

Report of Head of Housing Management

Report to Tenant Scrutiny Board

Date: 18 January 2019

Subject: Update on Estate Standards Inquiry

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 The Boards inquiry in 2015/16 municipal year focused on Estate Standards.
- 1.2 The Board received an update on the outstanding recommendations in December 2016 and requested a future update on the ones which remain incomplete.
- 1.3 Outstanding recommendations which are to be discussed at this meeting are enclosed in this report as appendix 1,
- 1.4 The closed recommendations and responses are shown in appendix 2 for information only.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Board is requested to receive the update on Estate Standards at appendix 1 and raise any questions with the manager in attendance for this item.

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.

Position Status Categories

- 1 - Stop monitoring or determine whether any further action is required
- 2 - Achieved
- 3 - Not fully implemented (Obstacle)
- 4 - Not fully implemented (Progress made acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- 5 - Not fully implemented (Progress made not acceptable. Continue monitoring)
- 6 - Not for review this session

Desired Outcome – Cleaner estates

Recommendation 3 – That the Council introduces the best waste collection solution for individual estates, even if that results in variations across the city.

Position April 2016

Recommendation Accepted – However it should be noted that the council is committed to expanding Alternate Week Collection where possible but there are some locations where an alternative to the standard fortnightly wheelie bin service is provided that best meets the needs of that locality.

November 2016 position:

Introduced an “opt in” recycling scheme in Headingley. Where residents did not “opt in” green bins were removed. Similar scheme being considered for Harehills.

Alternative Solution introduced in Beckhill Estate, Meanwood. Promoted at Beckhill Fun Day on the 28th July

Alternative waste solution introduced at Cottingley Estate.

Housing, Waste and Localities working together to try to resolve waste collection issues in a number of areas but specifically - bagged collection on Ley Lane, Armley, waste issues and improved recycling on Butterbowl and Bawn estates, and reducing fly tipping and side waste in Burmantofts

Position Status (categories 1 – 6) *This is to be formally agreed by the Scrutiny Board*

Desired Outcome - Improved garage policy

Recommendation 10 – That Housing Leeds reports back to Tenant Scrutiny Board back on any recommendations and or proposed policy changes following its review of garages.

Position April 2016

Review ongoing

Current position:

- All garage sites have been inspected and rated regarding their condition and sustainability
- Empty Garages on sustainable garage sites are being advertised for reletting
- Option Appraisals need to be undertaken on other sites for possible investment

and improvement, demolition or possible redevelopment opportunities.

Additional Actions

Garage Procedures Updated

- Updated clear procedure on garage tenancies and allocations
- New revised Garage Arrears Letters and new Garage Site Arrears Letters
- Revised Tenancy Agreement for both built garages and garage plots
- Garage waiting refreshed and updated.
- Promote and market garages better and raise tenant awareness.

Position Status (categories 1 – 6) *This is to be formally agreed by the Scrutiny Board*

ACHIEVED RECOMMENDATIONS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Desired Outcome – Assurances that the ‘One Council’ approach is operating at estate level

Recommendation 1 – That the Tenant Scrutiny Board review in September 2016 progress made towards service harmonisation and implementation of the ‘one Council approach’

Position April 2016

- Harmonisation ongoing

Current position:

- Procedure Harmonisation completed and implemented (see rec 2)
- Team Leaders in Housing , Localities , Parks and Civic Enterprise Leeds are in regular communication and working on Joint Local Action Plans on tackling Estate Management Issues
- Housing Officers represent other services during Walkabouts and act as a conduit for contact with other services.
- Staff from Localities working from or now based in Housing Offices in some locations for improved communication and joint working.

Desired Outcome – An improved walkabout process

Recommendation 2 – That the following be considered as part of the current harmonisation project and the results of the harmonisation project be reported back to Tenant Scrutiny Board

- Better communication of the estate walkabout with greater lead in time
- Proactive campaign to increase tenant participation both at walkabouts and in other associations
- That for some walkabouts specific agencies attend at the request of housing Leeds to target particular issues
- All ward councillors and those attend at the request of Housing Leeds to target particular issues
- All ward councillors and those attending receive outcome reports following walkabouts
- All actions agreed happen within agreed timescales
- Uniform reporting template
- Use of compliment letters
- Consistent approach to enforcement

Position April 2016

We believe that in the majority of situations the Housing Officer can take ownership of any issues identified during the Walkabout on behalf of other council services and that stronger relationships can be built between services that result in improvements. This means in the majority of cases having additional council officers from other services would not be necessary which makes the best use of officer time.

We also wish to consider alternative ways of identifying issues on estates that result in the same outcomes.

Current position:

The revised harmonised Procedure was launched officially on Monday 9th May.

Communication

Annual Schedule; is to be made available on the Housing Leeds website; direct invitations to Ward Councillors, Tenant Representatives and other interested parties to be sent at the start of the financial year by the Housing Officer.

2 weeks prior to the Walkabout the communications strategy includes promotional prepared by the Tenant Information Team via:

- Housing Leeds web pages
- Housing Leeds Facebook & Twitter posts
- Tenant Newsletter (quarterly)
- Posters displayed in housing offices, communal areas and other public places.
- Direct correspondence; letters and emails

7 days prior email reminders sent to all interested parties that have received direct invitations to attend.

Proactive campaign to increase tenant participation

The communication of the Estate Walkabouts schedule on an annual basis with a targeted approach 2 weeks/7days in advance of the walkabout ensures maximum participation through direct contact and promotional activity (as listed above) to encourage participation from tenants and also other interested parties e.g. owner occupiers and private residents in the community.

Better communication to increase involvement and contact between Housing Officers and tenants provides opportunity to promote participation in other associations (which are also publicised on social media/posters and in the Tenants Newsletter).

- Promoted walkabouts with our Service Improvement Volunteers
- Taking walkabouts as a theme/topic to the TARA Panel (the body representing all TARA's in the city) to raise awareness, encourage participation.

Specific agencies attend at the request of Housing Leeds to target particular issues.

In the majority of situations the Housing Officer can take ownership of any issues identified during the Walkabout on behalf of other council services to ensure issues are not only referred but monitored and actions chased where necessary. This means in the majority of cases having additional council officers from other services would not be necessary which makes the best use of officer time, but will be considered in specific circumstances.

Outcome Reports

Following the completion of the estate walkabout, the agreed actions are sent in writing to all attendees within 10 working days.

Where an estate walkabout has been completed and actions recorded but there were no other interested parties in attendance the outcome and findings will still be notified in writing to Ward Councillors and Tenant Representatives who had been invited, including photographs taken.

All actions agreed happen within agreed timescales

The harmonised procedure makes clear in the guidance that It is the responsibility of the Housing Officer to ensure that all actions are updated and complete within agreed timescales. These are based on the Scoring Forms completed by all those in attendance at the walkabout.

Any outstanding issues that have not been addressed from a previous walkabout will be escalated by the Housing Officer to the appropriate service to escalate and agree new timescales for completion.

If the Housing Officer is unable to resolve the issue they will need to escalate the issues to their Housing Team Leader or Housing Manager.

Uniform reporting template

The harmonised procedure includes a full toolkit to ensure consistency in assessing estate standards:

- Reporting Forms (with specific forms for multi-storey, low rise and sheltered blocks).
- Estate Standards Rating System
- Scoring Form

Use of compliment letters

Where there are examples of tenants who are contributing to positive estate standards by maintaining their garden/external spaces to a good standard this can now be recognised in writing using the complimentary 'Good Garden' letter.

Consistent approach to enforcement

The harmonised procedure makes clear to officers that they must ensure that prior to commencing an estate walkabout they have awareness of related tenancy management procedures, and estate management guidance, in particular:

- The Messy Garden procedure (includes clear enforcement process).
- Grounds Maintenance & Weeding Agreement

Estate Walkabouts may identify issues that are not related to the Messy Garden procedure e.g. parking issues, pests, misuse of communal areas etc. The procedure for enforcement for these types of tenancy breach is currently being harmonised.

Desired Outcome – Cleaner estates and better educated residents on the issue of waste

Recommendation 4

That the Council provides more bins on estates

Position April 2016

Agreed

Current position:

Additional Waste bins provided in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill

Additional Litter Bins requested for Aviaries and on Ley Lane, Armley

Plans for additional bins at Rossefields, Snowdens and replacement bins on the Broadleas at Bramley

Desired Outcome – Cleaner estates and better educated residents on the issue of waste

Recommendation 4 continued - Ensures the timely removal of full glass banks

Position April 2016

Agreed

Current position: We acknowledge the importance of glass banks to the overall recycling strategy and will work with the contractor to review collection frequencies and seek to expand the network of recycling banks.

Desired Outcome – Cleaner estates and better educated residents on the issue of waste

Recommendation 4 continued – Introduces more clean up days

Position April 2016

Agreed

Current position: Various Clean up days have been arranged and planned around the city listed below. Also city wide use of Community Payback clearing litter and other horticultural work to improve standards of estates.

Butterbowl Estate April; Beckhill Estate, Meanwood – May; Drighlington Clean up May; Bawn Estate – June; Wellstones – Pudsey – June; Manor Estate Rothwell –July; Holbeck – 20th July (part of Neighbourhood Improvement Approach); Hyde park close St John close, Little London July 2016; Ebor Gardens July; Beckhill Estate Meanwood –July

Lincoln Green Shops Area – July 2016; Lewisham Park Community Action Day July

Duxburry, Livina and Hawkins Little London Aug 2016; Newlands, Denshaw's and Rydal's Environmental Action day September; Alwoodley Estate – 7th Sept

Aysgarth area – September; Seacroft South –September; Boggart Hill/ The Rein September; Drighlington Action Day September

Planned Clean up days

Gipton South – Autumn; Rookwoods – November; Wortley - Heights Drive; Cottingley Estate – Autumn; Harrop Clean-up Day October; Hepworth's & Williams Street Action Day November; Moorland Crescent Clean up December

Desired Outcome – Cleaner estates and better educated residents on the issue of waste

Recommendation 4 continued – Undertakes an education campaign to raise variations across the city

Position April 2016

Current position: All departments working on various education / information campaigns

Promotion of “one piece of rubbish” campaign on Facebook

Clean Leeds campaign,

Keep Harehills Tidy Campaign

Promotion of Key Waste Management messages, via bin stickers, Council Tax bill inserts, Roadshows, Digital and Social Media, a new Leedsbin App, Education programmes at the RERF Visitor Centre,

- Put the right thing in the right bin to provide good quality recycling;
- Remember your bin days and what can be recycled and where;
- Recycle for Leeds so your waste can be made useful again;
- Saving money on waste disposal can safeguard vital local services.

All Housing Officers Trained on providing recycling advice and waste management at RERF.

Housing using Facebook and Twitter e.g. improve issues caused by improper disposal of household rubbish / waste in Burmantofts.

Pilot Recycling Incentive Scheme to a number of high rise blocks in the city.

Housing - information and education campaigns planned for quarter three on Ley Lane, the Raynville blocks and the Clyde and Wortley blocks and Heights Drive

Joint working between Housing and Waste on education to residents in the Beeston and Holbeck following introduction of AWC
Plus residents of low rise flats throughout Inner South

Education project with residents of Alderton Blocks in Alwoodley on waste management and recycling.

Education project with Housing and Waste targeting 2 bedroom flats regarding waste management, ensuring all have appropriate bins and what each is used for. Plus more general work in Middleton following roll out of AWC.

Desired Outcome – Improved appearance of gardens

Recommendation 5 - That appropriate enforcement action is taken to ensure tenants fulfil their tenancy agreement with regards to the upkeep of gardens.

Position April 2016

Current position: The Messy Garden procedure (includes clear enforcement process) has been harmonised and rolled out to all teams.

Desired Outcome – Improved knowledge of tenants as to their responsibilities

Recommendation 6 – That the responsibilities of tenants with regards their gardens are clearly communicated, particularly during pre-tenancy training.

Position April 2016

Tenant responsibilities for gardens are outlined during accompanied viewings, signing the Tenancy Agreement, New Tenant Visits, Annual Home Visits and specific contact and communication with tenants when the standard of their gardens fall below acceptable levels.

Current position:

Pilot Pre –Tenancy Training – Planned from December 2016.

Desired Outcome – Providing tenants with the tools to keep their gardens neat and tidy

Recommendation 7 – That Housing Leeds encourages and facilitates the start-up of tool bank schemes

Position April 2016

Historically Tool Banks have not been sustainable.

Current position:

Love your Garden project in Middleton proposed with Health for All. To explore how we can continue to support and learn from the model so that we can roll out to other areas as the new sustainable toolbank model.

Desired Outcome – A better understanding by tenants of what is achievable and within what timescales

Recommendation 8 - That greater publicity be given to the constraints faced by the Council in terms of grounds maintenance.

Position April 2016

It is proposed that an e-leaflet (pdf file) is produced setting out what grounds maintenance works are undertaken and the constraints on these as explored by the scrutiny board. The use of an e-leaflet approach will be low cost and allow the information to be placed on the council's website for tenants to access and can be highlighted in newsletters etc. It would also be available for local housing staff to print for those requesting a hard copy format and would act as a common reference guide to officers and other stakeholders

Current position:

Leaflet completed and distributed to Housing Teams

Additional Actions

- FAQ document produced by Forestry on Tree Management
- Housing now receives a monthly report on tree work progress
- Housing receives weekly report from Parks regarding grassed areas not cut and reasons.

Desired Outcome - Up to date map

Recommendation 9 – That Parks and Countryside in liaison with Housing Leeds pro-actively identify those areas 'not on the map' and action accordingly

Position April 2016

Unmaintained land frequently identified during Walkabouts, Estate Inspections and during routine visits to estates. While the land is question is often mapped and included in the Grounds Maintenance contact to be maintained but the problem may often be that grass cannot be cut for other reasons such as fly tipping that has not been removed access issues or blockages such as vehicles blocking access.

Housing and Locality teams receive a weekly report from Parks where grass has not been cut and the reasons for Housing or Locality Teams to resolve. Community Payback has been used in some sites to bring the area back to standard to be maintained on contract.

It is important to note that a level of due diligence is required before instructing works to ensure that the land is in public ownership. When land is found to be in private ownership then action is considered using formal enforcement powers to undertake minimal maintenance to prevent public nuisance e.g. where vegetation impacts on the highway.

Current position:

Position has not changed