

Area Panel:

**28 August, 3 September, 5 September,
6 September 2018**

Briefing Paper:

**Update on Improve Your Estates
Programme**

Introduction

This report provides an update on one of the actions resulting from the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) satisfaction survey carried out in June 2016. The survey was carried out by Housing in order to capture how satisfied and dissatisfied residents were with services and areas which may have been in need of improvement. The results of this survey revealed a 2% drop in customer satisfaction in respect of Neighbourhoods.

The survey results, along with the council's immediate response to them, were reported to the Housing & New Homes Committee on 18 January 2017. With a follow up report on 20th September 2017 detailing the actions designed to improve the areas of service tenants were most concerned about.

This update will focus on the progress made with a range of actions to improve council housing public areas and the general quality of life on estates.

Discretionary Decorating and Gardening Schemes

The need to be in receipt of Housing Benefit has been removed from the qualifying criteria for the Discretionary Decorating and Gardening Scheme for tenants. This change could result in up to 650 tenants over the age of 70 being able to apply for help with gardening and/or decorating. This is the first time tenants under 70 years of age have been able to receive help with being able to decorate and improve their home.

Housing Officers and Tenancy Sustainment Officers can also now refer 'families in need' to the scheme.

Review of Estate Inspections

A new team of Field Officers have been recruited and started a two month training programme in July. By the end of summer 2018, Estate Inspections will no longer be carried out by Housing Officers and a period of review will begin. A project group are currently looking into innovative and exciting ways in which to deliver Neighbourhood improvements from spring 2019 which will be delivered by the Field Officers. New ways of working could include using Neighbourhood Action Plans, and linking in with the Capital Works programme to make sure desired changes take place. Residents will be encouraged to

give their ideas and suggestions which will be included in decisions and improvements in areas across the city.

Untidy Gardens

Recruitment is currently underway for an extra Housing Officer to work on a project to bring about an improvement to the standards of our gardens across the city. There is potential to explore options to 'garden for your neighbour' and community food growing schemes to be developed. The Housing Officer will use a balance of support and enforcement to bring about visible change to our Neighbourhoods. This project will be in place by the end of September 2018.

Grounds Maintenance

A review of the current Grounds Maintenance contract is taking place. As part of this review a new tree inspection regime using GPS technology to record tree types and locations will be implemented. A weed spraying schedule is being investigated to cover car parks and garage sites and around communal drying areas, which are not covered under the current schedule. Work is continuing with City Parks to ensure the current standards are being met and resident groups will be engaged with to support gardening projects, such as food growing in local areas.

Contact:

Mel Fraser, Performance & Improvement Officer

e: Merryl.Fraser@brighton-hove.gov.uk

t: 01273 29 5368