

Housing Scrutiny Commission

27th July 2015

Communal Cleaning Review

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an introduction to new members about this review, what prompted it and the way in which it was undertaken, as well as a summary of future actions relating to the report's conclusions and recommendations.

2. Current position

- 2.1 A task group set up by this commission reported to the March 2015 meeting of the Commission. The report to tonight's meeting is the Housing Department's response to the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 A long-running concern of councillors, tenants and tenant and leaseholder representatives has been the quality of cleaning in common areas across the council's housing estates.
- 3.2 Complaints had been made about the frequency, quality and cost of the service, which was provided by the council's cleaning services team.
- 3.3 The Housing Commission agreed to look into the issue and set up a task group made up of councillors and tenant representatives, and taking evidence from a range of witnesses.
- 3.4 A key feature of the work done by the task group was the determination of the Chair and Vice chair that it would involve the active co-operation with and input from tenants throughout the course of its work.
- 3.5 The scope of the meeting was agreed in August 2014 and task group meetings were held in October and December 2014, and in January 2015, before the final report was agreed in March 2015.
- 3.6 The work of the task group included a number of visits to housing estates across the city, talking to tenants and estate management staff. The visits were also used to conduct surveys with tenants. The results of the survey formed part of the evidence to the task group.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

- 4.1 These can be found through the link to the Commission meeting on 18th March 2015. There were general concerns about the variable quality of the cleaning service. But this was in part due to the deteriorating surfaces on many estates.
- 4.2 The cleaning service itself was felt to be stretched, and during the review the management of the work was strengthened by the department.
- 4.3 There was also felt to be a lack of investment by the cleansing department in upgraded cleaning equipment. But the problems were made worse by the ending of deep-cleaning of surfaces across many estates.

5. Looking ahead...

- 5.1 The housing department will continue to develop its responses to the report and its findings. This is most likely to be through the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum, which has been seen as a key partner for the Commission and the department.
- 5.2 Update reports will continue to come to the Housing Scrutiny Commission over the next few months.

6. One other thing...

- 6.1 What is a task group? Task groups have been developed as a way for Scrutiny Commissions to conduct in-depth reviews outside the normal cycle of commission meetings.
- 6.2 They are held in private, but report to the Commission, both while the work is in progress and produce a final report for consideration by the Commission.
- 6.3 They take evidence, both in the form of written evidence and evidence from witnesses, who can be asked to provide a written paper as well.

Jerry Connolly
Scrutiny Support Officer
13th July 2015