

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Report to Tenant Scrutiny Board

Date: 2 December 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 fourth session looking at the Environment of Estates. At the last meeting it was agreed that the Board would invite representative ward councillors from the areas in which the Board undertook estate walkabouts. I.e., Armley, Bramley, Moortown and Beeston and Holbeck wards.

1.2 The Chair also requested that *all* Councillors be asked whether they undertook walkabouts, whether they found them valuable and what other methods they used to understand issues on estates. Key facts arising from the responses include

- 32 Ward Councillors representing 25 out of the 33 wards responded
- 100% of Councillors had attended a walkabout , 98% in the last 12 months
- All stated that the process was useful
- Positive comments included
 - Ideal way to develop relationships with housing officers
 - Important for tenants to see that councillors and officers are interested and care
 - Important to see estates for oneself
 - Good way of identifying other 'personal' issues

- Good way to share perspectives and establish good practice
 - Provides the opportunity for ward Councillors to set clear expectations and to set standards for the environment
 - Provides opportunities to monitor the consistency in performance of housing officers
 - Provides the opportunity to gather the intelligence needed to target resources
- Negative comments included;
 - lack of notice over times
 - diary clashes
 - poor communication over pending visits

1.3 Some ward Councillors fed back that they received the reports of walkabouts even if they had not attended. Others stated that the walkabout should be used to identify and compliment those tenants who kept a tidy and pleasant environment and to start enforcement action on those in breach of their tenancies. A recurring theme was the importance of ensuring that actions agreed happened in a timely manner and the importance of 'joined up working' between the different agencies and council departments.

1.4 All ward Councillors stated that the estate walkabout was only one of a number of ways in which they gained knowledge and an understanding of their estates. Other methods cited included; street surgeries, casework, attendance at tenant/community group meetings, private walkabouts, correspondence and membership on HAP.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Board is requested to

- (i) Discuss with Ward Members present matters relating to the environment of estates and estate walkabouts
- (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.