

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