



Estate Management Strategy

Delivering a Cleaner, Greener and Safer Colchester

Author: Richard Dowling, Housing Manager

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Glossary

ASB	Antisocial behaviour
CBH	Colchester Borough Homes
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
Service Level Agreements	Written agreements between CBH and CBC describing what each organisation is responsible to provide and the agreed cost
Social Media	Are forms of media that allow people to communicate and share information using the internet or mobile phones
QAAs	Quality Assurance Advisors: tenants or leaseholders who provide monthly reports for their respective communal areas
STAR	Survey of Tenants and residents. A standard satisfaction survey for landlords, that allows them to benchmark key services and satisfaction scores with other landlords. This is normally conducted every 2 or 3 years.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	An account of expenditure and income that every local authority housing department must keep. It is funded through the charging of rents and service charges relating to the management and maintenance of council housing. The account is kept separate or ringfenced from other council activities.
General Fund (GF)	The local authority's primary fund for general council activities. It is separate to the Housing Revenue Account.
SAINT	The local information sharing meeting for organisations providing services on Greenstead.

1. Introduction & purpose

The aim of this strategy is to ensure Colchester Borough Homes delivers an effective and efficient 'cleaner, greener and safer' estate management service. This service should be:

- Measurable
- Cost effective
- Integrated
- Deliver increasing tenant and leaseholder satisfaction results.

The estate management service consists of the management, maintenance and improvement of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estates, open spaces and communal areas.

2. Objectives

This strategy will help us to:

Deliver relevant aspects of the CBH Delivery Plan 2014-17 relating to estate services as follows:

- Work with our partners and residents to create mixed and sustainable communities
- Provide healthy, safe and energy efficient homes and estates
- Make the most of the resources and opportunities available
- Protect and enhance our reputation whilst increasing levels of satisfaction
- Involve our tenants, leaseholders and wider community in our work by creating opportunities for consultation and communication

The strategy is also aimed at:

- Increasing satisfaction with the overall housing service and in particular the satisfaction with the neighbourhood (a key satisfaction indicator in the STAR Survey and as at 2014 rated at 87%)
- Providing a proactive, consistent and responsive estate management service that minimises complaints and unnecessary costs
- Defining the resources and responsibilities necessary for delivering estate related services
- Ensuring our estates are clean, tidy and free from graffiti and other anti-social activities

3. Key strategy areas

3.1 Grounds maintenance, Including play areas, landscaping & trees

We will provide a grounds maintenance programme for the maintenance of grass cutting, shrub bed and hedgerows, play facilities and the management of tree works and inspections. This programme will contain defined standards of performance in terms of delivering and monitoring. We will ensure that we involve tenants and leaseholders in setting service standards and specifications, reviewing and awarding new contracts and monitoring.

We will formally monitor the delivery of this programme on a quarterly basis with Colchester Borough Council representatives. We will ensure that every month we will routinely inspect the quality of the grounds maintenance service contractor. We will publish our grounds maintenance standards and allow easy access for customers to report issues and concerns.

We will ensure that we have adequate budgets in place to deliver the defined standards of service (routine work) and for improvement and enhancement (ad hoc works).

We aim to replace every mature tree that has to be removed from a communal area with a replacement tree in a suitable location

3.2 Refuse collection and recycling

We will work with Colchester Borough Council to deliver a reliable and effective refuse collection and recycling service. We will promote recycling initiatives through advertising and information campaigns and where possible through provision of specific budgets and links to the capital improvement programme.

We will ensure that refuse areas and facilities are clean and tidy and adequately cleaned on a defined basis. We will support the supply of litter/recycling/dog bins and proactively tackle litter issues on our estates.

3.3 Neighbourhood Warden team

We will provide a Neighbourhood Warden Service. This service will inspect all communal flats and communal areas on a planned basis to ensure the areas are clean and safe.

Neighbourhood Wardens will also assist in the removal of fly tipping and other related estate services that are excluded from other service level providers.

3.4 Zone Wardens

We will support and work with the Colchester Borough Council Zone Warden team ensuring effective and regular communication and positive partnership working.

We will support the provision of an estate based rapid response cleaning and litter picking service. As part of this service we aim to remove all estate graffiti within the defined service standard and timescale.

We will support the installation of litter bins and initiatives to prevent the build up of litter and fly tipping (e.g. estates clean up and skip days).

3.5 Communal cleaning

We will provide communal cleaning services for the delivery of cleaning to designated communal areas and communal windows. We will publish the cleaning service standards by a variety of sources.

We aim to clean to acceptable standards 3 storey blocks every two weeks and 2 storey blocks every four weeks. These services will be monitored through regular monthly contractor meetings, site inspections and by QAA monthly reports. Information including cleaning dates will be published on all communal notice boards.

3.6 Estate Improvements and Communal Areas

3.6.1 Provision of drying facilities

We aim to provide adequate provision for drying clothes for tenants living in blocks of flats through the provision of secure drying areas and adequate supply of clothes dryers.

3.6.2 Car parking

We aim to provide, subject to resources and practicality, car parking facilities. We aim to mark parking bays to encourage the efficient use of spaces. We will also provide a limited number of marked spaces for disabled badge holders. We aim to link this information to the results of tenancy audits and identification of equality and diversity requirements.

We will consider and support the provision of car parking permit schemes in areas of high demand or where there are other identified problems.

3.6.3 Communal lighting

We aim to support the provision of low energy communal lighting to communal areas including the communal entrances to all our blocks of flats. We aim to move all landlord lighting from time clocks onto dawn to dusk sensors, taking advantage of new technologies and reduce future maintenance and electricity costs.

3.6.4 Signage

We will provide adequate signage to support the estate service including block addresses. All signage will carry and follow the CBH brand and logo.

3.6.5 Garage areas

We aim to review our provision of garages, subject to budgets and demand, in order to carry out refurbishment programmes on a planned basis. We aim to carry out regular inspections and ensure that these areas are safe and free from litter and fly tipping. We will investigate the potential for the installation of additional lighting in garage areas as part of any refurbishment programme.

3.6.6 Adaptations

We aim to support wherever possible the installation of dropped kerbs/pram ramps and hand rails at suitable locations and the installation of other practical and feasible improvements that will assist in improving accessibility.

3.6.7 General estate improvements

Subject to future budget approvals and availability, we aim to develop a communal area 'estate envelope standard' that will include the provision of security doors and door entry systems for communal blocks, new floor coverings in hallways and landings, replacement of walls and boundaries and other improvements as mentioned in section 3.6. We aim to involve residents in identifying priorities, making choices and in the delivery of these improvements by linking these programmes to the Council's Asset Management Strategy.

3.6.8 Sheltered Housing

This strategy recommends particular attention is given to sheltered schemes with a higher standard provided for safety, security and the provision of the higher 'premier standard' for grounds maintenance. Any improvements works should link to any ongoing option appraisal.

3.7 Tenancy Management

The estate strategy will also link to existing policies regarding tenancy management and the conditions of tenancy with particular focus on:

- **Animals** – we will provide support for the provision of dog bins and the eradication of dog fouling in communal areas.
- **Gardens** – we aim to ensure action is taken against tenants and leaseholders with untidy or verminous gardens, overgrown hedgerows etc., whilst supporting the provision of an assisted garden maintenance scheme for qualifying tenants such as elderly and disabled tenants.
- **Abandoned vehicles** - we will aim to deal with abandoned vehicles within the defined service standard times and in conjunction with the relevant statutory authorities.

- **Conditions of Tenancy** – we aim to ensure that tenants and leaseholders comply with their conditions of tenancy or lease regarding estate conditions.
- **Make a Difference Days and Community Building events** - we will aim to deliver eight 'Make a Difference' events each year where members of staff and volunteers will provide the labour resources and materials to improve identified estate locations.
- **Community safety and anti-social behavior** - We will support community safety partnerships and promote initiatives that prevent and deal with anti-social behaviour and crime.

3.8 Health and Safety

This strategy will place importance on ensuring our estates and communal areas are clean safe and secure. In particular our aims are to:

- Minimise personal claims and insurance related costs
- Support and promote fire safety and prevention
- Carry out regular recorded inspection and follow up action
- Reduce the opportunities for criminal activities
- Coordinate programmed works to include health and safety considerations
- Support local partnerships with the Police, ward councillors and other organisations (e.g. Neighbourhood Action Panels and SAINT)

3.9 Resources

3.9.1 Financial

We will make budgetary provision available for supporting this estate strategy through the following:

- **Routine budgets** - to cover the costs of grounds maintenance and cleaning. This is split between communal cleaning, window cleaning and refuse cleaning
- **An annual Community Improvement Fund** - to cover ad hoc initiatives that will benefit the community as determined by our own tenants
- **Capital estate improvements budget** - Capital improvement budgets to deal with larger estate improvement works, such as garage block refurbishment, provision of new car parking facilities, security, communal door entry upgrades and environmental enhancement works.
- **General repairs and maintenance** - Provision for the supply and maintenance of: Digital aerials, communal repairs, footpath/road sweeping and gully clearance
- **Minor works budgets** - to cover small ad hoc costs involved in dealing quickly with estate based issues not covered in the other budgets

3.9.2 Service Charges

We will ensure that estate service costs are transparent and fairly distributed for inclusion in eligible service charge calculation. We will review service charges on an annual basis. We will ensure that service charges are made for all relevant and chargeable estate services and accurately reflect the cost of that service.

3.9.3 Cost Distribution

We aim to ensure that the costs of providing estate management services are clear and identifiable and that they fairly and reasonably represent and are funded pro rata from both HRA and General Fund budgets to represent the mixture of ownership on the estates we manage. We will support service charge administration through agreed formula's agreed by Colchester Borough Council to support this principle.

3.9.4 Staffing

We will provide clear responsibilities for all officers engaged in the delivery of the estate service. Officers will work together in a collaborative partnership whilst ensuring minimum duplication of time and cost. We aim to develop well trained and professional staff with a sound understanding of delivering high quality and value for money services

Roles and Responsibilities:

We aim to consider and implement the most effective staffing structure for the overall provision of the estate management service and delivery of this strategy to maintain a holistic and coordinated approach. A nominated manager within CBH will take overall responsibility for the delivery of this strategy and resulting action planning and delivery.

4. Evaluation and Monitoring

Regular evaluation and monitoring will take place to assess the effectiveness of estate management services. This will include:

- **Satisfaction Survey** - Conducting a Survey of Tenant and Residents to monitor ongoing levels of customer satisfaction and benchmarking with other organisations every two years.
- **QAA reports and quarterly meetings** - to review the key areas of grounds maintenance, window cleaning, communal cleaning, refuse collection and the repairs service. QAA's will also have an opportunity to review and influence new initiatives and estate management issues
- **Site inspection regime** to inspect estates on a regular basis to undertake evaluation of the contractors performance against the service standards and identify any areas for concern or improvement through the development of an 'estate assessment guide'
- **Monitoring meetings** - we will plan an annual programme of regular and recorded review and monitoring meetings with relevant contractors and

Colchester Borough Council. These meetings will include a review of service standards and budget monitoring.

- **Compliments and complaints** - we will monitor, review and learn from relevant compliments and complaints through the 'You Said, We Did' practice. We will record and publish service improvements and changes that result from customer involvement relating to estate management
- **Estate and Neighbourhood tours** - we aim to hold three local estate tours on each Housing Officer round each year. These tours will assist in the monitoring of estate management services and identify any local issues. Local residents and relevant officers and contractors will be invited to participate. An action list will be produced for each tour.
- **Neighbourhood Wardens** - Neighbourhood Wardens will carry out regular recorded inspections of all communal areas and estates.
- **Service Level Agreements** - we will monitor service level agreements for services delivered in conjunction with Colchester Borough Council. The service level agreement will set out the service standards to be delivered, the responsibilities of each side and the costs of delivering those services.
- **Social media** - we will use our newsletter, website, Face book page and Twitter accounts to provide information, publicity and opportunities for engagement relating to estate services and activities as appropriate. We will also report on service improvements as a result of resident contact.
- **External accreditation** - we will consider opportunities for external accreditation and independent review of our estate services through initiatives such as 'Keep Britain Tidy' and mystery shoppers.
- **Neighbourhood agreements** - we will support the introduction of Neighbourhood Agreements subject to request and support by residents
- **Resident Involvement** - we aim to ensure that we will consult with our relevant resident groups and local councillors and organisation governance in the review and delivery of estate services and improvement works. This should include the selection of contractors and suppliers.

5. Consultation

Consultation on this strategy has taken place with:

- Colchester Borough Council
- The Neighbourhood Warden Service
- QAAs and Village Voices
- Leaseholders
- Colchester Borough Homes staff
- A task & finish group of residents

6. References

- Grounds maintenance key service specification standards
- Communal cleaning contract key service specification standards
- Rapid litter/refuse collection service standards
- STAR Survey report 2014

7. Related Documents

- Health and Safety Policy
- Asset Management Policy and programme
- Medium Term Delivery Plan 2014-17
- Antisocial behaviour policy
- Conditions of Tenancy
- Resident Involvement Strategy
- Complaints policy

Document Control Sheet

Title:	Estate Management Strategy		
Electronic File Name & location:	\\Cbcdata02\User_Data\CB Homes\Common Files\Policies, Strategies And Corporate Documents\Word Versions Of Current Corporate Documents\CBH Estates Strategy - February 2015.Docx		
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Document Amendment History

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1.0	New	February 2015	New strategy