

AGENDA ITEM 7

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT A CHARGED COMMUNAL CLEANSING SCHEME FOR COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS (FLATS ONLY)

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek member approval to implement a cleansing contract and seek approval to go out to tender to seek the most competitive price.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that elected members make a decision to implement one of the following options in relation to communal cleansing of flats as listed in Appendix A;

- i) That Melton Borough Council implement a cleansing programme as listed in Appendix A at a charge of £1.50 per property per week. That an initial investment of £5,000 is used from planned maintenance to bring cleanliness up to the same standards in each block.
- ii) That Melton Borough Council Implement a Cleansing programme in communal areas but do so using monies from the existing repairs and maintenance budgets (Option 2, Appendix A).
- iii) The Council decides not to carry out any cleansing of communal areas except in emergencies.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

- 3.2 Over the past number of years the condition and cleanliness of the communal walkways and entrances have deteriorated to such an extent that some refusal of properties has been put down to the fact that potential tenants state that the cleanliness is in poor condition and the particular flats is not an area they would like to live. This will have had an effect on income from rental.

- 3.3 In tenants and leaseholders conditions it does state that they are responsible for the cleansing of their communal areas however in many blocks this does not happen as it has been difficult to enforce.

3.4 Currently each block of flats/scheme is at a different standard and thus more investment may be needed initially to bring the cleanliness up to an acceptable standard.

3.5 In 2006 the Audit Commission recommended that we should be cleansing communal areas in order to maintain good conditions and reduce risks of rent loss due to voids being hard to let.

3.6 The annual cost of the service is estimated to be in the region of £25,000 based on costs obtained from a pilot cleaning project on the Drummond Walk Flats. The income will be £25,428 in total. This will ensure a bi-monthly clean of the communal areas of the flats.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 If it was decided to carry out communal cleansing, a tendering exercise would need to take place that covers a minimum of three years and mean a change to our current policy of asking tenants and leaseholders to clean their own communal areas.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 If it is agreed to implement a cleansing contract with a charge the cost will be neutral as the income collected will pay for the cleansing.

5.2 Currently to continually cleanse the communal areas from existing resources is unaffordable. The charge will not affect those in receipt of benefits as it will be a benefitable charge linked to their property.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 There are no other legal implications directly arising from this report.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 Cleansing the communal areas will make the condition of the current stairwells much safer and make the areas feel safer. By regularly cleaning the stairwells it is felt this over time will deter people from not respecting the communal areas and bring pride back into each area.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 An initial equalities impact assessment will be completed and taken for scrutiny by the Equalities Steering Group.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 The risks are considered in the table below:

Probability



Very High A				
High B		1		
Significant C			2,3	
Low D				
Very Low E		4		
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

Impact →

Risk No.	Description
1	Communal Areas continue to deteriorate due to no cleansing costing more to repair in the future.
2	If cleansing is not introduced continuation of higher void turn around and loss of rent.
3	Poorly maintained and cleaned communal areas attract crime.
4	Tenants/Leaseholders fall into arrears due to charges.

9.2 Currently the cleanliness of communal areas is one major reason why people do not like living in flats, refuse properties and request transfers. If we do nothing the risk of loss of income and rise in crime is expected.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change issues directly arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATIONS

11.1 Various consultations have taken place with questionnaires sent to each property that would be affected. In Appendix B it clearly shows the responses and views from tenants and leaseholders. In total 326 surveys were sent out and 120 responses received.

11.2 TFEC has been consulted on the proposed programme of cleansing; their formal comments are made in Appendix C.

11.3 Consultation has also taken place with the Town Centre and Fairmead Residents Groups.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 Wards affected are Craven, Newport, Sysonby and Dalby.

Contact Officers: Ronan Browne, Sam Spencer

Date: 13 January 2011

Appendices: Appendix A - Charging/Subsidy Options
Appendix B – Survey Results
Appendix C – Formal Response from TFEC

Background Papers: Minutes of Resident Meetings at Town Centre and Fairmead
Minutes of TFEC Meetings

Reference: X: Committees, Council & Sub-Committees/CSA/2010-11/
25-1-11/Communal Cleaning