

**FEEDBACK ON BENCHMARKING PEER REVIEW EXERCISE**

Report of the Chief Executive

**1. SUMMARY**

This report provides detail of the outcomes and action plan following the Estate Services Peer Review 2010.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

To note and comment on the contents of this report.

**3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The reasoning behind the Estate Services peer review is to obtain a balanced, independent, resident led assessment of the quality of the Estate Services functions. These services currently include Grounds Maintenance, Cleaning and Caretaking and Security. Obtaining an external perspective on the quality of Estate Services delivered, gives us a useful reality check and gives both staff and tenants the opportunity to network, and to learn from others.
- 3.2 In 2009/10 Derby Homes linked with Nottingham City Homes to undertake a Peer Review Exercise. A joint training session provided by Housemark was arranged for both organisations prior to the exercise using a photo quality guide (Housemark) which contains 24 elements including car parks, play areas, lifts, bin chutes, graffiti and litter.
- 3.3 Following this initial exercise it was agreed to extend the benchmarking exercise to include 3 further organisations – Berneslai Homes, St. Leger of Doncaster and Sheffield Homes.
- 3.4 The peer review exercise involves up to 2 officers and 2 tenants from each of the organisation visiting 3 estates. On their visit to Derby the group visited City Road flats, Shannon Square and Rivermead House.
- 3.5 The results of the peer review have been collated and a report produced by Phil Saunders, Business Improvement Manager of Nottingham City Homes and is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.6 It should be noted that each visit represents an assessment based on the three blocks and does not necessarily represent the condition of blocks across the whole of the organisation. It does, however, reflect what the tenants saw during their visit, either good or poor.

- 3.8 A detailed analysis of the scores were received from the lead organisation at the end of the review
- 3.7 In the overall 'peer review' score for Housemark's Estate Services Benchmarking 2009/10 Derby Homes scored 77.74% and placed us 4<sup>th</sup> out of the 5 organisations that took place in the peer review. This was calculated from the caretaking/cleaning and grounds maintenance result and is comparable with the 2008/09 score of 77%.
- 3.8 In the quality score for Caretaking/Cleaning and Estate Amenities Derby Homes' score of 77.95% placed us 4<sup>th</sup> out of the 5 organisations. This was calculated from 21 elements contained in the score sheet for caretaking/cleaning and is an increase on the 2008/09 score of 76%.
- 3.8.1 The three elements which scored the lowest percentages of 64.58%, 66.67% and 67.86% respectively were:
- communal bin shed and drying areas
  - cleanliness of windows
  - signage around Estates and Block Notice Boards.

These findings will go to the Home Process Improvement Team to discuss there. Estate Pride funds have been focussed on communal areas on flats for some time and will need to continue to do so. Notice Boards within flats will be considered by Housing Focus Groups in January 2011.

- 3.9 For Grounds Maintenance, Derby Homes scored of 76.49%, placing us 4<sup>th</sup> out of the 5 organisations. This was calculated from 3 elements contained in the score sheet for grounds maintenance and is a decrease on the 2008/09 score of 82%.
- 3.9.1 The element which scored the lowest percentage for Grounds Maintenance at 72.62% was:
- grassed areas.

However, this result should be viewed with caution as one visitor scored considerably lower than the other visitors and may have misunderstood the scoring system for this element.

- 3.10 Detailed results and comments from the Estate Services peer review and the Housemark Benchmarking report is available on request from Julie Eyre, Performance Manager.

**The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report**

- Consultation
- Financial and Business Plan
- Legal and Confidentiality
- Personnel
- Environmental
- Equalities Impact Assessment

- Health & Safety
- Risk
- Policy Review

**If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or the Chief Executive, [phil.davies@derbyhomes.org](mailto:phil.davies@derbyhomes.org) - Tel 01332 888520**

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**Background Information:** None

**Supporting Information:** None

# Estate Services Peer Review 2010

A guide to the Peer Review of Caretaking and Estate Services in Barnsley, Derby, Doncaster, Nottingham and Sheffield.



Report compiled by Phil Saunders, Business Improvement Manager, Nottingham City Homes  
11<sup>th</sup> October 2010

## Introduction

This report sets out the approach taken by the following ALMO's to assess each others performance in relation to caretaking and grounds maintenance.

### Organisations Involved

- Berneslai Homes
- Derby Homes
- Nottingham City Homes
- St Leger Homes of Doncaster
- Sheffield Homes

The initial idea of collaborating on the exercise arose following discussion between officers of Nottingham City Homes, Derby Homes and Sheffield Homes. It was agreed that we should form an alliance to undertake the exercise in a programmed manner.

Following a meeting attended by members of the group at Derby Homes' Head Office on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2010 it was agreed that the 5 organisations would work together to develop a process of self regulation of their caretaking and estate management functions. This self regulation would be undertaken with the involvement of tenant inspectors from each of the 5 organisations.

The process was agreed to follow the guidance of HouseMark's peer review exercise, which would enable sector wide benchmarking. The group agreed a set of ground rules to follow during the process, shown at Appendix 1.

At the meeting a formal process was agreed and lead organisations were agreed upon. It was decided that each year, all of the organisation would be visited once by the other 4 members.

As a result of this the inspections took place as follows

Organisation being assessed	Lead Organisation
St Leger Homes of Doncaster	Berneslai Homes
Berneslai Homes	Nottingham City Homes
Sheffield Homes	St Leger Homes of Doncaster
Derby Homes	Sheffield Homes
Nottingham City Homes	Derby Homes

It was agreed that the lead organisation would choose which areas to visit, thereby providing some independence and that areas were not being 'cherry picked'.

The lead organisation would collate the reports from each tenant inspector from all 4 organisations undertaking the visit and compile a combined scoring sheet which would then be forwarded to the host organisation.

The host organisation was required to facilitate the event at their organisation by providing transport for the day and refreshment and lunch. A room was also provided for the assessing organisations to deliberate at the end of the assessment. The hosts also provided officers who would act as guides throughout the visit.

At the end of each inspection the host organisation was asked to leave the room whilst the Tenant Inspectors discussed their findings.

The maximum number of attendees was agreed as follows:

- 2 Tenant Inspectors from each of the 4 visiting organisations who would be supported by up to 2 officers from each organisation.

Officers were not expected to score the service, but to give advice and assistance to the Tenant Inspectors.

## Benefits of the Scheme

- Gives an unbiased representation from tenants across a wide range of organisations across the Midlands and South Yorkshire
- Gives tenants and officers an insight into the service provided elsewhere
- Enables tenants and officers to network and to learn new things
- Gives organisations the opportunity to improve, based on the on-site feedback and report.
- Provides for an effective means of benchmarking, as those tenants scoring the service have visited all sites, making for meaningful comparison.
- Gives tenants confidence to go on to do other things.

## Areas under scrutiny

The guidance provided by HouseMark requires organisations to inspect a range of activities, including the following:

<b>Caretaking/Cleaning and Estate amenities</b>
Car Parks
Garages and Garage Areas
Paths, roadways & courtyards
Play areas & seating areas
Litter removal from communal areas, grassed areas & shrubs
Graffiti removal
Security of tank and meter rooms
Rubbish chutes
Cleanliness of windows
Cleanliness of ledges & window sills
Cleanliness of light fittings & working condition
Sweeping & washing of stairs, landings, entrance halls & lobbies. Washing down of tiles and painted walls.
Entrance halls and lobbies
Handrails, ledges and banister rails.
Lifts – (Floors)
Lifts (Doors, panels and frames)
Cleanliness of walls in communal areas.
Bin chambers.
Communal bin shed & drying areas.
Paths, roadways & courtyards
Play areas & seating areas
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>
Grounds Maintenance – grassed areas
Grounds Maintenance – weed clearance
Grounds Maintenance - shrub bed & hedge maintenance.

Each area is scored depending on the condition found by the inspectors. Some areas are given a higher weighting than others to ensure that factors such as litter and condition of entrance halls to blocks is given a higher priority, in line with tenant concerns. The inspectors are each given a pictorial guide to assist them in coming to a consistent view.

## The findings

The results from each of the assessments are shown below. Whilst there is a wide variation in the scores for each organisation, it should be noted that each visit represents an assessment based on 3 blocks within each organisation, including at least one high rise block. Therefore this score may not necessarily represent the condition of blocks across the whole of the organisation. However, it does accurately reflect what the tenants saw during their visit, either good or poor.

A more detailed analysis of the scores were returned to each organisation at the conclusion of each assessment. It is not intended to replicate that here, as that information is particularly relevant to the host organisation concerned. The figures below give an overall reflection of the scores given by tenants. The maximum score available to any organisation is 100%.

Organisation	Caretaking	Grounds Maintenance	Overall Score
Derby Homes	77.95%	76.49%	77.74%
Sheffield Homes	83.30%	81.25%	82.90%
Berneslai Homes	81.00%	80.00%	81.00%
Nottingham City Homes	92.07%	83.18%	90.87%
St Leger Homes of Doncaster	67.00%	75.00%	69.00%

The scores for each organisation will have been provided to HouseMark for inclusion into the national benchmarking exercise. Whilst the national benchmarking has some value, it is probably important to emphasise that the benchmarking within the group may be more relevant, due to the fact that it was the same tenants, giving an opinion across the 5 organisations. This obviously is not the case when comparing on a national basis, although the HouseMark guidance will help minimise any inconsistency.

## Conclusion

During conversations with tenants involved in the project it seems they were very supportive of the programme, and were keen to participate in the future. It has enabled officers and tenants to understand what happens elsewhere and can act as a springboard for change. Some organisations have since the exercise discussed working practices with a view to making further improvements to the service.

It is planned to continue with the exercise in 2011.

Thanks go to everyone involved in the project who made the exercise a success. In particular, thanks go to the Tenant Inspectors who gave up their time, in all weathers to enable each organisation to carry out the peer review.

# Appendix 1

## Proposal to undertake estate assessment

### Peer Review Procedure

#### 1. Contacts

[Phil Saunders](#) Nottingham – Lead contacts  
[Nikki Giles St Leger Homes](#) – Lead contact  
[David Abbott St Leger Homes](#)  
[Iain McLaren Sheffield Homes](#) – Lead contact  
[Zoe Barlow Sheffield Homes](#)  
[Valerie Watson Derby Homes](#) – Lead contact  
[Margaret Wardle Derby Homes](#)  
[Darren Asquith Berneslai Homes](#) – Lead contact

#### 2. Who will take part

2 x tenants (1 reserve) from each organisation  
2 x officers from each organisation

All four organisations will visit the host organisation

#### 3. Prior to the visit

The host organisation will liaise with their lead organisation and supply a list of areas for the lead to pick from. This will determine the areas where the inspections will be carried out. The host should chose areas that have both high rise and low rise flats where possible.

Berneslai Homes will be lead for St Leger Homes  
St Leger Homes will be lead for Sheffield Homes  
Nottingham City Homes will be lead for Berneslai Homes  
Derby Homes will be lead for Nottingham City Homes  
Sheffield Homes will be lead for Derby Homes

#### 4. Arranging the visit

The host organisation will arrange the following:-

- Buffet Lunch for all parties attending
- Refreshments
- Travel to get around to inspect the areas
- Car parking spaces for visiting organisations
- Meeting room for the commencement and closure of the day

#### 5. At the visit

The host will arrange for a meeting room to be available at the start of the day so all parties can get together for around 20 to 30 minutes and the host will advise all present about the agenda for the day.

The host will ensure the day is split into a morning and afternoon session and the inspectors will be split into two groups, visiting one of the areas in the morning then the second area in the afternoon. One of the tenant reps from each organisation will be in each group.

### **6. Closure of the day**

The host will organise a room where all parties can get together and discuss their scoring at the end of the day. It will be the responsibility of the lead organisation to collate the information on the average scores and feed it into HouseMark.

The host organisation will not be present at the closure meeting, so not to sway any scores. The results will not be circulated until the inspections for all the organisations has been carried out.

