

Challenge for Change

Scrutiny Presentation 2013

Grass Cutting

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Introduction

Who are the
Challenge for
Change
Team?

Purpose of
the Scrutiny
Project

Methods for
gathering
evidence

Key areas for investigation

What is grass cutting?

Customer expectations

Management

Communication

Objectives

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To make recommendations to ensure grass cutting is managed in a more efficient and cost effective way

To understand why tenants feel the way they do about grass cutting

To understand what the grass cutting service is

To recommend improvements in communication

To publish our activities in newsletters, on the website and at CWF

Findings

Staff Forums

- We met with the Managers of Sheffield Homes and Sheffield City Council
- All were given the opportunity to discuss their experience of the grass cutting service and asked questions about the other information gathered by Challengers

Service Level Agreement

- We scrutinised the Service Level Agreement (SLA)

Monitoring

- We also discovered that the only real monitoring that takes place is by the contractor, who then reports back to Sheffield Homes that the service is of an acceptable standard and is being maintained as per the SLA

Tenant Inspectors

- Tenant Inspectors told us that the maps they are issued with are usually out of date



Customer Survey

- We devised a questionnaire which we used to gather responses from Tenants and Residents
- Most of the people we have spoken to are not happy with the service
- We also contacted the TARAs and most of the replies that we have received report that the service falls far short of the expected standards





Budget

Budget Allocation

Challenge for Change was allocated £12,000 for this year

How it was spent?

- Training
- Attendance at regional scrutiny conference
- C4C member travel expenses
- Refreshments

Budget Review

The group ensured all budget decisions were based on value for money

The group's financial spend has come in under budget

Conclusions

- The Service Level Agreement is not clearly worded and is therefore open to interpretations
- Monitoring is not done as a matter of course, even though the SLA states that it will be done
- Communication between Sheffield Homes and the contractor is not sufficient
- Maps are completely out of date, this has led to some invoicing for areas that simply do not exist anymore. TARAs do not have up to date maps either
- Tenant Inspectors are not receiving adequate feedback when they report problems
- Pricing mechanisms are totally out of date, this has led to some areas being charged at the same rate for a push along machine as a ride on one
- No enforcement action is being taken where the contractor has failed to deliver or where the service is not up to standard

Recommendations

- We have made 17 recommendations
- Many relate to increasing value for money of the service:
 - Payment to be made on a per cut basis and not by the height of the grass
 - An urgent review of pricing mechanisms for different tasks/types of work
- Other key recommendations are:
 - Grounds maintenance should be based on housing boundaries rather than community assembly boundaries
 - Weed spraying should be done more than once a year
 - Review and rewrite the SLA with customer input
 - Better communication
 - Develop and implement a new and more efficient monitoring system
 - Update the mapping system

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- Parks and Public Realm Manager
- Sheffield Homes Estate Officers
- Parks and Public Realm Managers
- Tenant Inspectors
- Tenant and Residents Associations



Any Questions?