

Repairs Service Review Group
Thursday 11th December 2008
10am – 1pm
Minutes

Present:

Betty Barnfield
Russ Williams
Gloria Godwin
Dick James
Doreen Gower
Stacey Ashfield
Stephen Sheehan
Cyril Davies
Martin McCallin
Matthew Edwards
Helen Greenway

Property Services Manager
Grounds Maintenance Team
Grounds Maintenance Team
Contracts Manager
Customer Involvement Officer

- 1. Welcome**
Helen welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of what the meeting would be about.
Actions
- 2. Voids Challenge Days**
Helen discussed setting the dates for the quarterly Voids Challenge Days for the coming year.

She asked the group which days of the week and it was agreed to set the dates for Weds mornings. **HG to arrange**

Dates for Voids Challenge Days are as follows:
 - **Weds 28th January**
 - **Weds 29th April**
 - **Weds 29th July**
 - **Weds 28th Oct****SS to oversee development of this Challenge Group**

The volunteers for the next Challenge Day in January are:
 - Gloria Godwin •Russ Williams •Dick James •Doreen GowerBetty Barnfield will be a volunteer on the April Challenge Day.

3. **Grounds Maintenance Services**

Helen gave an update on what we have achieved on the Grounds Maintenance Service Standards so far.

Since the last meeting, we have developed a survey form that was sent out to all tenants in blocks that have communal areas that are maintained by the Grounds Maintenance Team. The survey form was developed from the draft standards that the SRG helped to produce. We wanted to capture what customers who receive the service around communal areas thought.

Stephen Sheehan brought all the survey forms that have been returned to us to the meeting and explained that they had not been entered onto the computer yet to be analysed.

Stephen asked the group to break into two teams and then to help us go through some of the surveys to get a flavour of what other customers thought about Grounds Maintenance and the proposed standards.

4. **Grounds Maintenance Service Survey Forms**

The SRG members were split into two teams. Each team was then asked to select 10 random survey forms. We then went through the forms, section by section, pulling out comments and getting a flavour of what people in blocks feel about the Grounds Maintenance Services. Helen and Stephen took the notes for each group.

The following is what came from the 20 random samples the SRG members selected:

Section 1 Grassed Areas

- Never looks tidy – cut too often
- Grass cutting left everywhere then taken into home
- Men do a good job / leave it tidy
- Do a very good job and then tidy up
- More efficient staff would help (to cut grass between the dates given)
- The grass service is about right
- Grass cutting should be done more often between the dates given
- Clean up properly – not just 'blow it'

Section 2 Leaf Collection

- Pathway under trees are a hazard

- You should collect leaves from disabled people's doorways and from those properties that are empty
- Collect leaves on the path outside gates
- Leaf collection doesn't get done quickly enough at Stallard Court
- Leaf collection hasn't been done for 5 years (where we are)

Section 3 Shrubs and planting areas

- Want prettier bedding plants and shrubs
- Replacing hedging with flower beds
- Not enough care taken by residents and gardeners
- Dog fouling is a problem in shrub and planting areas

Section 4 Trees

- Trees are making it dark – blocking out light – need cutting back
- Light pruning needed
- There are too many branches overhanging, but Cyril's Team have recently dealt with this
- Berries from tree on lawn are never cleaned up

Section 5 Hedges

- If complaints are received about hedges, you should respond and cut it then
- Not enough care from HHL in some cases
- Should be done more than twice a year and at different dates
- Twice a year is about right
- Hedges are not cut back hard enough

Section 6 Play Areas

- The play area at Broxash is in poor condition
- Not much equipment, druggies hang around there – equipment is vandalized (referring to Council play area)
- Used as dumping area – dogs fouling (referring to another Council play area)

Section 7 Garage Areas

- Cars parked day and night blocking access
- Street light would be useful
- Garages used as storage – cars park outside – blocking access
- Garage sites near us are in good and fair condition

- The garage area near Stallard Court is in poor condition – covered in leaves and litter

Section 8 Courtyards, Footpaths, Communal Clothes Drying areas and Car Parks

- The trees cause sticky substance on our clothes line
- Leaves need removing
- Can branches be cut to let in more light?
- Big bins to put more rubbish in
- Put rubbish out and does not get taken away
- Pot holes in car park
- Clothes line pulled down and gates pinched
- Communal areas cleaned more

Section 9 Fly tipping / dumped rubbish

- Some rubbish is left outside flats
- Neighbourhood Watch groups – could they help with identifying culprits of flytipping?
- Those who dump rubbish should pay
- Rubbish bags are left outside of gates
- More skips
- (From SRG Members): Where there are hotspots / repeated problems, could CCTV cameras be installed to collect evidence?

Section 10 Winter litter picking

- Littering has got worse around our sheltered scheme since the warden service has changed
- There is usually a litter problem around our scheme
- Non-tenants are responsible for dropping the litter
- Litter is sometimes a problem
- Need more litter bins
- Children cannot reach to put litter in the big wheelie bins

Section 11 Grounds Maintenance in general

We asked people about their satisfaction ratings for the Grounds Maintenance Service in general. Of the people who answered this question within the random samples, we had the following results:

Very satisfied	4 people
Fairly satisfied	10 people
Fairly dissatisfied	1

Suggestions for improving the service:

- Employ more staff
- Inspect the methods used and supply them with brooms

Section 12 Residents own gardens

We asked, where residents have their own gardens, if they would be interested in grass cutting service at a reasonable rate. Some told us that they would be interested and would be willing to pay between £3 and £5 per visit.

Section 13 Becoming a representative to monitor Grounds Maintenance Standards

A few people from the forms we looked at said that they would be interested in being a representative to help us monitor the Grounds Maintenance Standards in their areas. A few others said they would consider this, but would like more information.

SS to follow up

5. What will happen next

Stephen told the group that all the returned survey forms will be input entered onto the computer and the results will be put into a report. We will then incorporate the results within the draft Service Standards.

We will also write out to everyone who posed a question within their survey form and respond to their query / suggestion.

SS to follow up

A copy of the report and a copy of the draft service standards will be posted out to all the SRG members.

6. Date of next meeting

The following dates have been set for the Repairs Service Review Group meetings for the year (times will be confirmed).

- Fri 13th March
- Fri 12th June
- Fri 11th Sept
- Fri 4th Dec

HG to add to the What's On Calendar

These dates will be added into the 'What's On' section on Herefordshire Housing's website. All meetings will be held at our Head Office at Legion Way. Invitations will go out as usual nearer the time.