

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGE AND CHANGE ON IMPLEMENTATION FOLLOWING SCRUTINY REVIEW

Title of Review:	Review of Grounds Maintenance on Council Estates				
Timescale of Review:	June 2024 - March 2025		Post-Monitoring Period:	12 months commencing 30.06.25. Interim report January 2026.	
Date agreed by Scrutiny:	16.06.25		Date agreed by Housing Stock:	20.05.25	
Total No. of Recommendations and Sub Recommendations 12	Achieved	6	On track	0	Extended 1
	Achieved (Behind target)	0	Not on track	0	Suspended 0
	Withdrawn	3	Not Started	0	Failed 2

Key Achievements:

- Streetscene are now more involved in new-builds at the planning and plant/tree selection stage, this needs to be maintained through close working relationships with key stakeholders.
- Ability to log photos of void gardens as part of inspection commenced July 2025.
- Letting survey revised and implemented from July 25 and now captures tenant feedback on garden condition when a property is relet.

Reasons for non-implementation of Recommendations:

- Recommendations 1.1 and 1.2 are now withdrawn, as work will now progress under the Tree and Woodland Strategy led by Planning Policy. Recommendation 1.2 will likely require further review once Planning Policy have the database in place and required works have been identified.
- In relation to 3.1, the service continues to use an informal approach to quality checking which is not truly independent of the teams operating across the District, as per the recommendation.
- In relation to 3.3 the service maintain that the existing approach/provision is the most cost-effective way of delivering the service. Consequently, this recommendation has 'not started' and members of the Board may wish to consider withdrawing the recommendation.
- Use of social media posts to highlight changes to grass cutting/grounds maintenance works has not yet commenced.
- Recommendation 4.2 cannot be delivered. It is not possible to notify specific tenants in advance of Assisted Garden Service visits, as the service schedule may change in response to operational requirements and adverse weather conditions.

Code	Recommendation	Reason For Recommendation	Timescale	Responsible Officer/Team	Resources	Progress	Status
1.1	Streetscene to create a database of trees on BDC Housing land and complete a tree survey.	Currently there is no database of trees. A database can be used to plan a survey of all trees in the district and draw up a maintenance schedule. This would change the approach of tree management from reactive to planned. Regular surveys will be required to keep the program up to date.	January 26 To commence obtaining spatial co-ordinates of 1500 known trees to commence plotting onto MyMaps. To provide costings for full tree survey. 23.06.25 Tenants thought timescale should be 3- 4 months September/October 2025 so this can be budgeted for and commence from 01.04.26 but this is unachievable with the number of trees involved.	Richard Camps Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager	Existing MyMaps GIS system could be updated to add Trees. This will require additional (qualified) staff resource.	<u>January 2026</u> This is a significant piece of work requiring an officer to work on the project almost full time. It requires someone who is specially trained in both GIS systems and conducting tree surveys to map the entire trees on, which we don't not currently have with the GM team. The need for additional resource means that we are unable to progress this recommendation at this time. <u>Update July 2026</u> Between June 2025 and June 2026, Councillors from the Customer	Withdrawn

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						Services Scrutiny Committee conducted a review of Grounds Maintenance and Green Space Standards. The review is currently in its final stages, and it is likely that a resulting recommendation will support and align with this recommendation. Further to this the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy has now been adopted by Executive and production of the database will be led by Planning Policy..	
1.2	Consider contracting out tree maintenance or a hybrid approach. Costings required to inform decision	There is a backlog of tree work required, and nesting birds limit the time available each year to complete the work. Contracting out some or all tree work would reduce the backlog of work. This	6 months January 26 to obtain costing for outsourcing outstanding tree work to clear backlog.	Richard Camps Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager	Will require additional financial resources for internal staff or additional financial	<u>January 2026</u> The service will not be contracting day to day tree work out. Only individual, large specialist projects will be contracted	Withdrawn

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		could be considered on a larger scheme rather than individual trees. Clearing the back log of tree maintenance would allow a planned achievable program to be implemented.	23.06.26 tenants thought timescale should be 3- 4 months September/ October 2025 to get costings so this can be budgeted for and commence from 01.04.26 and start on backlog of tree work		resources to outsource some work to contractor(s)	where the HRA allows. Due to the significant costs associated with this which are beyond current resources we are unable to progress this recommendation at this time. <u>Update July 2026</u> Between June 2025 and June 2026, Councillors from the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee conducted a review of Grounds Maintenance and Green Space Standards. The review is currently in its final stages, and it is likely that a resulting recommendation will support and	

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						align with this recommendation. Further to this the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy has now been adopted by Executive and production of the database and subsequent maintenance identified will be led by Planning Policy.	
2.1	Streetscene to suggest planting schemes on new build council properties so that only self-maintaining, slow growing planting is provided.	Additional new build properties add to Streetscene workload with no additional resources given. Site visits revealed new planting schemes have substantial weed growth and overgrown shrubs. Current resources do not allow for weeding/pruning. Streetscene need to be able to maintain all new planting, so this needs to be self-maintaining/slow growing to reduce workload and will	Immediate	Planning/ Dragonfly (Development)/ Housing/ Streetscene	Existing staff resources	<u>January 2026</u> Streetscene are now more involved in new-builds at the planning and plant/tree selection stage, this needs to be maintained through close working relationships with key stakeholders.	Achieved

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		improve visual appearance on estates.					
2.2	Prior to handover of new build properties Streetscene to agree areas for grass/hedges that are to be maintained. Streetscene are to ensure this is added to Mymaps and work schedules.	The group have established that certain new build sites have had lack of service due to lack of planning /agreeing areas that need maintaining. Attending the site visits with plans from Mymaps it has been proven that grounds maintenance required at certain new build sites has not been recorded or added to the schedule. This resulted in areas not being maintained.	Immediate	Dragonfly (Development)/ Housing/ Streetscene	To use existing staff resources. An internal process is now in place for future schemes	<u>January 2026</u> Streetscene are now more involved in new-builds at the planning and plant/tree selection stage, this needs to be maintained through close working relationships with key stakeholders.	Achieved
2.3	Repair Co-Ordinators to take photographs of garden at void inspection and send to Streetscene Co-Ordinators.	This would enable Streetscene Co-Ordinators plan work required, to ensure the team that attend have the correct equipment and sufficient staff.	2 months August 2025	Dan Barley Repairs and Voids Manager Dragonfly (Management)	Use existing system (Total Mobile and existing staff resources	<u>January 2026</u> Innovation Officer has started work on internal processes soon to be tested with Streetscene prior to implementing. Implemented in July 2025.	Achieved

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3.1	Implement 10% quality checks are completed by Streetscene Area Co-ordinator within 1 week of work being completed.	The only quality checks are currently carried by the Team Leader who is not impartial. The timescale is necessary to assess grass cutting standard before regrowth	9-12 months March 26-June 2026	Richard Camps Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager		<u>January 2026</u> Quality Checks are being undertaken by Team Leaders and Co-Ordinators <u>Update July 2026</u> These are informally undertaken by Team Leaders and Co-ordinators when on their site visits.	Failed
3.2	Spot checks by Tenancy Management Officer, Housing Assistant (Tenancy) without the team knowing when and where checks are to take place.	This would allow for an impartial check on the standard of work by the Housing Department. This would allow monitoring of the service and whether the service is delivered to a satisfactory standard.	Immediate	Housing Management- all staff	Existing staff resources. Need to set up an internal process to report and record any issues	<u>January 2026</u> Spot checks to be started once grass cutting season commences in March 2026. <u>Update July 2026</u> Due to resource constraints, spot checks are not undertaken. However, any grounds	Achieved

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						maintenance issues identified by Housing staff during site visits are reported to the Tenant Engagement Officer and subsequently raised with the StreetScene Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager for investigation and appropriate action.	
3.3	Set up a dedicated team within Streetscene to work solely on void properties/ Assisted Gardening.	There are currently delays in maintaining void gardens due to other commitments, for example to cut graveyards. This results in overgrown, untidy gardens at void properties which can have a detrimental effect on the neighbourhood. A dedicated team would ensure void properties are given the required level of priority	6 months January 26 To obtain costings of an additional team	Richard Camps Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager	Existing staff to monitor if poor garden condition is cause of delays to let voids/ assess the quality of service/ cost extra staff resources	<u>January 2026</u> Costs to recruit a specific voids team would far outweigh the requirement to use them. As it stands now, the team who service void properties are dual purpose, enabling them to be used full time, a separate team for voids would not be cost	Withdrawn

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		alongside wider service requirements.				effective impact is reduced. <u>Update July 26</u> This recommendation has been withdrawn as there are insufficient resources and costing to provide a separate team.	
4.1	Streetscene to analyse complaints data.	At the meeting on 24.03.25 it was confirmed there is no analysis undertaken of complaints on the grounds maintenance service. Analysing complaints will establish trends which can lead to customer influenced improvements.	To commence within 1 month July 2025	Customer Standards and Complaints Officer with Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager	Existing staff	<u>January 2026</u> Trend analysis is being undertaken on all complaints. Additionally, these are discussed at Service Review meetings held 6 monthly. <u>Update July 2026</u> This is included in the service review meetings undertaken every six months with the Contact Centre.	Achieved

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4.2	Streetscene to publish via social media, contact centre/town centre boards & use email/text service to notify tenants on Assisted Gardening that they will be visiting within a date range.	On attending an Assisted Gardening, if there is dog faeces in the lawn, they will not cut the grass. On occasion Assisted Gardening tenants are not in when the team attend. These missed visits and dog faeces issues result in gardens being overgrown, impacting on the appearance of the local area. Prior notification may result in less missed visits due to no access and provide the tenant an opportunity to clear up dog faeces.	1- 3 months July - September 2025 to introduce using social media, contact centre boards to provide general information on seasonal changes to workload	Richard Camps, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager and Communications , Marketing and Design Manager		<u>January 2026</u> Unable to notify specific properties in advance, due to changing work demands. However, we can provide social media updates on wider issues affecting the team. For example, tree work commencing or delays in grass cutting due to adverse weather. <u>Update July 2026</u> Streetscene intend to use social media to provide updates, but these will be very general in nature (such as beginning/end of mowing season, adverse weather affecting service etc.	Failed

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4.3	Housing Assistants (Tenancy) to obtain feedback from new tenants at New Tenancy visits on standard of communal gardening/ Assisted Gardening.	Officers are in contact with new tenants up to 4 times a year. Officers can use this opportunity to capture tenant feedback on standard of garden when property let and ongoing communal maintenance.	2 months August 2025	Housing Assistants (Tenancy) and Tenant Engagement Officer	Existing staff	<u>January 2026</u> Letting survey is being revised to include questions to capture this information. Letting survey revised and implemented from July 25 and now captures tenant feedback on garden condition when a property is relet.	Achieved
4.4	Streetscene to consider publishing when they are working in an area via of Bolsover District Council website, Contact Centre/town centre boards, text service/emails/social media posts.	There is limited information available for tenants to know what service is provided by Streetscene and how often. This can lead to additional complaints. For example, grass cuttings not collected, when are they attending? This could result in greater customer satisfaction, reduced calls to contact centres, less complaints.	3 months September 2025 to introduce using social media, contact centre boards etc to provide general updates start/end of mowing season, works suspended due to bad weather etc	Richard Camps, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Manager and Scott Chambers Communications, Marketing and Design Manager	Existing staff and social media	<u>January 2026</u> The service will be working with the Communications Team to start publishing generic updates via communications such as 'beginning of mowing season, adverse weather etc. <u>Update July 2026</u>	Extended

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						Generic updates can be provided on social media. The service will begin to use social media when the summer hedge cutting commences in 2026 which will impact on the mowing.	