

Scrutiny Panel (CSP)
Fly Tipping

Introduction

This review is part of the Scrutiny Programme for 2021 as agreed with the Customer Assembly and Greatwell Homes.

Customer Scrutiny group for this review consisted of Sharon Medlin, John Hook, Peter Allington, Wendy Percival, Andrew Prigmore, Des Desai, James Thurston, La-Vern Haye, Wilton Smith, Alice Bvekerwa.

The Scrutiny group carried out this project between March and June 2021.

Scope Overview:

The Scrutiny review will look at:

1. The experience of customers who have reported fly tip to Greatwell Homes.
2. How Greatwell Homes can ensure we meet customer expectations.
3. Timescales for removal.
4. Greatwell Homes approach to fly tip including prevention.

Objective:

The purpose of this scrutiny is to review the fly tip process and provide suggestions on reducing the impact across our estates.

Providing high-quality living environments as per our Customer Charter.

Determining Questions:

1. Consider the pros and cons of both in-house and contractor model for managing fly-tipping.
2. Financial implications to customers i.e., Norse charges to remove bulky items - are they an inhibitor and part causation of fly tipping?
3. Is the current seven days standard, and 24 hours hazardous material, acceptable?
4. Is collecting fly tip within 7 days adding to the problem?
5. How do we create realistic expectations around fly tipping with our customers?
6. How can we prevent and deter fly tipping including stricter approach to tenancy management?
7. How can we ensure a good customer experience throughout the fly tip process?
8. How could partnership working with Norse and the new councils work to tackle fly tipping on land in our neighbourhoods that does not belong to Greatwell Homes?

Recommendations will need to be made using a simple cost / benefit analysis to demonstrate affordability and value for money.

Exclusions:

General Estate Services duties

Litter

Land not in neighbourhoods where Greatwell Homes has properties.

Method Breakdown and Research Findings

Research Tasks:

- Researching best practice
- Policies review
- Tenant survey
- Staff focus groups
- Tenant focus groups
- Performance information

Researching Best Practice:

We contacted our network contacts at TPAS and the East Midlands Tenant Participation Forum to ask how other housing providers deal with fly tipping and any successes they have had in reducing fly tipping.

We also followed forums and national organisations such as Keep Britain Tidy and the National Fly Tipping Prevention Group to connect with good practice examples.

We found that fly tipping is a major problem nationally that all councils and Housing Providers are dealing with.

The National Fly Tipping Prevention Group and Zero Waste Scotland have recommended lighting sites that are regularly fly tipped, installing CCTV, securing sites with fences with entrance points, and clearing overgrown vegetation.

Elevating the status of fly tipping is an approach several Housing Providers have taken.

Newham council use chalk paint and crime scene investigates tape to highlight fly tipping to residents.

The chalk and tape highlight that fly tipping is a crime, and not a minor issue to be ignored. This is twinned with posters and social media campaigns to appeal for witnesses to identify the culprits. The communications aspect shows that fly tipping is socially unacceptable. *See attachment number 1-2*

West Suffolk 'shame' the culprits of fly tipping. They leave the fly tipping in place indefinitely. Residents will complain about the fly tipping; however, this gives culprits time to remove the fly tipping themselves, and raises awareness with residents that fly tipping is a blight on the environment.

Leigh Academy in Edinburgh use bin stickers to encourage residents to dispose of rubbish correctly. *See attachment number 3*

Zero Waste Scotland have stencilled phrases on the ground of regularly fly tipped areas. Phrases include "Dump the Dumpers. Fly tipping fine £200". "This is our street, not your dump". Keep Britain Tidy and Dudley Council have used the phrase in their communications "Don't be a Tosser". The Scrutineers like the approach of using controversial phrases to shock residents and grab their attention. *See attachment number 4-6*

Southwark council have taken a zero-tolerance approach. They are working in partnership with all relevant partners (including DVLA, metropolitan police, environmental agencies). Rigorous enforcement action includes removing untaxed cars, full use of government legislation, and fines for culprits.

Many organisations twin enforcement with support and education to take a holistic approach.

Support offered by Southwark council includes Street Leaders, community wardens, Street Action teams.

Newham council work in schools to speak to children about fly tipping. They empower students to understand the impact of fly tipping, and the positive action they can take to keep their environment clean. Newham report a 79% increase in students identifying that they know a lot about fly tipping.

Newham also hold Love Your Ward events. These are events where residents can clear items, they want to get rid of, 'swishing' (clothes swapping), repairing of clothes, educational activities from the council's recycling team, and the 'beautification' of the area through resident-created murals and planters.

In Northampton town centre planters containing herbs have been installed in the two worst places for fly tipping. The herbs are for anyone to use, and these planters are to deter people from fly tipping there.

Some organisations have structured their estates team differently. Cross Keys Homes in Peterborough have dedicated rangers to clear fly tipping.

We know that very few organisations collect data efficiently enough to give accurate data on how well their fly tipping reduction interventions have worked.

West Suffolk collected data to show that 75% reduction but with caveats:

"Some of this is extremely hard to quantify with real confidence and stats can actually go up (especially if crews have been removing items without recording). But we have seen levels decrease by around 75%."

Policies Review:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Good Neighbour Agreement
- Greatwell Homes Customer Charter
- Neighbourhood Management Policy
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Greatwell Homes Website
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy: The only mention of fly tipping is section 3.3. Informal action to resolve. We would like fly tipping to be defined for customers in the communications campaign which we are also recommending.

Informal approaches to anti-social behaviour includes mediation, letters, meetings, acceptable behaviour contracts and good neighbour agreements. These approaches should apply to fly tipping. This should not be dependent on hard evidence. Evidence will be required for formal approaches (ie action against tenancy, prosecution).

The policy says Greatwell Homes is a member of the Community Safety Partnership which is a multi-agency forum. We would like an annual review to make sure the partnerships are working well.

Good Neighbour Agreement: This document has a great a start, from the outset with: Greatwell Homes will act under their tenancy agreement for persistent anti-social behaviour. It does not reference fly tipping however it does state that residents are to “store your rubbish in the bins provided and ensure bin collections are respected”.

Greatwell Homes Customer Charter: This document does not specifically mention fly tipping, however, does state that “we will work in partnership to help your neighbourhood stay safe and well maintained.” I am happy this document stays as is.

Neighbourhood Management Policy: This document informs the customer that the Estates team will remove litter and bulk refuse on a weekly basis unless it is classed as hazardous materials to which a 24-hour deadline is given. Although it does not state fly tipping, I believe it is clear enough what the Estates team will do with refuse dumped on Greatwell Homes land. Unless we change the timetable for pickups, I would leave this as is.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard: This document is written by the government; it is clear and to the point. It does not directly talk about fly tipping, more around the theme of anti-social behaviour.

Rechargeable Repairs Policy: This policy does not apply to fly tipping; it is for repairs only. We know from staff interviews that we do not regularly recharge for fly tipping, but we would like to start recharging, and publicise that we recharge. This will be a deterrent but will also cover costs of collecting fly tipping. The lettings team should point this out to new tenants. However, we know that proving who the culprits are is exceedingly difficult.

Greatwell Homes Website: The website is over complicated and needs to be simplified.

Tenancy Agreement: This is a legal contract between the tenant and Greatwell Homes, you have the right to live in your property, unless you are in breach of the conditions stated within the document. The action taken will be anything from verbal unofficial warning to eviction in extreme cases. It does not mention fly tipping or other breaches from the anti-social behaviour / good neighbour agreement policy.

The Tenancy Agreement also says tenants are responsible for the behaviour of their children and visitors. We know from staff interviews that on at least one occasion a customer has helped their friend to fly tip in our bin store.

Acceptable Behaviour Contract could be used for persistent fly tippers. This would be an informal approach to anti-social behaviour.

Tenant Survey:

Asks: where do you live, is fly tipping an issue there? Do you understand different organisations' responsibilities for fly tipping? Do you know how to report fly tipping, have you ever reported it, how long did it take to get collected? If you don't report fly tipping, why not? Are our time scales acceptable? What do you think about the bulky item collection fee? What are your suggestions to reduce fly tipping?

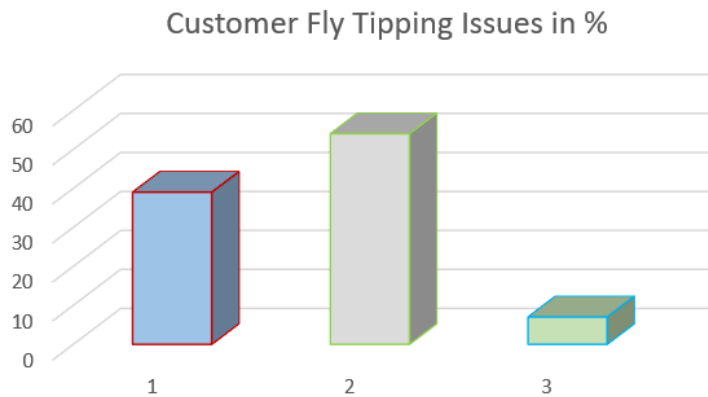
Communications Team sent out with quarterly newsletter.

115 responses.

Some respondents volunteered for video call customer focus group.

Fly tipping issues with the customer's areas

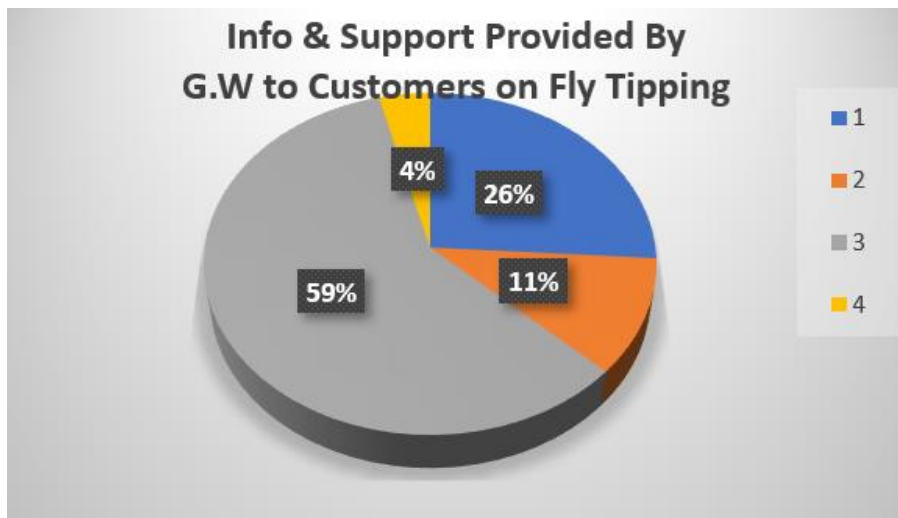
Fly-tip:



1) Sometimes, 2) Always, 3) Never

Staff Survey:

The Community Involvement team sent a staff survey.



1) Very good, 2) Exceptional, 3) Fair, 4) Poor

Staff Focus Groups:

Customer Services, Income Recovery, Neighbourhood Housing and Independent Living teams attended a Microsoft Teams call.

The Estate Services Manager was available throughout the scrutiny review. Estate Services team members were unable to attend.

We had 3 Teams meetings with staff which was extremely helpful to the scrutiny group. Some of the points made:

- People know where they can fly-tip on our land and not be caught
- We never get the evidence to re-charged
- People have become savvy about leaving letters and addresses on things
- Need our tenants to be precise about where fly tipping is and what it is
- Need to educate the children and get them on side
- Why would people pay when they know we will clear it up?
- We need to be seen on the estates
- Use cameras in hot spots
- Let people know how much this is costing them each in rent and council tax.
- Use plain language in posters, fliers etc
- Get the people on side, work with them to improve the estates so that they can be proud of where they live and take pride in our town.

One of the staff told how she was informed of someone that was continuously dumping their items, so she posted letters in all the houses, then paid them a visit asking if they know who was doing it, and that from now on Greatwell Homes was going to monitor the area. There have been no more incidents.

Staff believed that fly tipping had increased in lockdown. People on benefits could have some large items removed for free. However, this is incorrect there is a fee of £30 for everyone.

Tenant Focus Groups:

The customers that responded to the survey also had the opportunity to join a focus group on Microsoft Teams.

The Scrutineers logged on to speak with customers – one customer attended the first meeting with four customers joining the second session.

Talking to the tenants we found:

- Most had reported fly tipping
- They did not like the Greatwell Homes web page
- Would like to see fly tipping picked up within 48 hours of reporting it.
- After reporting it they could not find out when it was being collected
- After five months of reporting the same fly tipping, they were ready to give up
- Had never heard of What3Words app
- Did not know that if it was on a footpath or road, they should contact street doctor to report it
- Were happy with their homes, but not necessarily the area they lived in
- Want the website to made easier to report on
- They talked about how to make it easier to report and which organisation to report it to
- It was felt that some people did not care because the area they lived was rundown, and if Greatwell did not care about the area why should the tenants

Performance Information:

List of Estate Services jobs as an excel Spread Sheet, provided by Business Intelligence.

Job descriptions are erratic. Some jobs say, 'fly tipping', some say 'collect items'. This makes reporting very difficult to gauge how many fly tipping jobs we get. Do clearing out abandoned garages count as fly tipping? We need to agree on all definitions of fly tipping and make sure all staff know that and report fly tipping jobs as 'fly tipping'.

Customer feedback from the Compliments, Concerns, Comments and Complaints database; provided by Customer Services.

There were no complaints about fly tipping.

Maps provided by Estate Teams. *See attachment number 7*

Government data on incidents of fly tipping and actions taken; provided by Scrutineers.

This data shows that fly tipping has not actually increased despite perception, however it has not decreased either. 1.2 million incidents nationally.

The amount of general household waste fly tipped has increased as a proportion of total fly tipping incidents.

Final Conclusions

1. Consider the pros and cons of both in-house and contractor model for managing fly-tipping.

Our research showed no benefits to hiring this out to contractors, we only found one housing group that had hired contractors. And they were cancelling the contract at the end of this financial year.

We do not recommend a contractor model for Greatwell Homes. Bringing the repairs service in-house has been successful; and has enabled Greatwell Homes to have more control of the quality of the service.

2. Financial implications to customers i.e., Norse charges to remove bulky items - are they an inhibitor and part causation of fly tipping?

We looked at work done by several organisations which included Cross Keys Homes which showed that when they did their research 15 counties did not charge for bulky item collection and this did not reduce the amount of fly tipping.

When the free bulky items collection was removed, and collection was charged for; councils found that there was no change in the amount of fly tipping. This tells us that money is not the problem.

3. Is the current seven days standard, and 24 hours hazardous material, acceptable?

Customers would like all fly tipping to be collected in 24 – 48 hours. However, the 7-working day standard is acceptable – where this standard is met.

4. Is collecting fly tip within seven days adding to the problem?

At present, we have 24 hours clear up for dangerous fly tipping and 7 days for the rest, we found that the longer it was left the bigger the pile got.

It seems to depend on the area. 'Hot spots' tell us that it probably is adding to the problem, but this isn't the case in all areas. Fly tipping in some areas do not attract more fly tipping.

5. How do we create realistic expectations around fly tipping with our customers?

Education, Communication and Enforcement!

6. How can we prevent and deter fly tipping including stricter approach to tenancy management?

A rechargeable fly tipping collection policy, covering document for the tenancy agreement, communications campaign, support from staff on correct disposal of waste, effective partnership working, staff visible in neighbourhoods (more estates services staff), maintaining estates to a higher standard to encourage pride, partnership working to get prosecutions for fly tippers.

7. How can we ensure a good customer experience throughout the fly tip process?

Make reporting fly tipping easier – better web pages, portal reporting, accurate information, and feedback from Customer Services.

Visibility of staff in neighbourhoods – staff are proactive in walking around neighbourhoods to see fly tipping and will either report to Customer Services or Estates will collect at the time.

Collect fly tipping on time as per our standards.

8. How could partnership working with Norse and the new councils work to tackle fly tipping on land in our neighbourhoods that does not belong to Greatwell Homes?

Land rationalisation means many communal outdoor areas have been adopted by Greatwell Homes. Roads and paths are still the responsibility of highways and fly tipping should be reported to Street Doctor.

We do not yet fully understand how the county council and borough councils have changed into North / West Northants council and Wellingborough Town council.

Findings outside of determining questions

At present the job sheet is downloaded from Orchard, then a team member goes through to sort out which order to do the jobs in. This seems a waste of the estate works time, there should be a system in place so the worker can just get his job sheet and go. If repairs use Service Connect and have a planner, this seems to be appropriate for estate services too.

Having dedicated estate teams was suggested by staff. The teams will know the areas they work in and people on the different estates will get to know the workers, thus making it easier for them to approach the workers. We did find other housing groups are also moving toward this dedicated teams of different areas. Peterborough C.K.H. (Cross keys Homes) have a dedicated Ranger service.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff for their contributions to this report giving up some of their valuable time, we could not have done it without their help.

	Recommendation	Benefits	Management response	Agrees action	Delivery date	owner
1	That we bring this service in house and have estate teams this will mean an increase in staff, for the different areas, and continue to work with other outside agents building strong links,	We will be able to maintain the high standards we currently have and keep records to help target hot spots	We are planning to bring additional areas in house following the end of the Norse contract and this is planned for April 2022. This will give us better control over standards and operatives will be able to build better relationships with customers and partner agencies.	Agree	Apr 2022	LH
2	Promote ways of responsibly disposing of household waste. Identify problems tenants have with using responsible methods of disposing of items and seek solutions to make it easier. Go into the schools to promote respect for where we live and have flyers made with helpful advice and phone numbers. Please see attachments	This will help to reduce the amount of fly tipping on our land and therefore the cost of clearing it up. Working with the children should help prevent them from becoming fly tippers in the future.	A program with the community involvement team and the green team working alongside partner agencies to be developed. Targeted communication strategy to be developed with our own communications team. Neighbourhood champions to be consulted on communication content.	Agree	Apr 2022	AM
3	Update the website to include red button that takes you to reporting fly tipping, with easy-to-use colour coded maps (make all the houses the same colour) with matching phone numbers and web sites. Promote what3words app, have a clear definition of what the legal definition of fly tipping is. Have a	Everyone will know who to contact in the event they find fly tipping this should make for faster removal and less chance it will become a pile with the increased risk of vermin and danger to our tenants and their children.	Improvements to be made to website to include fly tip reporting section using drop down menus to identify location (street name and what 3 words) and items. Solution to be developed to incorporate maps and status updates and clear definition of fly tip to be added to website.	Agree-phased approach 1. Publish link to NNC website (street doctor) on our website and promote on social media	Jul 2021 Sept 2021 Apr 2022	AM

	list of items for the tenants to choose from (chair, fridge, bed)			<p>2. Create simple fly tip reporting solution with drop downs on website</p> <p>3. Full solution with integrated maps plus status updates</p>		
4	Update the ASB policy to enhance the fly tipping, HO to promote the tenant's responsibility at PTIs and exit interviews (ask if they know how they are going to get rid of the rubbish) implement a recharge policy for people found to have fly tipped. Promote what3words app.	Everyone will have a greater understanding of the law and how we expect our tenants to behave.	ASB policy to be reviewed to enhance section on fly tipping. PTIs and exit interviews to specifically cover fly tip. Recovering costs from fly tip is already covered in the neighbourhood management policy but can only be done where it is reasonable to do so and working with local partnership agencies due to enforcement powers needed. Promotion of what 3 words covered in recommendation 3.	Partially Agree	Apr 2022	CH
5	For hot spots that you consider using mobile cctv cameras along with crime scene tape chalk paint and witnesses appeal posters to catch the culprits as well as letters to go in every house around the spot. Put how much this is costing our tenants on all poster and letters about fly tipping and make	Making it known that this will not be tolerated on our land and by our tenants. We hope people will come forward.	Mobile CCTV would come with its own problems, however the use will be investigated taking into account legal implications and adherence to data protection laws. Pilot on the Hemmingwell to be used to inform final decision on CCTV.	Partially agree	Apr 2022	AM

	sure that they know if we catch you, you will go to court.		Letters to all in hotspot areas is a very good solution as well as the use of chalk, tape and designing posters that can be placed at strategic locations. Work with local schools to highlight the problems and involve children to design posters.			
6	When CS receive a report on fly tipping that they try to get a good description of the item advocating the use of what3words and giving out ref numbers when asked for, initiate a system that can collate base line date to pinpoint hot spots, find a system that can help with the plaining so when the estate works get their jobs, so they do not have to spend time sorting them out. All staff should know what is and is not our land may be staffing updates and training to CS staff up to date.	This will allow tenants to keep track of what is happening to the fly tipping and report back if not cleared in the 7 days. And give the works more time out on jobs.	Link to action 3 in terms of collating data, use of what 3 words app and types of items been fly tipped. Information to be used to analyse for hot spot areas. Area based teams to be set up which will eliminate the need to plan routes and workloads to address fly tip issues as operatives will be in the area daily.	Agree	Apr 2022	AM
7	Publicise and promote the cost of fly tipping and the implication to tenants (use removable banners on side of estate vans) as well as Greatwell homes website etc.	Letting people know that fly tipping hits them in their wallets and purses will hopefully make them realise that it's not a free service and the money comes from them	Linked to comms campaign as highlighted in recommendation 2.	Agree	Apr 2022	AM
8	There is a rechargeable repairs policy but not rechargeable fly tipping policy. Either amend the	Reaffirming that fly tipping is illegal and the tenant will be charged for collection	Recharging costs is already covered in the neighbourhood management policy and we will	Partially agree	Apr 2022	CH

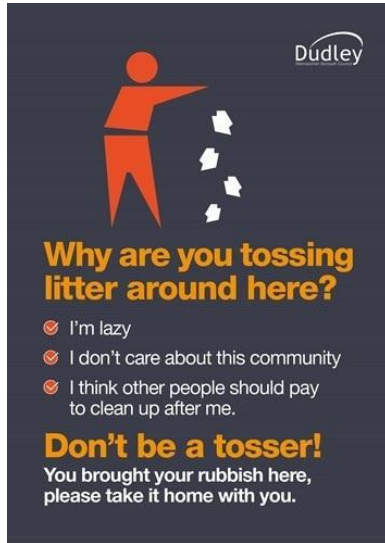
	<p>repairs policy or create a new policy for fly tipping.</p> <p>A cover document for the Tenancy Agreement highlighting the main points – including tenants are responsible for their visitors.</p> <p>Acceptable Behaviour Contract for any tenants suspected to be fly tipping.</p>	<p>of items dumped if there is sufficient evidence.</p>	<p>do so where reasonably practical.</p> <p>Terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement including ASB and fly tip is covered during the sign up interview. As fly tip is a criminal offence we would not be using acceptable behaviour contracts but we will explore good neighbour agreements for hotspot areas.</p> <p>Information to be covered in new Welcome Packs (currently in trial) – dos and don'ts of being a good neighbour</p>			
9	<p>That you use the opportunity of environmental works that is coming up to pick 1 area out and go to town, involve the residents use flyers to go into the schools to talk about fly tipping, cut back overgrown trees and shrubs, block of rat runs and let the residents know that there will be a zero-tolerance approach this including car without tax work with the police council etc</p>	<p>We realise this has a cost but if it is successful and cut the amount of fly tipping and make for happy residents that we hope will take pride in where they live and look after the area. We can also learn from this so it could be rolled out in other areas picking what worked and what did not.</p>	<p>We will be working local agencies under the safer street funding initiative to improve the Hemmingwell estate including the installation of CCTV and mobile cameras (led by the police) removal of garage blocks, tree works as well as general communication around fly tipping. Program to start later in 2021 and anticipated to be completed March 2022.</p>	Agree	Apr 2022	AM

Attachments:

Attachment 1-2 is Crime scene tape and poster attached to fly tip. Attachment number 3 is a bin sticker highlighting Fly tipping



Attachment number 4-6 is Shaming small poster and two floor stencils.



DUMP THE DUMPERS.
FLYTIPPING FINE: £200

THIS IS OUR STREET, NOT YOUR DUMP.

FLYTIPPING FINE: £200

Attachment 7-9 Maps of Greatwell Homes Land and Housing Stock for Wellingborough

Hemmingwell Map

