

# Scrutiny Review of Grounds Maintenance Service Report

Date Submitted: 24th January 2020

# Scrutiny Report 2020

<b>Report to:</b>	One Vision Housing – Managing Director – Ian Mitchell
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
<b>Title:</b>	Scrutiny Review of Grounds Maintenance Service
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	As a registered providers OVH have an obligation to engage with their tenant under the Consumer Regulation. ‘Delivering compliance within the consumer standard depends on good governance and on a organisations culture’ [Consumer Regulation Review 2019]
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Ken Williams – Vice Chair of Scrutiny

## Background

Improving the quality of our communities and neighbourhoods and the lives of the residents requires strong partnership and collaboration between us as customers and One Vision Housing (OVH).

OVH do this by engaging with their customers to monitor and scrutinise the performance of services that they are in receipt of. And we the Scrutiny Team do this by scrutinising a service area that is underperforming and sharing our findings with OVH on how we as tenants think OVH can improve. With this in mind we are delighted to share with you are recent findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of the Grounds Maintenance Service.

### Topic Selection:

Using a scoring matrix we the Scrutiny Team identified Grounds Maintenance Service as the next topic for scrutiny, this was based on the recent performance figures (please see appendix a) and a recent spike in complaints. The scoring matrix looks at low levels of satisfaction, poor or reducing levels of performance.

### Scrutiny Team members that took part in this review are listed below:

- Pam Holliday – Chair
- Ken Williams – vice Chair
- Anthony Bailey
- Bernie Blackmore
- Richard Goldston
- Gleyns Bowen

## What we established during our investigations.

### 2.0 Our Findings:

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| 2.1 | There are large disparities in the standard of the service, the reasons vary with some areas being prone to fly tipping, dog fouling and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), the size and access to areas impacts on what machinery can be used, which could impact negatively on the quality of service.   |
| 2.2 | As we the Scrutiny Team are made up of OVH tenants we have personal experiences of the service and like the point above, the quality of the service varies, therefore we thought it relevant that we include photographic evidence (please see photographs in appendix C & D).   |
| 2.3 | We do recognise that the weather has a major impact on the growing season for example 2018 a very dry summer which resulted in very little growth, 2019 was a particular wet summer which added to the growing speed, this resulted in it being difficult to ensure the correct staffing levels to be able to react and keep up with the amount of work. |
| 2.4 | When it was identified that an extra team was needed we felt that the recruitment of an extra team was too late in the year, and recruiting only one team was not sufficient to improve the poor performance of the service.   |
| 2.5 | Survey questions not reflective of the service, and a larger sample base needed, for a truer reflection of the service for example Question was the operative easy identifiable, we feel this questions is irrelevant because unless you actually see the gardener then you can't give an answer.  |
| 2.6 | OVH to complete the exercise to establish the areas OVH is responsible for.  |

## Proposals already in place by OVH to improve the service, which we validate

### 3.0 Validation:

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|-----|---|
| 3.1 | We established that during our review that OVH have begun corrective measures to improve the service, we the Scrutiny Team would like to acknowledge this and validate our approval for the following improvements to be made to the service:   |
| 3.2 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recruited another gardening team</li> <li>2. Planning to get ahead in the winter months – to remove weeds, moss and prune trees</li> <li>3. Support from an inspector that can respond to complaints immediately</li> <li>4. For any future landscaping project OVH aim to plant low maintenance shrubs</li> <li>5. All grounds maintenance staff to have PDA's (Portable Digital Assistance) making them clearly visible, they can also be tracked and document problem spotted and</li> </ol> |

	<p>liaise with Neighbourhood Services in order for the problems to be addressed as soon as possible.</p> <p>6. Continue the partnership working with Sefton Council to remedy the issue of fly tipping by reducing the cost of rubbish removal, and the option of skip days</p>
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## Action Required

### 4.0 Scrutiny Teams Recommendations

4.1	<p>Overall we recognise that OVH have a way to go to improve this service, we as the scrutiny team feel that, and that external factors such as weather can't be legislated against, however we do feel that our recommendations below if implemented will have a positive impact on the service.</p>
4.2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A review of the survey questions, not all questions are relevant</li> <li>2. Survey a larger sample, allowing a truer reflection of the service</li> <li>3. Establish the areas that OVH are responsible for to avoid having any neglected areas</li> <li>4. Develop a marketing campaign on the issue of fly tipping dog fouling etc.</li> <li>5. Continue with the removal of weeds throughout the whole year and not just in the winter months</li> <li>6. Offer skips for areas blighted by fly tipping</li> <li>7. Further recruitment is required, possibly two more teams</li> <li>8. To have the grounds maintenance as an ongoing tenant inspection</li> </ol>
4.3	<p>We will review this service area in 4 months to ensure that the accepted recommendations have made has improvements to the service.</p>

## Case Study

### 5.0 Cathy Roberts

5.1.	<p>Cathy Roberts a community centre off Sefton Road, Litherland was demolished circa 2010, since then the plot has been left unattended and is overgrown with weeds and starting to become a spot for fly tipping. This issue was reported each year by a member of the scrutiny team only for the work to be completed as a one off when a complaint was received. (Please see photographs in appendix E)</p>
5.2	<p>However, since September 2019 it was agreed that the Cathy Roberts plot should be included in the Ground Maintenance Contract. However even when it was added onto the schedule it still took a further 6 weeks of emails and phone calls before the issue was addressed.</p>
5.3	<p>We consider this to be an example of where customer service could have been improved and is therefore worthy of being mentioned in this report</p>

## How we got there

6.0	<b>Appendix A. Topic Selection</b>
6.1	<p>The data for the ‘Grounds Maintenance’ &amp; ‘Average Days to Complete a Repair’ where the two topics selected for shortlisting, using the scoring criteria, the following results were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Grounds Maintenance’ scored 1.5</li> <li>• ‘Days to complete a repair’ scored 1.1</li> </ul>
6.2	<p>Therefore ‘Grounds Maintenance’ was selected and the next steps were to make the necessary arrangement for the Team to meet with the relevant head of service to begin the process of gathering the information required in order to scrutinise this service.</p>
6.3	<p>Below is a list of who voted for which category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pam Holliday – Grounds Maintenance</li> <li>• Bernie Blackmore – Grounds Maintenance</li> <li>• Anthony Bailey – Grounds Maintenance</li> <li>• Ian Leybourne – Days to complete a repair</li> <li>• Richard Goldston – Days to complete a repair</li> <li>• George Carter – Days to complete a repair</li> <li>• Ken Williams – Grounds Maintenance</li> <li>• Glenys Bowen – Grounds Maintenance</li> </ul>
7.0	<b>Appendix B. – Acknowledgements</b>
7.1	<p><b>We would like to acknowledge the following OVH and SPS staff who attended the Scrutiny Team interviews for their openness and transparency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geoff McKeating (Maintenance Manager – One Vision Housing)</li> <li>• John Hanford (Maintenance Surveyor – One Vision Housing)</li> <li>• Matty Parkins (Project Manager - Voids and Grounds Maintenance - Sovini Property Services)</li> <li>• Kyle Lane (Neighbourhood Services Team Leader – One Vision Housing)</li> </ul>

8.0

Appendix C. – Photographs (good examples)

Image 1. Barnes Drive, Lydiate – October 2019



Image 2. Kenyons Lodge, Maghull – October 2019





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Appendix D. – Photographs (poor examples)

Image 3. Vincent Road, Litherland – October 2019

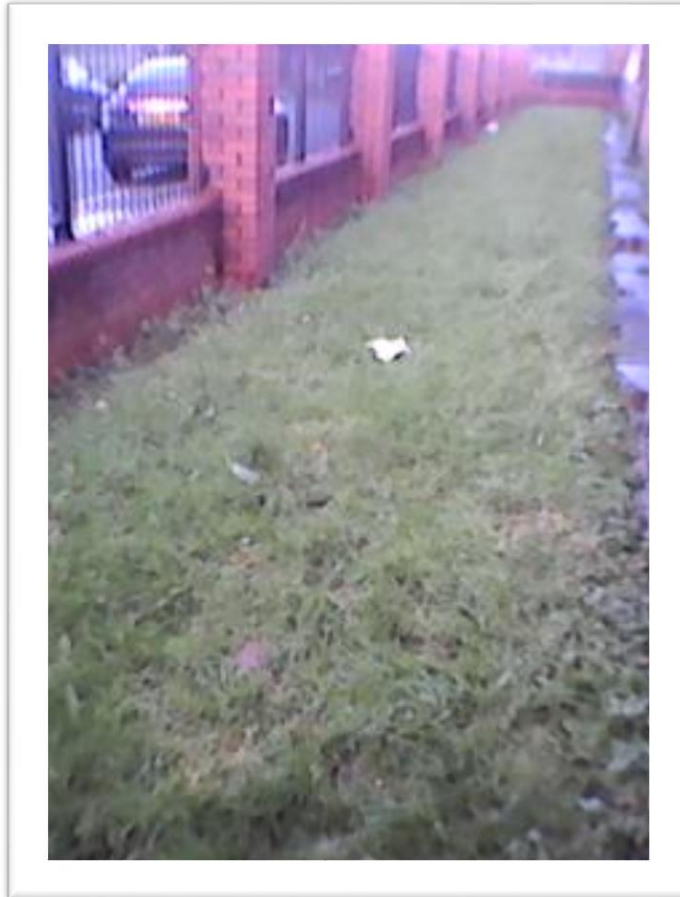


Image 4. Whimbrel House, Bootle – October 2019





January 2020





**10.0**

**Appendix E. Cathy Roberts, Sefton Road Litherland - October 2019**



