

BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on 16th June 2024

Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group – Review of Grounds Maintenance on Council Estates

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing

Classification	This report is Public
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PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To inform Scrutiny of the completion of the recent review by Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the Tenant Engagement Strategy, one of the ways in which tenants can engage with the Council is via the Challenge and Change Group. This Group delivers the tenant scrutiny function of the tenant engagement and governance structure (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The review has taken place between June 2024 and March 2025, across six meetings and one day of site visits.
- 1.3 Tenants were supported by the Tenant Engagement Officer, Jane Calladine; the Housing Strategy and Development Officer, Joanne Wilson and Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager, Richard Camps.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The tenants chose to review the Grounds Maintenance on Council Estates (provided by Streetscene). Tenants had concerns on the quality of the service, whether voids gardens are being maintained to the required standard and the negative impact this can have on neighbourhoods.
- 2.2 As part of the review tenants spoke to a number of officers. They completed a site visit to three new build schemes, two existing estates with communal open space, and two void properties to assess the standard of grounds maintenance.

- 2.3 Tenants have looked at the different areas of ground maintenance - grass cutting, hedge cutting, weed spraying, assisted gardens service, and tree management and maintenance.
- 2.4 Tenants have reviewed works schedules and sought clarification on how the service adjusts when impacted by the weather.
- 2.5 The tenants have agreed recommendations across four areas (see section 6 Appendix 2):
- Clarification of responsibilities for both tenants and the Council.
 - Clarification of the current maintenance programme and potential factors which can impact planned works.
 - Evaluation of the quality of maintenance works and how this is assessed by the service.
 - Analysis of complaints related to grounds maintenance and action taken.
- 2.6 Attached at Appendix 2 is the final report from the review for Members information.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 In order to ensure good communication between the Member and Tenant Scrutiny functions, it is essential that Members are informed of completed reviews and their recommendations. This will ensure there is no duplication of review by Members into the same service area, allowing time for tenants recommendations to be implemented.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Members could choose not to be informed of the work completed via tenant scrutiny, but this creates a risk of duplication of review work.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee note the recommendations of the Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group in relation to the Grounds Maintenance on Council Estates.

Approved by Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk

Yes ☒

No ☐

Details:

Most of the recommendations can be accommodated within existing budgets. Recommendations 1.1, 1.2 and 3.3 require further investigation which may conclude that resources need to be adjusted in order to deliver further service improvement. If this is the case, further discussions will take place as part of the service managers budget setting process and reports submitted to Members/Executive for any significant changes to budget allocations/service delivery.

Under Recommendation 4.2 use of Gov.Notify would likely be contained within the annual allowances given to each account (unlimited emails and 10,000 texts).

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection)

Yes ☐

No ☒

Details:

There are no legal implications from the recommendations.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing

Yes ☒

No ☐

Details:

Further investigation in relation to Recommendations 1.1 and 3.3 may identify that additional staffing resource is required or that existing staffing resource needs to be adjusted to meet service demands. This would be brought back to the relevant committee/Executive for consideration if determined a suitable course of action.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

Equality and Diversity, and Consultation

Yes ☒

No ☐

(Please speak to the Equality and Diversity Officer for advice)

Details:

Tenants engaged in the review have devised the recommendations in conjunction with officers, based on evidence assessed which included both anecdotal and documented evidence of tenant experience.

Recommendations related to maintenance of grass, planting, hedges on communal open space will have a positive impact on older, potentially disabled residents who are more likely to reside in the adjacent properties.

Environment

Yes ☒

No ☐

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment. *(Please speak to the Climate Change Officer for advice)*

Details:

Recommendation 2.1 aims to ensure that planting incorporated on new build schemes meets planning obligations while also being suitable for the location/tenants

expectation and maintainable within existing service resources. Evidence shows recent biodiversity planting has not been appropriate/maintained.

DECISION INFORMATION:

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies:</p> <p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue (a) Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.</p> <p>Capital (a) Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.</p> <p>District Wards Significantly Affected: <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick All if all wards are affected:</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p> <p>If No, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i></p> <p>Consultation carried out: <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p>Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing

The Tenant Engagement Strategy and our objectives link to the following corporate aims:

- Our Customers by providing excellent and accessible services

DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

Appendix No	Title
1	Tenant Engagement and Governance Structure
2	Bolsover Tenants Challenge and Change Group – Review of Grounds Maintenance on Council Estates

Background Papers

(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).