

# **Housing Scrutiny Commission**

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**Feedback to Housing Scrutiny Commission on the  
recommendations made by the Communal Cleaning  
Task Group.**

Housing Scrutiny Commission : 27 July 2015

Assistant Mayor for Housing : Cllr Andy Connelly  
Lead director: Ann Branson

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**City Mayor**

## **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: all
- Report author: Suki Supria, Marie Murray and Alex Doyle
- Author contact details: 37 51 25
- Report version number: V2.1

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides the formal feedback required by the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the recommendations made by the Communal Cleaning Task Group on 18th March 2015.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Please see section 3 which clarifies all the proposed actions and comments that are made in relation to the recommendations made by Housing Scrutiny Communal Cleaning Task Group.

### **3. Supporting information including options considered:**

- 3.1 The recommendations made by Housing Communal Task Group which was reported to the Housing Scrutiny Commission on March 18th 2015 are as below. The proposed action /comment from Housing Services and City Cleansing is in red under each point :

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE TASK GROUP: PAGE 6 of the report presented to the Housing Scrutiny Commission 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015:**

##### **SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Tenants should ensure records of meetings fully reflect the issues they raise and proposed resulting actions should be monitored on a regular basis.

##### **Proposed Action/Comment:**

*Minutes are produced at Ward Meetings. However it may not be produced in local forums or walkabouts. Housing will ensure that any TARA or Tenants meetings reflect the issues that have been raised.*

- 2.2 Estate management staff should take proportionate steps to ensure able tenants clean the areas for which they are responsible. If necessary tenancy conditions should be amended to make this easier to enforce

##### **Proposed Action /Comment**

*Conditions of Tenancy are in place and enforceable however we have to be reasonable and proportionate in the actions that are taken. It may be unreasonable for a tenant to have their house possessed because the communal areas had not been cleaned. There are many stages before we*

*consider litigation to repossess a dwelling.*

- 2.3 Signage showing cleaning schedules and scope and cleaners' sign-offs should be on all estate buildings which have the service. Sign-off boards should be monitored regularly by City Cleaning Service supervisors. Assistant estate management officers should also monitor the sign-offs on a regular basis and report concerns to the cleaning services team as appropriate

**Proposed Action/Comment :**

*This is already in place but may vary from area to area and a consistent approach may be needed. City cleaning supervisors monitor the standard of cleaning that is undertaken. Cleaning schedules and sign offs are in place. It is accepted that some surfaces may not allow Notice Boards and it therefore recommended that Estate Management will now look at all areas that are cleaned with a view to ensure appropriate Notice Boards are in a place, that cleaning schedules are placed , with the dates and times and are signed off. A programme will be established to do this.*

- 2.4 The cleaning service should be more proactive about devising new work patterns to deal with the current problems caused by ageing work surfaces, (for example by extending the time allowed for cleansing a block while at the same time reducing the frequency of cleaning)

**Proposed action/Comment**

*More Cleaning time will incur more costs. It is accepted that some of the work surfaces are in poor condition. It has been agreed by the Assistant Mayor that that a programme of works is undertaken to improve the surfaces of the worst blocks on a yearly basis. This will be achieved by a combination of the following:*

- 1) *A programme of Deep Cleaning*
- 2) *By using the Environmental and Communal Area Budget to improve surface area*
- 3) *Capital investment to improve the worst surface areas on a yearly basis*

- 2.5 The housing service should invest in infrastructure within estates to support the cleaning service, including storage areas and accessible water supplies. This should form part of the HRA environmental improvements programme

**Proposed action/Comment**

*This is accepted and a working group is being established, which will include Housing, City Cleaning and members of the Tenants Forum to look at these options and also to look at good practice across the country. This is also supported by 2.4.*

- 2.6 The cleaning service needs to invest in fit for purpose equipment, including trolleys to carry water and cleaning equipment and materials to enable front line staff to move more easily around the areas they are required to clean.

**Proposed Action/Comment**

*This is accepted and a working group is being established, to look at a number of issues that have been identified in this report. The group will include representatives from Housing, City Cleaning and members of the Tenants Forum. They will look at a number of these options that are cost effective and achievable and also to look at good practice across the country.*

## LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.7 A complete renegotiation of the communal cleaning contract is required. Recognising that it will impact on all parties a working group should:
- (i) define what areas should be covered by a communal cleaning service  
**Proposed Action /Comment**  
*This is accepted and a working group is being established, to look at a number of issues that have been identified in this report. The group will include representatives from Housing, City Cleaning and members of the Tenants Forum. They will look at a number of these options that are cost effective and achievable and also to look at good practice across the country.*
  - (ii) Re-calibrate work patterns to ensure enough time to do the required work. This should include further investigation into alternative frequency of cleaning associated with more times being allowed to do the work  
**Proposed Action/Comment**  
*The working group will look at the frequency and time allocated to undertake the cleaning*
  - (iii) Establish new cleaning standards reflecting current conditions. This should include investigating the cost and value of re-introducing annual and other period deep-cleans.  
*A programme of deep-cleaning is to be established commencing 2016/17. The programme will identify the worst blocks and have a yearly programme to undertake this.*
- The tenants and leaseholders forum could be a suitable vehicle for developing these issues, with the cleaning team joining it for the specific programme of developing new contract structures.
- 2.8 Charges should be simplified and more closely reflect the actual cost of the service provided. Tenants and leaseholders should be consulted on the level of service they require and what they are prepared to pay for it.
- Proposed Action /Comment**  
*The Assistant Mayor has not increased the service charge in 2015/16. We will consult tenants on the service levels.. It has also been agreed by the Assistant Mayor that a programme of works is undertaken to improve the surfaces of the worst blocks on a yearly basis. This will be achieved by a combination of the following:*
- 4) *A programme of Deep Cleaning*
  - 5) *By using the Environmental and Communal Area Budget to improve surface area*
  - 6) *Capital investment to improve the worst surface areas on a yearly basis*
- 2.9 A clear consultation process should be put in place to specifically ask tenants what service they want, its frequency and the likely cost. This should be

repeated on a three-year cycle to ensure consultation is reasonably relevant to all tenants. It could be part of wider tenant satisfaction consultation work. It should include tenants and leaseholders who do not receive the service.

**Proposed Action/Comment.**

*This is accepted and a working group is being established, to look at a number of issues that have been identified in this report. The group will include representatives from Housing, City Cleaning and members of the Tenants Forum. They will look at a number of these options that are cost effective and achievable and also to look at good practice across the country.*

- 2.10 The cleaning service should consider new methods of organising delivery of the service through more locally-based teams, possibly including the setting up of community co-op style contractors to develop greater community connections between contractors and users of the service.  
*Cleaners are locally based and work in specific blocks. However this can be looked at more detail by the Working Group.*

## TENANTS FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.11 The Tenants' and Leaseholders Forum met on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015 to consider possible recommendations to the Task Group. These are set out in the below table and should be considered in conjunction with the recommendations above.

No.	Recommendation
1.	Regular cleaning times and dates need to be set <i>This is the same as 2.3</i>
2.	Clear information needs to be available on notice boards to say when cleaning takes place and what is cleaned <i>This is the same as 2.3</i>
3.	A cleaning record should be pinned to notice boards and the cleaner should sign, with their name, after each clean <i>This is the same as 2.3</i>
4.	Produce a document that describes what an "acceptable" standard of cleaning is. <b><u>Proposed Action /Comment</u></b> <i>City Cleansing already have this in place. The supervisors monitor the standard and the cleaners have to reach 80% of the performance that is required.</i>
4.	A more effective, workable system should be in place for Estate Management Officers and cleaning supervisors to check cleaning has been completed and this is to an acceptable standard. This could be linked to fire safety inspections <b><u>Proposed Action/Comment</u></b>

	<p><i>This is accepted and will be incorporated in the new working arrangements of the Estate management Officers role. This will be incorporated in any estate walkabout, site inspection or fire inspection</i></p>
5.	<p>People should be made aware of the cost of the cleaning service</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comment</u></b></p> <p><i>Housing is currently looking at the possibility of a yearly statement to be sent to tenants that will include a breakdown of the costs of their rent which will include the cleaning charge. The working group will look at this in more detail. For new tenants this can be provided at sign up.</i></p>
6.	<p>A more effective system needs to be in place to cover cleaners when they are on holiday or sick</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comment</u></b></p> <p><i>This is already in place and City Cleaning have a 'relief team and a sub-contractor that will cover such periods</i></p>
7.	<p>Work needs to take place to encourage tenants to take more responsibility of keeping communal areas clean and tidy themselves. New tenants need to be advised <b>what</b> responsibilities they have and the responsibilities of the cleaners.</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action /Comments</u></b></p> <p><i>This is accepted and Estate management Officers will cover this at site visits and estate inspections. New tenants can be advised of their responsibilities at sign up.</i></p>
8.	<p>Include window cleaning as part of the cleaning service, also cleaning of communal doors and removal of all cobwebs</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comments:</u></b></p> <p><i>This is not part of the contract and is not part of the scope for this report.</i></p>
9.	<p>Ensure the cleaners have access to hot water to clean and a review to take place to ensure they are provided with the most appropriate cleaning materials and products</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comments:</u></b></p> <p><i>This is not feasible until appropriately assessed due to the risk of hot water being carried. The working group could look at this and look at what other authorities do and make recommendations.</i></p>
10	<p>Take steps to make the communal areas smell nicer</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comments:</u></b></p> <p><i>This is COSHH regulated in terms of the materials that are used. The materials that are used should ensure that the smell is neutral.</i></p>
11.	<p>Consider using the Community Payback scheme or the Neighbourhood Improvement Operatives to improve the appearance of the communal areas</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/ Comments:</u></b></p> <p><i>This service does not cover communal cleaning only the clearance of large overgrown landscaped areas.</i></p>
12.	<p>Pilot reducing the frequency of the cleaning, but increase the time available to clean when this takes place. To be agreed with tenants prior to the pilot taking place.</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comment</u></b></p>

	<p><i>A working group is being established, to look at a number of issues that have been identified in this report. The group will include representatives from Housing, City Cleaning and members of the Tenants Forum. They will look at a number of these options that are cost effective and achievable and also to look at good practice across the country.</i></p>
13.	<p>Over a specific timeframe review communal cleaning in each block to establish whether people want this to continue, and if so what standard of cleaning they want, involving tenant reps in this process</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comment</u></b></p> <p><i>A working group is being established, to look at a number of issues that have been identified in this report. The group will include representatives from Housing, City Cleaning and members of the Tenants Forum. They will look at a number of these options that are cost effective and achievable and also to look at good practice across the country.</i></p>
14.	<p>Review the communal cleaning charges to ensure the charge to tenants actually reflects the cost of the service</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comment</u></b></p> <p><i>A working group is being established, to look at a number of issues that have been identified in this report. The group will include representatives from Housing, City Cleaning and members of the Tenants Forum. They will look at a number of these options that are cost effective and achievable and also to look at good practice across the country.</i></p>
15.	<p>Consider using electric machines to carry out cleaning tasks e.g. steamers</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comment</u></b></p> <p><i>A working group is being established, to look at a number of issues that have been identified in this report. The group will include representatives from Housing, City Cleaning and members of the Tenants Forum. They will look at a number of these options that are cost effective and achievable and also to look at good practice across the country.</i></p>
16.	<p>If recommendations are implemented but do not improve the service consider whether it is more cost effective to use an external provider.</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Action/Comment</u></b></p> <p><i>This has already been done and an external contractor used in the 1990s. They could not cope with the demands of the service and terminated the contractor.</i></p>

#### 4. Details of Scrutiny

<p>Various Commission Cleaning Task Group Meetings            Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015            Report to Overview Select Commission 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015</p>
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## **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

### 5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 A programme of deep cleaning is expected to cost £50k a year. This could start immediately and can be funded from in year savings. A permanent revenue growth can be included in the 2016/17 budget. Improving floor surfaces could be met from the existing Environmental and Communal Area capital budget (£1m). District managers should make provision in their programmes to include such schemes. The current programme includes some replacement floor schemes. The value of these schemes in 2014/15 was £60K. Annual capital investment would be required to replace surface areas in poor condition. The proposed ongoing programme of £100k can be included in the capital bids for 2016/17. Funding would be subject to approval and other competing HRA schemes.

### 5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 There are no legal implications.

Jeremy Rainbow

### 5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

No Direct Climate Change implications

### 5.4 Equalities Implications

5.4.1 This review looks at the relationship between two council departments and their relationship with an external client group – namely council tenants and leaseholders who use their services.

5.4.2 The objective of the review is to make proposals which improve the service to tenants. Initiatives/recommendations that lead to improvements will impact tenants across all protected characteristics in a positive way. Well managed communal spaces can contribute to a sense of belonging and can foster good relations between, and within communities.

Surinder Singh (Equalities Officer) x 374148

### 5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None

[Redacted]

**6. Background information and other papers:**

Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**7. Summary of appendices:**

None

**8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

Yes

**9. Is this a “key decision”?**

No

**10. If a key decision please explain reason**