Housing Scrutiny Commission

Update on Communal Cleaning:

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 17th December 2015:

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Councillor Andy Connelly Lead Director: Ann Branson



Useful information

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1.Summary

- 1.1. A Housing Communal Cleaning Task Group was set up by the Housing Scrutiny Commission to look at communal cleaning that is undertaken in blocks of flats that are owned by Housing Services. This group comprised of ward councillors and representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum.
- 1.2. The Task Group reported it findings and made recommendations to the Housing Scrutiny Commission on 18th March 2015.
- 1.3. A joint report from Housing and City Cleansing was presented to the Commission on the 27th July 2015 in response to the recommendations that were made. It was also noted that a small working group including tenant's representatives would look at some of the recommendations and report back to the Commission.
- 1.4. The Commission requested a further update report on what was being undertaken in improving communal cleaning standards. This was requested in 6 months for the meeting in December 2015. The Commission had also requested that a Senior Member of the City Cleansing team attend the next meeting, to present information on specific actions taken in response to each recommendation (relating to the contractor only) in the task group report. Alick Doyle and Sean Atterbury (Head of Services) will be attending. Attached in Appendix 1 is the response.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the progress made on improving the communal Cleaning standard and the issues raised by the working group.
- 2.2 To report back to the next Tenants and Leaseholder Forum in January 2015.

3. Supporting information including options considered

3.1 The working group that met to look at some of the main issues raised by the Task Group consisted of tenants representatives from The Tenants and Leaseholders Forum, Bev Packwood from City Cleansing and staff from Housing Services.

3.2. Quality of communal floor areas.

- 3.2.1 The main area of concern is the condition of the floors in the communal areas in blocks of flats. Some of these blocks are of concrete construction and even after they have been cleaned the surface appears to be dirty and un-kept. It was agreed by the Assistant Mayor in the original report that a programme of works is undertaken to improve the surfaces of the worst blocks on a yearly basis. This will be achieved by using existing HRA budgets (in consultation with Tenants and Residents Associations and ward councillors). This will obviously be dependent on budgets being available to undertake this work. Some of the areas in the City for example in the Centre area had already been highlighted as having poor quality surfaces and improvements were identified to the concrete floor by placing non slip altro-flooring quality covering. The working group also visited the Saffron district and highlighted that the Neston Garden blocks was also in need of improvements. The Centre area had the most blocks of flats in the City.
- 3.2.2 The City Council have now procured under the framework contract a company that can undertake any 'finishing works' to a dwelling /block of flats. This includes improvements to flooring in communal areas. This company has been used to install nonslip altro flooring on Apollo Close (Wycliffe Ward) Please see appendix 2 the 'before and after photos of the flooring'. Ebrahim Jussat, Chair of the St Peters Tenants and Association has commented 'on the improved quality of the flooring and how impressive it was'. Mr Jussatt was going to write to all the tenants in the block outlining that they must take some responsibility in ensuring that the new surface is now well maintained and looked after.
- 3.2.3 In this financial year 2015/16 the following blocks will also have the communal flooring improved as in 3.2.2.
 - Apollo Close 2nd block (Wycliffe Ward)
 - Apollo Court (Wycliffe Ward)
 - Berners Street (Wycliffe Ward)
 - Mercury Close (Wycliffe Ward)
 - The cost of these works is £ 33,598. .
- 3.2.4 In the financial year 2016/17 it has been proposed to undertake improvements to the flooring areas in the following blocks of flats (Some of the schemes may have other associated works to be undertaken as well). Please note the HRA budget for 2016/17 has yet to be approved and will be going to the Executive in February 2016 for approval.

Block	Specification	Provisional
		Costs
Portmore Close 10 Blocks	Improve communal areas by vinyl tiling to floors Portmore Close 10 blocks	£30,000
Beaumont Leys		

Ward		
Fraser Close	Paint communal stairways and lay new	£21,000
Monckton Close	Floor coverings	
Vancouver Road		
Willow Street		
Calgary Rd		
Wycliffe Ward		
Mercury Close 2 Blocks	New floor coverings as per ongoing programme of improvements	£34,480
Atlas Close 3 Blocks		
Hydra Walk		
Vostok Close 2 Blocks		
Wycliffe Ward		
Lombardy Rise	Deep cleaning and floor replacement	£10,000
North Evington Ward	programme	
Neston Gardens	New altro flooring	£42,000
7 Blocks		
Heathcote Rd 2 Blocks		
Neston Rd 2 Blocks		
Saffron Ward		
Total		£137,480

3.3 Deep Cleaning programme

3.3.1. The Task Group noted that historically annual deep cleans used to be undertaken in some communal areas. This is no longer the case, and deep-cleaning is rarely undertaken on the estates. Returning to a more planned deep cleans would enhance the appearance of the communal areas. It was agreed at the last meeting that consideration be given to a programme of deep-cleaning

- be undertaken to block of flats that were in the worst condition, as identified by the Area Managers.
- 3.3.2. We already have a procured contractor that can undertake deep cleaning in our block of flats. The contractor can undertake a range of cleaning as required by the Area Managers as listed below.
 - Wash all walls from top to bottom.
 - Wash all windows and frames including the entrance doors internal and external entrances.
 - Strip and re seal all plastic flooring.
- 3.3.2. Since the Commission last met we have undertaken a programme of deepcleaning in our worst block. Appendix 3 is the list of all the block of flats that have had a deep clean this year.
- 3.3.3. The cost of deep cleaning is approximately £32,000. This programme of deep cleaning and improvements to the floor surfaces has also been supported by programmes of internal painting and external improvements to bin areas, block paving, cleaning bin chute areas and landscaping as requested by the Area Managers. This is financed through the Environmental Works and Communal Areas budget as prioritised by ward councillors and Tenants and Residents Association (TARAs).
- 3.3.4. The following areas are due to be cleaned later this financial year.
 - (a) Morton Estate. Humberstone and Hamilton Ward. Clean communal areas.
 - (b) Gilmorton Estate. Aylestone Ward .Clean windows and areas.
 - (c) Rushey Mead. Belgrave Ward. Clean communal areas.

3.4. Other areas that the Working-Group focused on.

- 3.4.1. There was a number of others that the Working Group looked at as well;
 - (a) That a programme of deep cleaning is continued in future years to support the work that has already been undertaken. This should include cleaning walls and surrounding surfaces. It was noted that this would obviously be dependent on the availability of appropriate budgets being made set aside to undertake this in future years.
 - Building Cleaning is to remodel the service to provide a dedicated team and manager specifically for the housing portfolio to ensure the delivery of high quality services for this purpose. An LCC team will be setup and equipped specifically for the purpose of period and deep cleaning of communal areas which will be in lieu of using outsourced providers. This will provide greater flexibility as well as being a more economical solution. The management teams of both building cleaning and housing will be working closely to mitigate any cost increases wherever possible.
 - (b) The group noted that on some of the estates the issue of having clean water was a problem. Where fresh water could not be obtained in some parts of the City, the surfaces were cleaned by water that already had been

previously used. It was noted that this was not across the City but only in a few areas. The group looked at a number of options such as asking tenants to supply fresh water, to installing outside water taps on the estates and finally that in some areas it should now be considered not to do the cleaning and request tenants to undertake this.

The Building Cleaning team are to trial backpack pulse mops and microfibre clothes with the estates. Both are relatively new innovations within the industry but well tested. Used together they will significantly reduce the volume of water used in the cleaning process which will remove the necessity for other solutions include water bowsers which were previously suggested. Additionally this represents best practice for the delivery of

sustainable cleaning services and meets to the published DEFRA standards.

Because of the course nature of the flat mop heads the necessity to provide additional periodic scrub offs is reduced. The system is far more productive than traditional mopping and therefore is a measure that will help mitigate costs.

Photographs of the system are attached in Appendix 4.

- (c) City Cleansing also outlined that they now are using a variety of stronger chemicals to remove some of the engrained dirt on the floors. This has made a difference in improving the standard of cleaning; staff have been appropriately trained to use this product. They are also using a product called 'lift –off' to remove some of the back dirt that has embedded on some of the floors. The group accepted this and noted this and would improve the cleaning on the estates.
- (d) City Cleansing were experiencing difficulties in recruiting but when the Working- Group met they had taken on more staff to improve the situation. They had also reconfigured working practices to support staff and the ensure standards were maintained. City Cleansing had taken on 2 additional supervisors to monitor the standard of cleaning and they also set up one additional team of 3 to work in some of the smaller blocks.

The further reallocation of tasks and introduction of an additional team will provide resilience for the service. Whilst recruitment within the cleaning industry is generally challenging, the service is working alongside agencies which is providing additional support when required.

(e) In addition to the changes made in (d) the Working- Group were also informed of the number of changes that City Cleaning had made to improve the standard of cleaning.

The Building Cleaning Service forms a key part of the Facilities Management (FM) offering of LCC. Recent changes in management have positioned the service to be supported and focussed not only on internal support the organisation but commercially in the FM marketplace of the public sector.

Consequently there will be significant changes to the way the service delivers cleaning, interacts with customers, and its support functions. The introduction of a new computer system "Concerto" in Q1 of 2016 will enable the production of site by site cleaning information for the customer's benefit which will improve transparency. A manager will be responsible for the portfolio of house and will be undertaking a site by site review of cleaning input (time required on site), working practices, and equipment. Additionally the manager will be responsible for performance monitoring of the service by qualitative inspection of sites that will also monitor the compliant method of delivery and any customer feedback.

The review of sites will be an instilled practice with the service which will be part of the continuous improvement cycle of the service.

The Service also has applied to become members of the British Institute of Cleaning Sciences (BICSc) which is the national industry body cleaning. By doing so it will have access to publications and demonstrations of new developments within the industry. All cleaners will be trained to BICSc standards.

Whilst it is recognised the aforementioned is for introduction in 2016 there have been many other improvements to date including:-

- Invested in new trolleys to assist staff in carrying equipment and water.
- Trailing of new chemicals cleaners to improve the standard of cleaning.
 Further meetings are being arranged with suppliers to look at other products on the market that would assist staff in cleaning communal areas.
- They were trailing new chemicals cleaners to improve the standard of cleaning. Further meetings are being arranged with suppliers to look at other products on the market that would assist staff in cleaning communal areas.
- Retraining of staff to ensure they are aware of the cleaning specification and standards required on site.
- Members of the Working-Group visited areas of the City that were being cleaned to observe the new methods of working. Members of the group went out with the supervisor and visited some of the estates and noted that the new methods were working. They were pleased that Chlorination tablets were being used and that this had made a difference. They noted that walls in St Matthews were in a bad condition and were not being cleaned, however it was outlined is was not in the current specification. The group outlined that St Matthews floor surfaces were the worst and these needed to be prioritised in any future improvement programme. The group was very impressed with the standard of cleaning in the Mowmacre area.
- (f) The group noted that the each area had different frequencies and this varied from area. This was set up according to the particular block when the contract was being set up. To review this and to standardise this across the City would be a major exercise and it was agreed that this was something that may have to be considered when the contract is reviewed or procured. The group stated that in the long term a complete re-negotiation of the

specification, charges, frequency of cleaning should be considered. In addition it was noted that there should be a clear consultation process in place and that this should be carried out every 3 years. It was agreed that this would be placed on the work programme of the Housing Transformation Team to consider.

See note (e) above. The cleaning team will be constantly reviewing sites in conjunction with housing officers. Any suggested changes will only be implemented after consultation with tenant associations.

(g) The group noted that some tenants and tenants groups were prioritising improvements to landscape areas, car parking and environmental works rather than prioritising improvements to the floor surfaces. The group stated that Area Managers be notified that this was a priority for any future spend in their areas.

4. Details of Scrutiny

4.1. Various Task Group Meetings. Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission 18th March 2015. Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission 27th July 2015.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications (Peter Coles – Principal Accountant)

As outlined in the original report July 27th 2015.

5.2 Legal implications (Jeremy Rainbow – Supervisory Legal Executive)

As outlined in the report of July 27th 2015

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications (Environmental Team)

As outlined in original report July 27th 2015

<u>5.4 Equality Impact Assessment (Surinder Singh – Equalities Officer)</u>

As outlined in original report July 27th 2015

6. Background information and other papers:

Various Commission Cleaning Task Group Meetings Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission 18th March 2015

Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission 27th July 2015

7. Summary of appendices:

- Appendix 1
- Appendix 2 Before and after photographs of St Peters Estate
- 8. Is this a "key decision"?

No

No.	Recommendation
1.	Regular cleaning times and dates need to be set
	This is the same as 2.3 Although regular cleaning times and days are in place –due to having to cover a lot of areas the cleaning times do change and sometimes the days change. This is also complicated because of the service has resource difficulties.
2.	Clear information needs to be available on notice boards to say when cleaning takes place and what is cleaned
	This is the same as 2.3 As we were going around the estate we highlighted several blocks without notices boards – this information should have been giving to the housing offices for action – once in place our cleaning specification will be available.
3.	A cleaning record should be pinned to notice boards and the cleaner should sign, with their name, after each clean
	This is the same as 2.3 The signing records sheets are provided by the housing office and sometimes they may not get replaced - City Cleaning will be monitoring this to ensure that this is minimised. The cleaning staff are instructed to do this at all times - but we know that some may get missed.
4.	Produce a document that describes what an "acceptable" standard of cleaning is. Proposed Action /Comment
	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.
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 Proposed Action/Comment 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 We are going to introduce regular inspections of sites with Housing officers and Supervisors.
	Kath Thurman to supervise the housing portfolio and have a monthly meeting with housing officers at Ian Marlow Centre. Revise inspection sheet.
5.	People should be made aware of the cost of the cleaning service Proposed Action/Comment 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.

Concerto to improve this. Please see main report

6. A more effective system needs to be in place to cover cleaners when they are on holiday or sick

Proposed Action/Comment

This is already in place and City Cleaning have a 'relief team and a subcontractor that will cover such periods

We have agreements with agencies and sub-contractors to provide resilience.

We are still having problems with covering some posts - but continue to try to either fill the vacancies and recruit ongoing casual staff.

7. 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 **what** responsibilities they have and the responsibilities of the cleaners.

Proposed Action /Comments

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.

More photographic evidence of rubbish being left in blocks will be produced at our meeting.

8. Include window cleaning as part of the cleaning service, also cleaning of communal doors and removal of all cobwebs

Proposed Action/Comments:

Internal glazed panels are not currently in the specification however these could be as an improvement to the service delivery. There would be a cost site by site for this.

This is not part of the contract and is not part of the scope for this report.

9. 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

Proposed Action/Comments:

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.

We are constantly reviewing products for effectiveness and compliance to DEFRA MBS for the cleaning industry to ensure best practice. Discussions are ongoing about access to water.

Hot water where accessible is decanted in to containers and taken out on site using trolleys – staff are trained in the process and risk assessment completed.

10 Take steps to make the communal areas smell nicer

Proposed Action/Comments:

This is COSHH regulated in terms of the materials that are used. The materials that are used should ensure that the smell is neutral.

As we are all aware we are cleaning up the estate and trying to get the floors appearances to look brighter / cleaner – we have been using Chlorination daily and striping chemicals to get rid of the old polish around the edges - which the supervisors have been working alongside the cleaning staff during this process and the end results have been good.

11. Consider using the Community Payback scheme or the Neighbourhood Improvement Operatives to improve the appearance of the communal areas **Proposed Action/ Comments:**

This service does not cover communal cleaning only the clearance of large overgrown landscaped areas.

We have used community payback in the past and would do so again for this purpose if offered and managed appropriated.

12. 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.

Proposed Action/Comment

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.

We find there is a build-up of debris in between cleans therefore our suggestion would be an increased frequency of cleans.

We would still maintain the frequencies need to be increased - this areas are used 24/7 but some as we know are only cleaned once per week.

13. 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

Proposed Action/Comment

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.

A dedicated manager will be assigned to this project and will meet with tenant

associations and housing staff at agreed intervals to discuss specification, quality and outcomes. We are restructuring the service to support flexibility.

We are planning to visit some other sites in different authorities— to get feedback which should help us with these types of cleaning.

Periodic cleans should be also applied but will mean additional charges.

14. Review the communal cleaning charges to ensure the charge to tenants actually reflects the cost of the service

Proposed Action/Comment

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. As above

Concerto to support this.

15. Consider using electric machines to carry out cleaning tasks e.g. steamers

Proposed Action/Comment

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.

As above

We are discussing access to electricity for this purpose and putting together a programme of improvements and periodic cleans.

16. If recommendations are implemented but do not improve the service consider whether it is more cost effective to use an external provider.

Proposed Action/Comment

We are proposing to continuously review the service to and if necessary will sub contract.

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.

APPENDIX 2

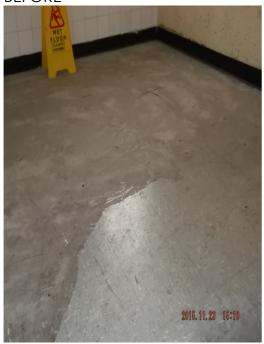
BEFORE



After



BEFORE





AFTER





APPENDIX 3

Communal Cleaning. Deep cleaning

1-6/31-36 EMBURN HOUSE CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS New Parks Ward

1-33 / 34-66 CRAYBURN HOUSE CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS New Parks Ward

2-4 WOKINGHAM AVENUE CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Eyres Monsell Ward

145-153 AYLESTONE DRIVE CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Aylestone Ward

65-71 MONMOUTH DRIVE CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Eyres Monsell Ward

LOMBARDY RISE
CLEAN
LANDINGS/STAIRS/ENTRANCES/WINDOWS
North Evington Ward

ROWLATTS HILL HARROWDEN/IFFLEY/SANDFORD CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Thurncourt and Evington Ward

GILMORTON CLOSE 10 BLOCKS CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Evres Monsell

WEST COURT
CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS
Castle Ward

ORONSAY ROAD 2-12 / 14-30 CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Beaumont Leys Ward

NESTON GARDENS 73-80 CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Saffron Ward MOWMACRE HILL 5 BLOCKS CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Abbey Ward

B.L.E LIMEGROVE 6 BLOCKS CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Beaumont Leys Ward

HEATHCOTT ROAD 37-47 / 133-143 / 145-151
CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS
Saffron Ward

GLENHILLS BOULEVARD 12 BLOCKS CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Eyres Monsell and Aylestone Ward

LANSDOWNE ROAD 17-19 CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Saffron Ward

BELVOIR DRIVE 3 BLOCKS CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Aylestone Ward

CHARNWOOD ESTATE 49 BLOCKS
CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS
North Evington Ward

BELGRAVE FLATS 23 BLOCKS CLEAN TO COMMUNAL AREAS Belgrave Ward

ST MATTHEWS ESTATE Various CLEAN TO CHUTE ROOMS Wycliffe ward

ST MATTHEWS ESTATE CLEAN TO GLASS AND FRAMES Wycliffe Ward

ST MATTHEWS ESTATE CLEAN TO WALKWAYS Wycliffe Ward

ST MARKS ESTATE 15 ENTRANCES CLEAN WALKWAYS/ENTRANCES/STAIRS Wycliffe Ward

APPENDIX 4

Communal Cleaning-Pulse Mopping Kit

