some areas it had not been laid that long ago. So the question is – is it the quality of the tarmac or the way it has been laid. Some of the services covers (Water etc) had sunk, this created a sever trip hazard.

The estate we were on also had private tenants and in two cases shrubbery growing was beyond their own boundaries and encroached onto the pathways, we were told because they are not council tenants the process to get them to conform is a much harder process and may have to be referred to the council's legal team.

We questioned the lack of garages on the estate, it seems there are none, and nobody seemed to know why none had been provided anywhere. However looking

at the way the estate was built, if there were to be any garages they would have to be a walk away from most people's properties because of the proximity of the buildings.

Although some properties have fencing and a gate some do not, and there was no reason why. Maybe if it was available for everyone to have fencing and gates it would improve the look of the area.

There is a school on the estate which is attended largely by children from the estate and there seems to be a good relationship between the two. Perhaps that would be further helped were there to be a tenants association perhaps organising events together.

There is no bus service that actually enters the estate but a good service on both the main roads at either sides of the estate means they are in walking distance of buses to either Leeds or Bradford. For those less able to get about there is an Access bus that drops them off as near to their homes as possible and takes them to shops and any essential services they are likely to require.

We asked whether there were any problems with dogs in the high rise and we were told that they were quite successful implementing LCC policy. They thought what helped them in this was the animal register that is kept up to date. The subject of animals in these was always at the forefront when they were doing any new sign up of tenants.

Just a short note on the ICT, the Housing Officer was part of the trial for the use of the tablets, however she said that in some areas it was very useful but there was problems with the software. Hers had been broken for about 6 to 8 weeks. Maybe something to bear in mind for a future meeting.

Over all it was very enlightening to do the walk round and talking to the staff who undertook this work. It showed the problems they have to deal with and highlighted areas which maybe improved.

Written by Christine Gregory

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Estate Walkabout – Church Hills, Britannia’s and Stanningley Ct

13th October 2015

Undertaken by Olga Gailite and Michael Healey

Started 10am Church Hill Green. The overall condition of the estate was good. Plenty of good kept gardens. The local park very well kept.

Things needing attention

1. LCC litter bins overflowing, rubbish littering greens and gutter/drains. Dead leaves Church Hill green also. Also potholes in road. Overflowing rubbish bins. Large rubbish awaiting collection.
2. **Harrisons Avenue.** – Litter bins overflowing, hedges and trees need cutting/pruning. Pot holes in road.
LCC litter bins overflowing. Litter picker needed (Was on their rounds)
Some large items awaiting collection.
3. **Leeds/Bradford Road** – Litter picker required. Road sweeper needed.
Leaves in gutter/manholes.
4. **Britannia Close** – LCC litter bins overflowing. Litter picker needed. Litter over grass and in road/gutter.
A Large tree is to be investigated; the roots are damaging walls, fencing/communal areas
5. Litter picker needed. Another tree’s roots causing problems. Potholes in road.
Sheltered flats well-tended inc gardens and hedges

Michael Healey

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Report author: Olga Gailite

REPORT

WALKABOUT

AREA COVERED: CHURCH HILLS, BRITANNIA'S AND STANNINGLEY CT., BRAMLEY

PROPERTY TYPES: HOUSES, LOW RISE FLATS, SHELTERED BUNGALOWS

HOUSING OFFICER: BALDEV BASS

13/10/2015 10am-11.15am visit to estates

Attended: Housing officer Baldev Bass, Bramley and Stanningley councillor Kevin Ritchie, TSB members Olga Gailite and Michael Healey

Scrutiny Inquiry: The Environment of Estates

Range of evidence collected:

Overall the Environment of Estates is in not very bad condition.

1. Few houses had overgrown hedges, shrubs or lawn (Church Hill Green);
2. Big issue in this area is food waste and a general litter in the public spaces, full public bins and lots of litter next to it (Church Gardens corner and Harrisons Avenue corner);
3. Seen just a 1 dog fouling on the footpath in this area;
4. Seen few potholes on the Leeds Bradford road.

Please see attached files.

Further scrutiny input/ activity:

To interview local housing officers, to gather information from tenants surveys regarding Environment of Estates, more visits to be taken to the estates

Desired Outcomes:

- to make a positive difference to tenants and to local area,
- to improve tenants satisfaction through listening their ideas and suggestions regarding the Environment of Estates,
- to improve Housing services quality and to lower complains level.

Recommendations

- To gain desired outcomes need to invest more resources on environmental projects.

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Report on the Walkabout

Area - Cottingley

Date - 13th October 2015

**Present - Ann Marie Carney (Housing Officer Patch 3)
Sam Costigan (Housing officer Patch 2)
Chris (Line Manager)
Emma Louise Simpson (Project Support)
John Gittos (TSB Chair and Cottingley resident)**

Cottingley is an urban area to the south west of Leeds

It has its own railway station , and has services that serve Leeds and Huddersfield and intermediate stations , and the line is on the Leeds to Manchester route and therefore will undergo electrification in the near future .

Cottingley is served by regular buses to Leeds and Morley , there is also an Access bus service for those residents who need it .

Most of Cottingley is a council estate but there are some private dwellings . Two tower blocks form the centre of the estate and are Leeds tallest flats .

The Cottingley estate was built in the 1970s, replacing an estate of temporary prefabricated housing . The estate is set around a series of *cul de sacs*, segregating large volumes of traffic from housing and pedestrians. This method of building has often been criticised as creating a 'rabbit warren', impractical for the local police and fire services .

On the estate there are three shops a small grocery store , a chemist , a hairdresser , and a paper shop , a post office was closed two years ago after a breakin and has never been reopened .

There is a primary school on the estate .

There is Junction 1 Retail Park separated from the estate by a cemetery which includes a B&Q warehouse, an Aldi supermarket, PC World and a Burger King.

The estate is split into three patches and overseen by three housing officers for the purposes of this report I covered two of the patches on the walkabout that I did

I found the officers knowledgeable about the estate , they knew their patch and had obviously done their homework , and empathised with the problems that face tenants.

What was a concern was that there was no enthusiasm from tenants to attend the walkabouts , I asked the officers how they informed the residents of the walkabout and was told via the usual channels ,with that in mind I checked the notice boards but there was nothing to indicate a walkabout had been planned so perhaps this might have to be addressed .

Although on this particular walkabout no councillor was present , I was told that a councillor does attend normally , but the person in question on this particular day was on leave .

No PCSO attended but there was frequent communication between them and council officers , and I would question the necessity of a PCSO attending other than to meet residents and perhaps that can be achieved in other ways.

There was not a problem at this particular time with anti social behaviour on the estate .

The estate has a community centre that organises events for residents and by residents , it is actively supported by three councillors and is proving to be bringing the community together ,a resident from the estate manages the centre , it still has a long way to go but with encouragement and support it can succeed .

There is a regular TRAC meeting that brings together residents , councillors , police ,and housing officers , attendance numbers vary and tends to be more women than men .

Problems Observed On the Walkabout

- No Tenants were present
- No Councillor involvement
- Waste and litter on pathways
- Bulky items in gardens for disposal
- Garages needing repairs
- Overgrown edges from private dwellings .
- No PCSO attended
- Rubbish been thrown from tower blocks .

There is on the estate a lot of fly tipping and other waste being dumped ,there are in my opinion three reasons for this , one a lack of receptacles to put waste in, secondly a need for designated areas to house bulky items prior to disposal , and thirdly and perhaps the most important to make tenants more aware of how they can get rid of waste .

What I did observe was that when waste was building up in gardens, sometimes bulky items making it an eyesore the officer knocked on the door and did politely point out to the tenant that this was not acceptable , this approach seemed to work in the three cases I saw , and it seemed in two of the cases the tenant was not aware of how and where they could remove the items to , the officer in both cases provided information on this , the officer made it clear that she would return to check it had been removed it was all done quite amicable .

Although there were still weeds growing around footpaths there were areas pointed out to me where weed spraying had recently been carried out and the area was much neater , when I asked how often spraying is done I was told it's only three times a year .

There seemed plenty of garages to go round , but not all were taken and given the fact parking on parts of the estate is a problem I found that surprising .One of the reasons may be some of them are in need of repair , so were they to be in better condition perhaps tenants would hire them I have no evidence to come to any conclusion either way . Another reason perhaps for lack of interest may be the fact some of the garages were not in eye shot of the tenant's home .

It was obvious walking around the estate there was a variation in the state of individual gardens , so I asked if there were provisions for people who were incapable of doing their own gardens ,I was told yes on health grounds but only if they had no family to do it for them .

There is a report due to be discussed soon and one of the ideas coming from this is a community tool bank , where tenants who perhaps cannot afford the equipment to improve their gardens can borrow them .

Cottingley is no different to other places when it comes to litter it is a big problem ,they have a litter picker who works on the estate three times a week , he used to be permanently in Cottingley but due to cuts this was no longer possible . What was noticeable was that the litter problem was bad around the school perimeter .

As I stated previously Cottingley has two high rise blocks with six flats on each landing and there are 24 floors in each block , the flats are one or two bedroomed . Two significant problems in the flats are people throwing rubbish from the windows , and the other some tenants although contrary to their tenancy agreements have dogs .There are cameras around the blocks .Each block has a meeting room .One of the blocks Cottingley Towers houses an office for the estate which is manned once a week for a couple of hours by one of the housing officers .

The local school gets involved in the community where it can which I think is a good thing to get the children involved in the community .

One of the main gripes of residents on this estate is refuse collection .

Surely refuse collection, as one of the council's core services, should be tailored to the location and sometimes I wonder if that is happening , on this particular estate due to the way it was built tenants have to move their bins along narrow paths to a road and that is not always easy .

“ Cottingley In Bloom “ is active on the estate where tenants can help to improve their surroundings and local councillors not only encourage but are very much hands on .

Written by John Gittos

16th October 2015

Walkabout Wednesday 21/10/2015

Area Fairfield Crescent , Bramley , LS13 3EB

Present Gloria Thompson (Housing Officer)
Jackie Worthington TSB)
Councillor Kevin Ritchie
John Gittos (TSB)

Problems observed on the walkabout

No Tenant involvement
No PCSO
Lack of bins
Untidy gardens
Trees needed cutting
Hedges trimming
Reported work not being done
Mobility scooters

No tenants were present on this walkabout and the housing officer and the councillor said this was a normal occurrence , when asked about the way they go about informing tenants of an intended walkabout it was done through the usual channels . There is no tenants association on the estate although there are plans to try and set one up but in the past it seems getting tenants to participate in the community has not been a great success .

No PCSO have ever attended the walkabout apparently and I am not convinced had there been one there today it would have been of any advantage to either housing officer or the PCSO .

What was noticeable was there was a lack of litter bins around the estate , and nobody was sure of the reason for this , it may be because of vandalism in the past , but perhaps were there to be some bins there may be less litter about . There was a distinct problem near the shops with litter .

We found some gardens to be overgrown or rubbish piling up some of which could be described as bulky items , there were quite a few that were in this category and this was noted by the housing officer , she said she would then write to the tenants concerned and follow a process set out by LCC .There was a number of overgrown hedges around the

estate which were the responsibility of the tenant (i.e in their gardens) she would also use the same method of writing to the tenant .She pointed out to me there was about 25 of these letters that had been sent out regarding gardens and hedges that were in various stages of being acted upon , some of them for a length of time that made it obvious they were being ignored .There was a feeling that perhaps the powers of the council are not robust enough to deal with the minority of tenants who clearly ignore requests to tidy their gardens . I am not sure that the first response to these problems is to send out official letters perhaps the tenants would react differently were they to get a knock on the door and a face to face conversation , it seems this is done in some areas by officers successfully before a letter is sent out . I did notice the estate seems to have particularly large gardens compared to some areas of Leeds which would make an untidy garden even more noticeable because of its size .

When hedges needed cutting or trimming or weed spraying was required it seems the officer would be told either yes it will be done or no because it's not on the mapping area . It seems the mapping area is only updated yearly so if the area in question is not on the map it won't be done . At present I have not got enough information as to how places get onto the mapping area so further investigation on this is required by the board .

Part of this officers patch covers Sheltered housing scheme it was obvious from the appearance the area was well maintained .There was one problem that needs to be look at and that is tenants in Sheltered housing that have mobility scooters ,it seems the parking of these when not in use can be a problem , residents are told in case of fire they are not to be parked too close to the building and if the tenant has very little or no garden it may end up blocking the pathways then that too becomes a problem .It may be useful to look at some kind of a shed that's big enough to house a scooter , in a place for obvious reason not too far away from the tenant's door .

We also visited a well maintained community centre , mainly used by those in Sheltered housing but can be used at a small cost by other tenants in the area . If the estate could form a tenants association then this would be the perfect venue for any meetings .

There are a number of Accent Homes on the estate .***Accent is a registered social landlord with homes for rent and sale across Yorkshire, the North East, North West, East Midlands and the South of England.***

There are some private houses on the estate and they were generally well kept , although there are two properties which the council were in the process of taking legal action against due to the state of their gardens , letters had been sent out but to no avail ,so it seemed legal action was the only option .

There were not many garages available to tenants on the estate , but it seems tenants are reluctant to take up offers of a garage anyway and some at the time of writing this were actually vacant . When I asked why the poor uptake of garages the response was the same as I found on the other estates they are much too small for today's cars , I was told for example the cars can get into the garage but the problems arises when the driver tries to get out of the car , not enough space to open his or her door . Councillor Ritchie did voice his concerns about speeding and a need for speed bumps , but I think before commenting further on this the board may need to seek more information regarding the speed limits in and around the estates and the criteria used before placing speed bumps .

There is no bus service that runs through the estate but a regular service to Leeds/Bradford is available on Stanningley Rd which is on the perimeter of the estate .There is also in walking distance Bramley railway station with trains to both Leeds and Bradford and stations beyond .

There are some local shops , and a Morrisons supermarkets quite near .

Overall I found the housing officer pleasant with a good knowledge of the area ,and very approachable . Councillor Ritchie was someone who regularly attended the walkabouts , and had a determination to make the environment on the estate has pleasant a place for his constituents as possible

Jackie Worthington / John Gittos

21 st October 2015

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