

ESTATES SERVICES PEER REVIEW 2012

Report of the Director and Company Secretary

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update the City Board of the Estate Services Peer review exercise conducted earlier this year and to report on the outcomes.

2. RECOMMENDATION

To note and comment on the contents of this report.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 HouseMark is a membership based organisation helping the housing sector to improve performance and achieve value for money.

In 2008 HouseMark introduced a process for organisations to visit each other to carry out a detailed assessment of caretaking and grounds maintenance services.

A pictorial guide was produced by HouseMark, together with a detailed scoring system to ensure a consistent approach is applied across organisations. Derby Homes first took part in this benchmarking in 2009 and worked with Nottingham City Homes.

Officers and tenant and leaseholder representatives from both organisations attended a training session at Derby Homes with HouseMark.

The objective of an Estate Services peer review is to obtain a balanced, independent, resident led assessment of the quality of our Estate Services functions. 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.

- 3.1.2 In 2010 the benchmarking group was expanded to include:

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

- 3.1.3 The organisation due to be visited offers three sites for assessment which must include high rise and low rise sites, garage sites and playgrounds. The lead

organisation selects which sites should be visited. The lead organisation is responsible for collating the final assessments and reporting back to the host organisation.

- 3.1.4 The process adopted this year was similar to previous years, except that in order to make the process more efficient it was agreed that only one officer from each organisation would attend and that whereas in the past, tenants would split into two groups, necessitating the need for two minibuses, it was agreed that tenants would visit as one group. It is estimated that these changes achieve approximately £4,000 savings spread across the organisations.
- 3.1.5 The only other change this year was that it was felt appropriate to re-visit the blocks that were assessed in 2010, to provide a meaningful benchmark.

Block visited in 2010 and 2012 were:

- Rivermead
- City Road
- Shannon Square and Sussex Play Area

- 3.1.6 The host organisation is required to facilitate the event at their organisation by providing transport for the day and refreshment and lunch. A room is also provided by the host organisation to deliberate at the end of the assessment and the hosts provide officers to act as guides throughout the visit.

3.2 Outcomes

- 3.2.1 The results of the peer review have been collated and a report produced by Phil Saunders, Business Improvement Manager at Nottingham City Homes and is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2.2 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.

The format of the report has changed this year to give a more pictorial view of the results. The report provides a direct comparison between the results for 2010 and 2012 as the same blocks were visited during these years.

- 3.2.3 24 elements are assessed as part of the review process. Each tenant inspector is issued with a scoring sheet and scored each of the 24 elements out of 4, however some elements are given a higher weighting to ensure factors such as litter is given a higher priority in line with tenant concerns. The scores awarded by each tenant are then averaged for each area assessed and an overall rating for each element is awarded.
- 3.2.4 In the overall 'peer review' score for the Estate Services Benchmarking 2012 Derby Homes scored 83% and placed us 3rd out of the 5 organisations. This was calculated from the caretaking/cleaning and grounds maintenance result and is equal to the score received in 2011 (83%).

As a direct comparison we received a score of 78% for the same blocks in 2010, an increase of 5%.

- 3.2.5 In the quality score for Caretaking and Cleaning Derby Homes' score of 83% placed us 3rd out of the 5 organisations. This was calculated from 21 elements contained in the score sheet for caretaking/cleaning and again shows an improvement on performance for the same blocks inspected in 2010 (78%).

The highest scores received were for:

- Security and tidiness of intake rooms and dry stores (100%)
- Graffiti removal (96.88%)
- Communal bin shed and drying areas (91.67%)

- 3.2.6 The quality score for Grounds Maintenance identified the biggest variation in scores over the three years. Again we were ranked 3rd out of the 5 organisations, receiving a score of 86%, an improvement of 10% on the scores received in 2010 (76%).

There was an improvement in all three elements in this area with the highest increase in 'Grounds Maintenance – grassed areas' for which we received a score of 89.29%, an increase of 16.67% on the score received in 2010 for the same blocks.

- 3.2.7 A number of positive comments received included:
- Information contained in notice boards excellent
 - Exterior aesthetically pleasing – well maintained
 - Impressed that tenants chose colours for the communal areas of their blocks – shows Derby Homes are listening to tenants and implementing their wishes when possible
 - Children's play area excellent and well kept.
- 3.2.8 The feedback received from the other organisations seeks to identify areas of improvement and enhances the work being done on our estates and our blocks by our own staff, contractors and tenants to help Derby Homes deliver excellent services.

Housing Management and Investment teams have been involved in preparing for these visits and have received details of the results.

4. RISK

There is a possibility that organisations will only select their 'best' sites and blocks for visits, although this would reduce the learning outcomes from the exercise.

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

Consultation
Financial and Business Plan
Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Policy Review

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact:
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Background Information: none
Supporting Information: none

Estate Services Peer Review 2012

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

Final Report



Phil Saunders
Business Improvement Manager

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

2012 is the third year that the peer review exercise has been undertaken by each of the organisations listed above. Thanks go to all involved in particular the tenants who took part, visiting organisations across South Yorkshire and the North Midlands. This collaboration has been a great success to date and is still one of only a handful of similar collaborations across the UK. Indeed this group was only the second such group to be developed in line with the HouseMark Peer Review process when it started in 2010.

The process adopted was similar to previous years, except that in order to make the process more efficient it was agreed that only 1 officer from each organisation would attend and that whereas in the past, tenants would split into 2 groups, necessitating the need for 2 minibuses, it was agreed that tenants would visit as one group. It is estimated that these changes achieve approximately £4,000 savings spread across the organisations. The only other change this year was that it was felt appropriate to re-visit the blocks that were assessed in 2010, to provide a meaningful benchmark. The process to follow the guidance of HouseMark's peer review exercise, which would enable sector wide benchmarking was reconfirmed. The groups agreed set of ground rules to follow during the process, are shown at Appendix 1.

Each organisation has a defined lead, and the details of this are given below.

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

The lead organisation has collated the reports from each tenant inspector of all organisations undertaking the visit and compiled 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.

The maximum number of attendees was agreed as follows:

- 2 Tenant Inspectors from each of the 4 visiting organisations who would be supported by 1 officer from each organisation.

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

In 2012 it was agreed that host tenants could take part in the visit but they would not be allowed to score. This was felt relevant as some inspectors hadn't visited sites in their own areas and it was useful for them to draw comparisons.

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:

Caretaking/Cleaning and Estate amenities
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
Grounds Maintenance

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%.

The format of the report has changed this year to give a more pictorial view of the results. The report provides a direct comparison between the results for 2010 and 2012 as the same blocks were visited during these years.

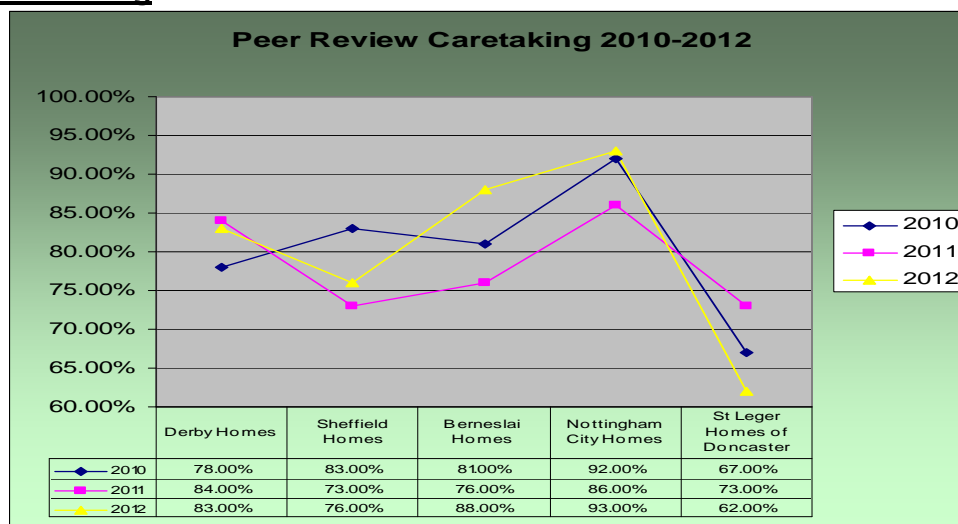
The results show a mixed picture with 2 of the organisations showing an improvement between 2010 and 2012 whilst 2 others saw a reduction in the score provided by tenants.

Comparison results for the period 2010-2012

It should be noted that the sites assessed in 2011 were different to those assessed in 2010 and 2012, therefore, the charts below are not comparing the same blocks throughout the period.

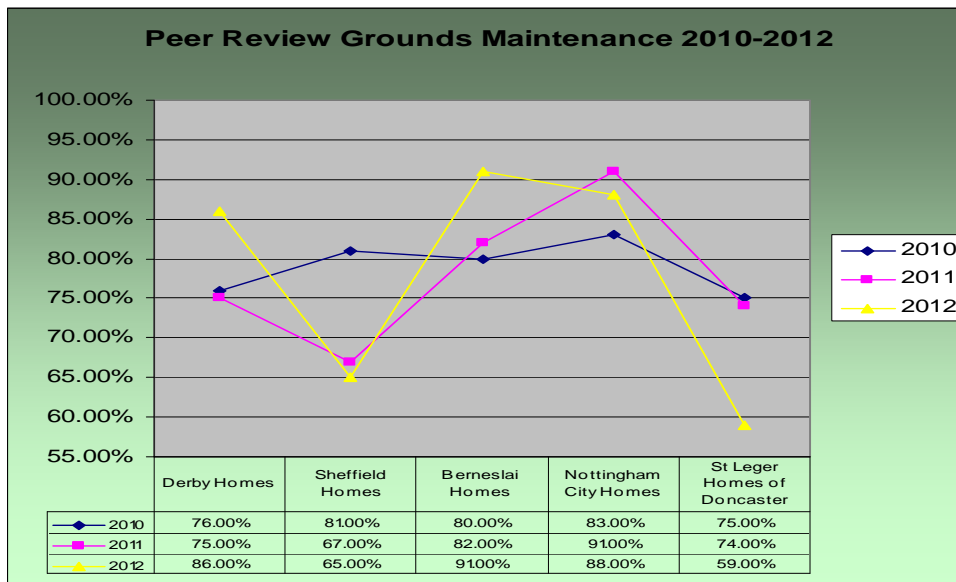
The charts below show the scores provided for each organisation for the 3 assessments between 2010 and 2012, in relation to caretaking, grounds maintenance and a combined score for both caretaking and grounds maintenance.

Caretaking



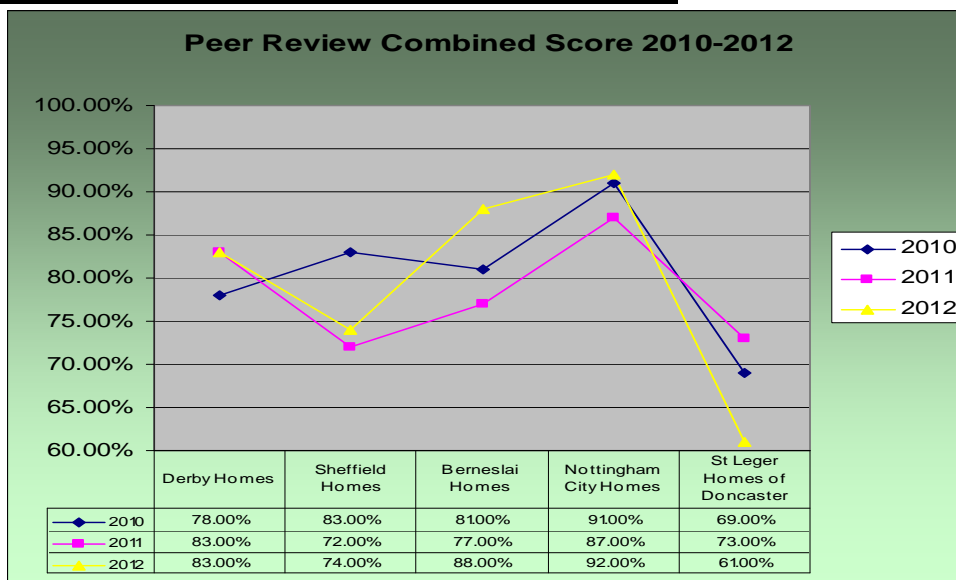
This chart shows performance for Caretaking. Despite blocks visited in 2011 being different to other years it does show that the overall position of the organisations when scored has remained similar

Grounds Maintenance



There has been a bigger variation in scores over the 3 years at some of the organisations when compared to Caretaking. Berneslai Homes has shown continued year on year improvement.

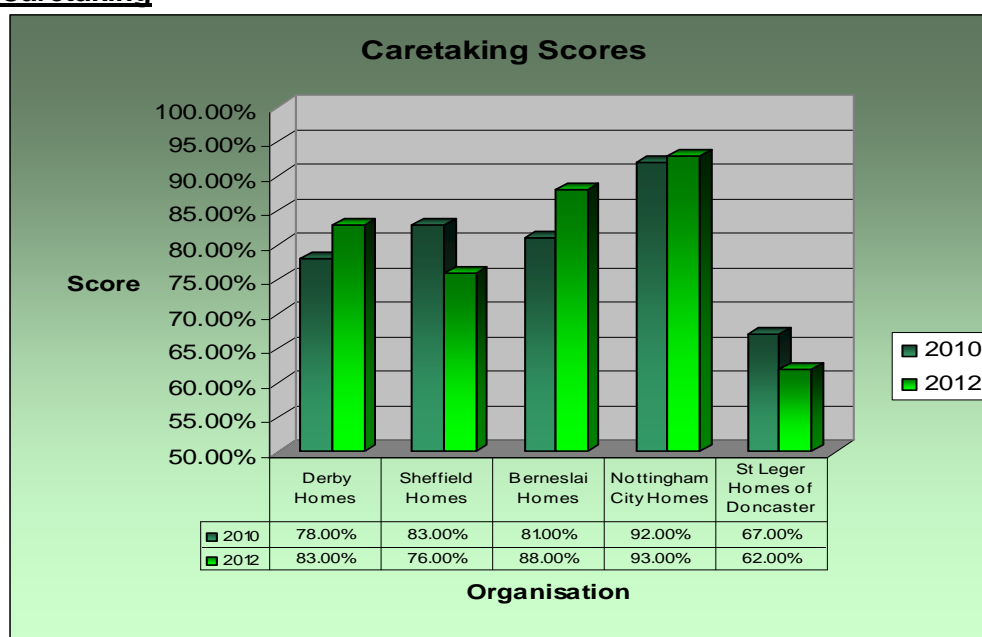
Combined Caretaking and Grounds Maintenance



Comparison of 2010 scores against 2012

The charts below compare the scores awarded in 2010 and 2012. These figures are directly comparable as the same sites were visited in both years.

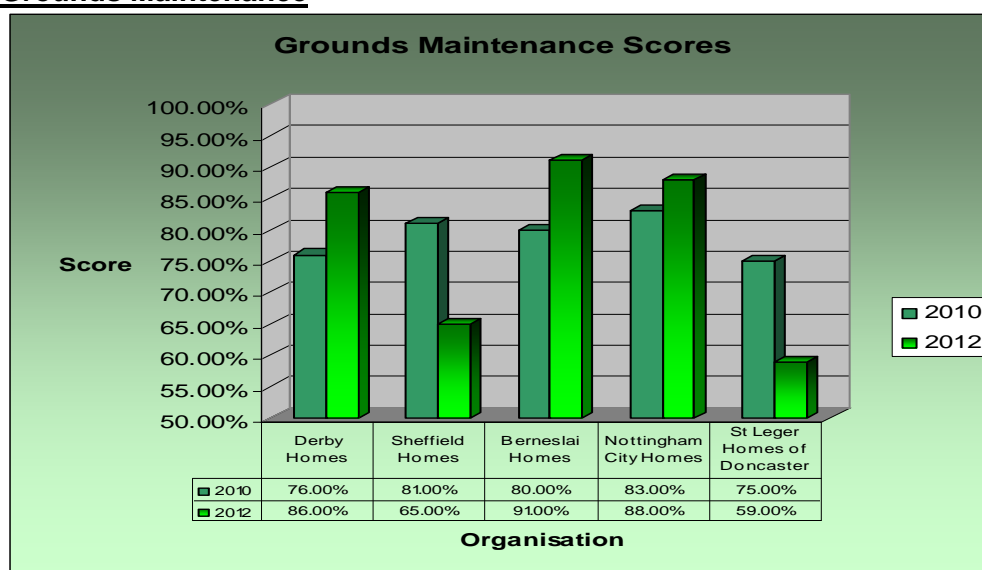
Caretaking



This chart shows that the blocks at 3 organisations were seen to have improved between 2010 and 2012 whilst at the other 2 organisations there had been a

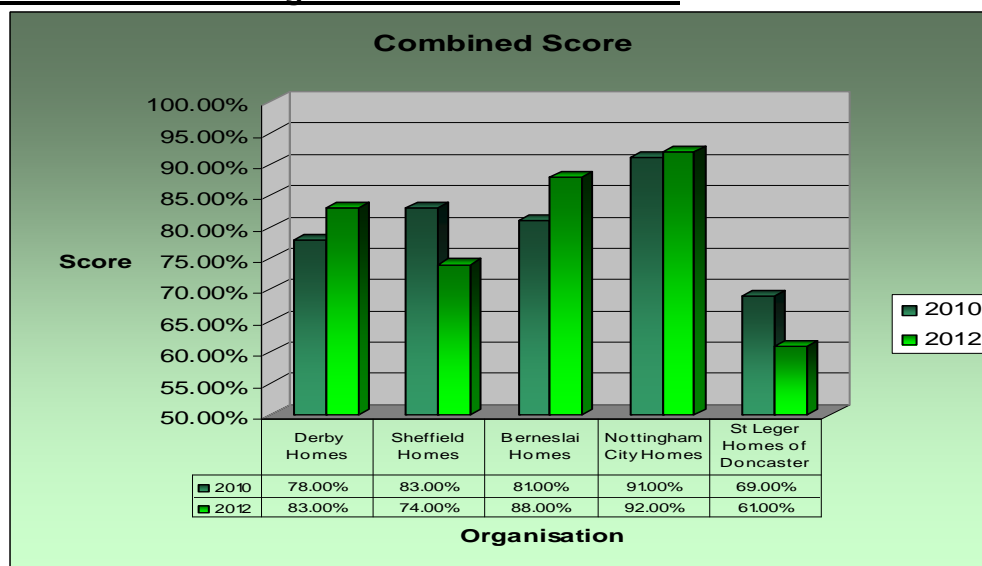
reduction in the score for caretaking. The best improved score here was Berneslai Homes with Sheffield Homes seeing the largest fall in scores.

Grounds Maintenance



Grounds Maintenance has seen some significant changes in perception over the past 2 years. Performance has again improved in 3 of the organisations whilst in 2 others there has been a deterioration. However the changes here are more dramatic. The best improver here was Berneslai Homes whilst St Leger saw the largest fall in score.

Combined Caretaking and Grounds Maintenance



This table reflects the combined scores for Caretaking and Grounds maintenance. The biggest improver during the period is Berneslai Homes with Sheffield Homes showing the biggest fall.

The table below shows the sites visited in both 2010 and 2012

Organisation	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
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Derby Homes	Rivermead	City Road	Shannon Square
Sheffield Homes	Stradbroke Road	Waterslack Road	Adelphi Tower
Berneslai Homes	Albion House	Church Street Flats	Church Street Close Sheltered
Nottingham City Homes	Southchurch Court	Lanthwaite Close	Newark Crescent
St Leger Homes of Doncaster	Cusworth House	Highwoods Crescent	Winderemere Close

Each organisation is responsible for submitting their scores to HouseMark for inclusion in the 2012/13 benchmarking cycle. 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.

Appendix 1

Estate Services Peer Review Assessment

Peer Review Procedure

1. Contacts

[Phil Saunders](#) Nottingham – Lead contacts

[Nikki Giles St Leger Homes](#) – Lead contact

[David Abbott St Leger Homes](#)

[Zoe Barlow Sheffield Homes](#) – Lead Contact

[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

1 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 choose 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.

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 report back to the host.

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