



# CUSTOMER FEEDBACK REPORT LONGHILL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME



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## **Introduction**

- 1.1 During the period 15<sup>th</sup> March to 8<sup>th</sup> October RMBC/ RBH undertook some significant environmental improvement works to Longhill Estate in the Sudden area of Rochdale South. In brief, the works comprised the following:
  1. front garden fencing
  2. rear garden fencing
  3. driveways and dropped kerbs
  4. Environmental Improvements to open spaces
- 1.2 The contract expiry date for the fencing and parking works was originally 6<sup>th</sup> August but it was extended by two months primarily as a result of the significant extra works that were undertaken. The value of the works increased accordingly from the £178,000 tender price to a final figure that will be around the £210,000 mark once the final valuation is sorted
- 1.3 The environmental improvement works to tackle specific issues e.g. the former Lloyd Street garage site and the various open spaces across the estate came to £24,000
- 1.4 A total of 93 properties were included in the scheme. Of these, 44 (47.31%) were council dwellings whilst 49 (52.69%) had been purchased through the Right to Buy and were directly affected by the works. In total, there were 25 responses giving a percentage response rate of 26.88%. Of these 12 (48%) were council tenants, 9 (36%) were Right to Buy. 4 (16%) did not state their tenure.

## **2.0 The Pre-Contract Phase**

- 2.1 The project was undertaken in a radically different way to the first two completed larger Priority Estate schemes of Kirklee and Falinge Hill. The technical aspects were carried out solely by the RBH Property Services Surveying Team located at Globe House who worked very closely with the RMBC Strategic Housing Implementation Planning Team
- 2.1 As far as consultation was concerned
  - Each RBH property was visited at least once, to discuss options, and if contact was not made with the tenant, at least one letter with the options for the property were sent out.
  - Any affected RTB properties were also contacted by letter asking permission if it was proposed to change any boundary fencing.
  - Letters were sent confirming what the work details for the individual property
  - The feedback survey form asked a series of questions concerning the consultation process and the information they had received. The responses are below:

- 2.2
- 23 answered the question regarding the clarity of the information they received and 22 (95.65%) felt that the information they received relating to the project was easy to read.
  - 23 answered the question regarding whether or not the consultation process allowed them to have their say and of these 21 (91.30%) said it did whilst 2 said it did not.
  - 24 answered the question “Were you informed when the work would start & how long it would be expected to take?” 21(87.50%) said yes whilst 3 (12.50%) replied in the negative.
- 2.3 Whilst satisfactory, at 68.18% (with 15 of the 22 people who responded to this part of the survey giving it either full marks or 4 out of 5), the score is disappointingly lower than those for the specific questions regarding clarity of information, giving people the chance to have their say and informing people when and how long works would take, which scored 95.65%, 91.30% and 87.50% respectively.

The overall satisfaction rating scores are shown in the table below.

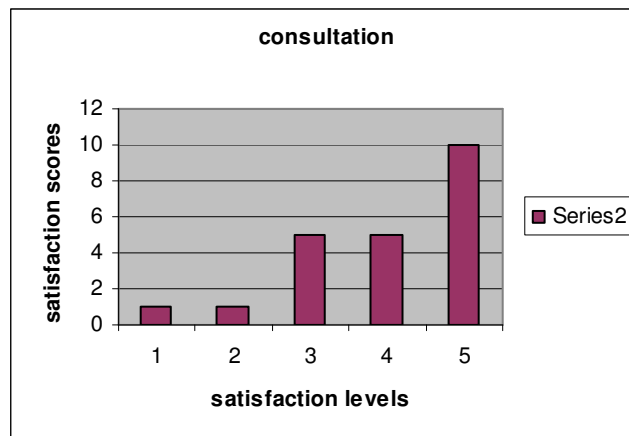


Table showing overall satisfaction rating of the consultation exercise

- 2.4 As can also be seen in the graph, one person scored this area of the project with a 1 and another scored it with a 2. These ratings significantly reduced the overall percentage score. When you look at these respondents more closely it should be noted that they made the following remarks on their survey forms (with the author’s comments bracketed along side them):
- “thought I was going to get a new driveway”  
(The property already has a driveway. For cost reasons the scheme did not include improving or replacing existing driveways)
  - “fencing is not what I thought it would be. No privacy down one side of back garden. Was told if conifers came down would have complete privacy. Fencing on front would have looked better if it had been part brick wall then fencing.”  
(The tenant specifically requested the removal of the conifers as they were dying. The next door house, privately owned, has a slightly higher path than this property which gives the impression that the fence is

lower than should be. The tenant also wanted works which were not included in the scheme. A number of visits to the tenant had been made to try to resolve issues. The option of brick wall with fencing on top had never been part of the scheme, or raised prior to the feedback form by this tenant.)

So, as far as these 2 respondents are concerned, it would seem that the overall satisfaction rating of the pre-works phase was heavily influenced by them wanting work elements which, for reasons of affordability, were never included in the project. Managing expectations is a difficult job when carrying out works that do not address all of the concerns raised by people. The satisfaction rating would rise significantly to 75% if the scores of these 2 people were deleted from the survey.

### 3.0 Whilst The Work Was Underway

3.1 Tenants & residents were asked for their views on a series of issues relating to the time the workmen were on site. Again, responses were strongly favourable:

- All 25 respondents answered the question on about the tidiness of the site 21 (84%) said that the workmen kept the site tidy whilst the work was being done
- 25 people answered the question regarding the level of disruption and 23 (92%) said that the disruption levels were acceptable
- All 25 answered the question “where the workmen polite and courteous whilst on site”, everyone stated yes (100%)
- 2 (8.33%) of the respondents made a complaint whilst the contractor was on site. One was an owner occupier who entered into a private contract whilst the other was a tenant who raised issues which were discussed in full on a number of visits.

3.2 The overall satisfaction rating whilst the contractor NAB Contractors Limited in partnership with RBH Property Services Surveying Team were on site stands at 83.33 % with 20 of the 24 respondents giving them marks of 4 or 5.



Table showing overall satisfaction rating during the construction phase

3.4 In concluding, whilst the contractors were on site the satisfaction rating was excellent, although the overall score does not fully reflect the scores on each section

#### 4.0 Overall Effectiveness Of The Scheme

4.1 Tenants were then finally asked for their views on the completed project. 24 people completed this section

- 18 (75.06%) of those who responded to the question were of the opinion that the completed work was what they had been told to expect
- 19 (79.17%) of those who responded to the question stated that they felt that the scheme had improved their property.
- 23 people completed the question had the project improved the neighbourhood/ estate. 21 (91.30%) of those who responded to the question said yes.

4.2 The satisfaction rating for the overall effectiveness of the Longhill Environmental Project stands at 70.83% with 17 of the 24 who responded giving it full marks or 4 out of 5. 3 were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. 4 people were dissatisfied. Of these 4, 3 had wanted additional works which were not part of the scheme, 1 had entered into a private contract, as an owner occupier.

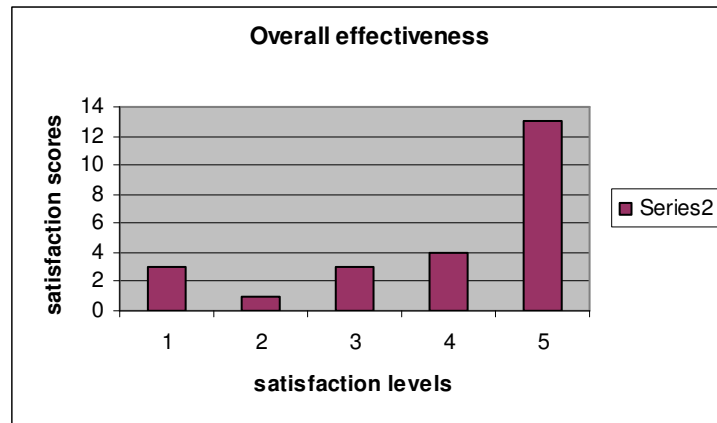


Table showing the satisfaction rating of the overall effectiveness of the project

4.3 Additional written remarks made by tenants and residents regarding the Longhill Environmental Improvement Project are noted below (with the report author's comments bracketed along side):

- "thought I was going to get a new driveway"  
Authors Comments: the property already has a driveway. The scheme did not include improving or replacing existing driveways.
- "street looks lovely with new fencing. Workmen did job well, nice and polite, even in the wind and rain carried on working. Very happy with everything they did."
- "Love the new fencing it is a lot better. I feel a lot safer with the back

fencing.”

- “next door is Council. Wooden fence has been left unstable due to the post being removed to make way for metal fencing. Feels a post should have been left in place to keep my fence stable”
- old fencing has not been removed”.

Author’s Comments – both were reported immediately to contractor who carried out necessary works. It had not been raised prior to the comment on the feedback form.

- “excellent work. Very happy. I did have to follow up with some work a few times, but as a whole I am very satisfied”

- “workmen were politest, tidiest and best worked on the estate. Standard was excellent and should be congratulated. Overall the drives have eased street parking when it is used. Well done RMBC. Only quibble agreed to wooden fencing, didn't realise it was changed to railings, which wouldn't have necessarily agreed to.”

Author’s Comments. This was an owner occupier who had boundary fencing with a tenant replaced. All were advised of the change of type of fencing from wood to metal railing, before the work commenced.

- “has improved neighbourhood, but much to be desired with metal fencing looks like a park, glad didn't choose to have my property done. Some of the rear fencing looks unsecure and shabby, and some fencing looks loose on wooden post and fencing. Overall works done to your satisfaction”

Author’s Comments. This was from an owner occupier, but did not provide contact details so unable to follow up. Surveyor has carried out final snagging inspection, and not come across any such instances, nor have any been reported by tenant.

- “fencing is not what I thought it would be. No privacy down one side of back garden. Was told if conifers came down would have complete privacy. Fencing on front would have looked better if it had been part brick wall then fencing.”

Author’s Comments. The tenant has specifically requested the removal of the conifers as they were dying. The next door house (privately owned) has a slightly higher path than this property which gives the impression that the fence is lower than should be. The tenant also wanted works which were not included in the scheme. A number of visits to the tenant had been made to try to resolve issues. The option of brick wall with fencing on top had never been part of the scheme, or raised prior to the feedback form by this tenant.

## 5.0 Overall Conclusion

5.1 Based on a reasonable response rate of 26.88% the responses to the 2

general questions regarding general satisfaction in relation to the contract and overall effectiveness of the project are high with rates of 80% and 70.83% respectively.

Not far behind, at 68.18%, the pre-contract overall satisfaction rate is also satisfactory, but is surprisingly below the satisfaction ratings scored in relation to the specific “consultation” questions regarding clarity of information, giving people the chance to have their say and informing people when and how long works would take, which scored 95.65%, 91.30% and 87.50% respectively. .

- 5.2 Expressions of dissatisfaction were low with only 5 (7.14%) of the total number of 70 scores being of 1 or 2. Three of these scores for various elements of the project came from those 2 people who were unhappy at the scope of works which, for reasons of affordability, did not include items that they wanted. The other 2 dissatisfaction scores came from the private owner also mentioned in section 4.3 who had an issue with works that they had arranged privately with the contractor and so, technically speaking, should not really be reflected.
- 5.3 This particular scheme was implemented in a radically different way to the first two completed larger schemes of Kirklee and Falinge Hill. The technical aspects were carried out solely by the RBH Property Services Surveying Team located at Globe House who worked very closely with the RMBC Strategic Housing Implementation Planning Team. The outcomes are very encouraging should this approach be utilised again on another scheme in the future
- 5.4 In conclusion, the Long Hill environmental project has been extremely successful as the estate now looks significantly better than it did prior to the works being undertaken. This will be demonstrated when ESG members carry out their estate study visits later this year and also at a future ESG meeting when “before” and “after” pictures will be provided. Overall reactions, too, been most favourable with the 80.0% construction phase and the 70.83% overall satisfaction rating being particularly pleasing.