**Task and Finish Group (T&F)**

**Completed by the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP)**

**Subject area:** Ground Maintenance negative comments on surveys.

**Request made by** [redacted] – Customer Voice (CV)

**Description of Project:** Examine the customer communication aspect of surveys undertaken and the negative customer comments from these surveys.

## Overview

CV team have been working with the Estates team for just over a year and have carried out three transactional surveys to understand customer satisfaction around the ground's maintenance service delivery. Copies of these three surveys were sent to the panel.

In the most recent survey, they received a 15.28% response rate with 36.15% of respondents stating they were satisfied with the grounds maintenance delivery. The survey covered a representation of customers including region and needs.
This survey also included a question about communication.

The customer voice team work with [redacted] to review the feedback from surveys and his team make follow up contact with customers who have expressed dissatisfaction within the survey.

They have advised that satisfaction is generally low and there is some confusion from customers as to what they can expect from the service delivery and what is Aster's responsibility compared to the responsibility of a Local Authority.

### Information supplied by CV team

- 3 excel spreadsheets listing all responses to the surveys undertaken. This format was difficult to work with especially when trying to identify what may be a definite complaint and those that may be just a general comment.
- Graphs showing response rates broken down by percentages
- The following 'You said we did' response was sent to customers by CV team after the surveys were analysed

" We recently sent you a survey to understand how satisfied you are with our Grounds Maintenance service. Your feedback has helped us to understand what is working well and where improvements can be made.
We received valuable feedback and following this our estates team have attempted contact with every customer that has expressed dissatisfaction to address the issues identified. This has led to many resolutions including:
• signposting customers to local authorities where the area of dissatisfaction is not owned or managed by Aster.

• Where we have identified areas that haven't been maintained and is our responsibility, we have updated our grounds maintenance maps to ensure these areas are included and maintained in the future.
• signposting any queries not relating to grounds maintenance to the appropriate team.

The survey demonstrates how cutbacks in local authority services impacts the areas our customers live in. There is often confusion between what services we deliver and those that are the responsibility of the local authority. If you would like more information on our ground's maintenance service including what you can expect from the service, the areas we are responsible for and when your next visit is scheduled, please visit our website"

**2. Complaints**

136 complaints were attributed to the grounds maintenance team since the 1st of August 2023 (up until end of August 2024).

61 were dealt with by way of "fast track complaints" (the change to the ombudsman codes in April means that there are no longer "fast track complaints.) These would have been sent to grounds maintenance who should have responded by actioning the complaint.

"Fast Track Complaints" have, in some ways, been replaced by service requests and it has been pointed out to the panel by the complaints team that many service requests would be a grounds maintenance issue. To begin with, the team were not recording the reason for the fast-track complaints so the figures are less reliable. Changes made a few weeks ago means they are now capturing the reasons for service requests and will be able to give more reliable reporting in the future.

Out of the remaining 75 cases, only 8 have gone to stage 2.

**3. Comments**

The CSP completed a full scrutiny on Grounds maintenance in 2015 and in 2023 the panel were asked by [redacted] to complete a task and finish report on grounds maintenance at a specific block of flats in Dorset.

Customers may be suffering from survey fatigue especially if they perceive, rightly or wrongly, that their views are not being listened to and potential action taken

**4. Conclusion**

Only customers who have digital access get any information on grounds maintenance the "What we do information."

The panel believes the information needs to be supplied to *all* customers whether digital or not to ensure everyone is aware of Asters responsibilities. e.g. customers

should be made aware that Aster do not include any weed management or keeping edges of lawned areas straight.  If grass is only to be cut and dropped and not taken away then that should be clear

This is a very emotive subject for customers who in the majority of cases want to be proud of where they live and that it looks good. They also pay for the service.

**5. Recommendations**

Supply *all* customers with the ground maintenance what we do and what we don't do information.

Ensure that spot checks are undertaken by Aster ground maintenance on all areas where contractors are used especially if 'hot spots' of customers complaining about the service delivery are identified.

[redacted]

Chair, Customer Scrutiny Panel

September 2024