ROSEBERY
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

REPORT TO THE BOARD

16 FEBRUARY 2021

Board Action:	**For Approval**	
Agenda Item:	**1**	

ESTATE SERVICES

Objective:	**Virtual Scrutiny Panel Scrutiny Report – Estate Services**

Executive Summary:	This is a covering report to provide context and background to the attached report provided by the Virtual Scrutiny Panel (VSP), Appendix 1. The report sets out the findings and recommendations of their fourth scrutiny investigation after reviewing our Estate Services. Overall, they found that it is a good service that is providing value for money, however they also noted several improvements that will lead to further efficiencies and improve the effectiveness of the service. The scope of their investigation focused on: • Whether the service delivers value for money, provides the necessary services, and meets the quality standards which have been set. • Service innovation • Opportunities for improved customer engagement • Contract management and monitoring

Recommended:	The Board is asked to note the actions recommended to improve Rosebery's Estate Services.

Resident Consultation:	No resident consultation was required as the Virtual Scrutiny Panel report directly to the Board.

Corporate Plan Implications	This paper updates the position on one action contained within the corporate plan.

Budget Implications	Resident scrutiny is integrated within our core business and as such all the activity planned as part of this strategy is delivered within our current approved budget.

Value for Money Implications	Making better use of digital technology and social media platforms helps attract and reach a wider a range of residents in a cost-effective way. It offers savings e.g. from reduced meeting costs, as residents offer feedback through online channels.

Equality & Diversity	We continually maintain a profile of our customers which allows us to deliver engagement that is appropriate to them, recognising their individual needs, preferences and motivations.

Sustainability & Environmental Implications	The reduction of physical meetings and paper heavy pre-meeting information packs contributes to a paperless working environment and delivers a reduction in our print costs.

Risk Implications	Failure to comply with the Housing Regulator's consumer standards and co-regulation requirements. Failure to capture the impact and outcomes from involved residents, leading to frustration and disengagement of those residents committing time and energy into supporting our service improvement journey.

Legal Implications and Adherence with Relevant Law	Rosebery is required to comply with data protection law and regulations.

Report Author:	Theo Scott Customer Experience Manager
Report approved by:	Louise Williams Head of Housing and Customer Experience
If you would like to discuss anything in this report before the meeting, please contact:	Theo Scott Customer Experience Manager theo.scott@rosebery.org.uk 01372 814 000
This report has been discussed with:	Members of the Executive Team

1.0 Summary

1.1 This is the Virtual Scrutiny Panel's (VSP) fourth scrutiny investigation report to the Board following their launch in February 2018.

1.2 The VSP have undertaken a detailed investigation looking at the Estate Services, which is delivered by our Asset Management Team with support from the Neighbourhood Team.

1.3 The VSP decided to review Estate Services as one of three services they

prioritised as part of their original work programme. This was as a result of the following reasons:

- The overall trend on the feedback received from monthly customer satisfaction surveys which is below key performance indicator (KPI) targets.
- The service was previously managed by the Neighbourhood Team but 18 months ago, was transferred to the Asset Management Team. This was to make better use of their skills and experience with contract management and performance monitoring of contractors. The VSP wanted to understand how this has improved the service.
- The existing communal cleaning and ground maintenance contracts are coming to an end. The investigation represented a good opportunity to get residents' perspective on service requirements and potential improvements that can be included in the procurement process.
- As this service is predominately financed through a service charge, there were obvious benefits to this review being resident-led.

2.0 Scope of the scrutiny investigation

2.1 The investigation has focused on the Estate Services, primarily looking at communal cleaning, grounds maintenance and associated services covered by Rosebery's Estate Services Officer. The service is managed by the Project Surveyor, a member of the Asset Management Team and contracted out to Cleanscapes for communal cleaning and Groundscapes for grounds maintenance.

3.0 Investigation methods and management support

3.1 The investigation began on 9 September 2021. The VSP received a presentation from the Project Surveyor, providing an overview of Estate Services and identifying strengths and areas for improvements.

3.2 This was followed with a desk-top survey which saw the VSP review Rosebery's:

- service standards
- relevant policies and procedures
- the service contract with Cleanscapes
- performance information
- satisfaction survey results
- complaints about the service
- publicity surrounding the service
- how residents are engaged in the management of the service and
- contract monitoring information.

3.3 The VSP had planned to carry out a few physical estate inspections as well but, due to personal and work commitments, this was not possible. However, in readiness for this investigation, Rosebery asked several specific questions relating to the delivery of our Estate Services as part of the quarterly 'Rosebery Voice' survey carried out in October 2021The VSP found this information very useful and avoided the need to commission a separate survey of service users.

Commented [DP1]: Wording to be amended as it begs the question of 'why'?

3.4 The VSP also carried out staff interviews with key staff members of Rosebery and contract managers from Cleanscapes and Groundscapes.

3.5 The VSP would like to thank all Rosebery staff members and the contract managers from

Cleanscapes and Groundscapes, for being open and helpful throughout their investigation.

4.0 Findings and recommendations

4.1 The outcomes of the investigation have been summarised in Appendix 1, VSP report on the investigation of Estate Services.

4.2 The Asset Management Team have provided their responses to the findings of the VSP report together with an action plan, Appendix 2, for delivering the VSP's recommendations. These have all been acknowledged and agreed with the VSP.

5.0 Virtual Scrutiny Panel – Challenges

5.1 Despite the good progress of the VSP since their launch in February 2018, the panel have faced several challenges during this review of Estate Services. These have included:

- The pace of the review
- Volume of paperwork
- Time available to submit findings and recommendations to Rosebery and, in turn, receive their response
- Availability of members to attend meetings
- Limited membership

5.2 The impact of the pandemic over the past two years 19 has also impacted on the time that the existing VSP membership have had to commit to meetings and, more recently, this investigation. This has resulted in much of the workload being shared between just two of the members, with the support of their Resident Mentor and the Customer Experience Team.

5.3 By their own admission, this has resulted in limited time to carry out a more in-depth investigation of Estate Services and therefore their findings and recommendations are not as far reaching as they would have hoped.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The Board is asked to approve the Virtual Scrutiny Panel Report and service improvement action plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1: VSP Report on the investigation into Estate Services
Appendix 2: Rosebery's response and service improvement action plan