

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet Housing Committee – 19 February 2025

Communal Areas Improvement Project Update

Accountable member:

Cllr Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services

Accountable officer:

Paul Leo, Interim Housing Transformation Director

Ward(s) affected:

All wards with council housing stock.

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

This report is to update the committee on the project to improve the cleaning and maintenance of communal areas.

Recommendations:

1. To note the report.
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1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

The project does not require additional budget. The new equipment and other costs have been covered from existing budget.

Signed off by: Gemma Bell, Director of Finance and Assets gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

The provision of cleaning and maintenance of communal areas is part of the obligations on the landlord under the tenancy and lease agreements and is recharged to residents.

Signed off by: Claire Hughes, Monitoring Officer claire.hughes@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

There are no direct environmental or climate change implications in the improvement plan.

Signed of by: Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, Maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity
- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

There are no direct implications from the improvement plan.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

The satisfaction with communal area maintenance is one of the areas in the Tenant Satisfaction surveys which are regularly carried out. An improvement in the satisfaction level will show how well the improvement plan is working.

2 Background

2.1 In the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) report to the Cabinet Housing Committee at its meeting on 13 November 2024 maintenance of communal areas was one of the areas that had the lowest satisfaction rating with 65% of tenants being satisfied. In response, the team responsible for communal areas has been implementing an improvement plan.

2.2 The estate services team are working to address dissatisfaction with the cleaning of communal areas and the following activities are in progress:

2.2.1 New Cleaning Rotas & Schedules – After a review new rotas and schedules were introduced in June 2024. Historically cleaning teams may have visited the same estate more than once in a week to clean different blocks on that estate. The new rota reduces the number of visits with more time spent at each location to complete the cleaning to all blocks on the estate. This approach reduces travel time, dedicates more time to cleaning, increases the impact of the cleaning and the visibility of the cleaning teams.

2.2.2 New equipment – The team has now deployed new equipment including battery powered backpack hoovers and battery powered floor scrubber/dryers which are more effective than the brooms, mops, and buckets which had been used previously. This new equipment is more suited to the flooring that many of the blocks now have, such as non-slip vinyl or laminate floors, and allows a better quality of clean in an efficient manner. There are no trailing leads, and the floor is dried as it is cleaned which allows for a safer environment for employees, tenants and visitors.

2.2.3 Block survey form – a block inspection form for use by staff has been created. It incorporates

ideas from colleagues across different teams who been involved by providing ideas and feedback to ensure that the final form will work for each team. Initially the form is being piloted in paper format as a template for staff to complete when out on the estates visiting the blocks. The intention is to develop this an electronic form (using Versa mobile working tool). Tenants have agreed to pilot the use of this form and feedback on the cleaning service by completing the form and commenting on the form itself.

- 2.2.4 Team meetings – we have covered the feedback received via the Acuity customer satisfaction surveys and the cleaning staff have discussed the feedback and ways that they may improve quality and efficiency in their work. The new equipment will help, as would a collective more proactive approach to their work, for example, planned replenishment of van stocks and better route planning. Attitude and behaviours have been discussed with the team to reinforce expectations around providing quality services for our customers.
 - 2.2.5 Estate Inspections are taking place on a quarterly basis with Tenancy Management and the Estates & Cleaning Supervisor, with Councillors and Police also attending.
 - 2.2.6 CCTV Installed – CCTV has recently been installed at the block which has been subject to the greatest level of fly-tipping. In conjunction with CBC Neighbourhood Team, Tenancy Management and the Estates and Cleaning Team monitoring this block, it is anticipated that the CCTV cameras will act as a deterrent to fly tippers. We are also exploring the possibility of joint funding for more CCTV capacity.
 - 2.2.7 Dedicated multi-trade resource – from November onwards a multi trade person has been dedicated to work specifically on communal areas, visiting one block at a time in a planned way to complete an inspection which will be recorded on the versa mobile working form. Any repairs will then be completed by the same operative wherever possible.
- 2.3 The Estates Maintenance Supervisor will be available to answer members' questions at the meeting.

3 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 The committee are asked to note the report and raise any issues where more information is required.

4 Alternative options considered

5 Consultation and feedback

- 5.1 The tenants and leaseholder panels have been involved in developing the improvement plan and actions and are providing feedback on its effectiveness.

6 Key risks

- 6.1 There are no additional risks linked to the recommendations. This work relates to corporate risk CH5 which is reproduced in Appendix 1 below. This covers tenant satisfaction.

Report author:

Paul Leo, Interim Housing Transformation Director, email: paul.leo@cheltenham.gov.uk.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Background information:

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Report to Cabinet Housing Committee 14 November 2024.

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
CH5	Tenant Satisfaction - If there is a decline in the quality of services delivered to tenant's, then this may result in reduction in customer satisfaction (evidenced through the TSMs) affecting the quality of life experienced by residents in Cheltenham and leading to referral to the Housing Ombudsman and/or Regulator for Social Housing.	Claire Hughes	4	3	12	Reduce	<p>Effective oversight of service delivery performance by senior officers, Cabinet and Housing cabinet committee.</p> <p>Review and monitoring of service standards.</p> <p>Effective tenant voice and listening and acting on tenant feedback.</p> <p>Learning from complaints.</p> <p>Review of nation TSM data</p>		