

Estate Services Strategy

March 2024



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Estate Services Strategy - March 2024



Introduction

London Borough of Havering owns and manages 12,191 Council rented and Leasehold properties. The Estate Services Team is responsible for keeping these estates clean and safe for our residents to enjoy.

The role of the team is to provide caretaking services and conduct estate inspections, working with residents to resolve estate issues to provide residents with pleasant places to live. A team of 49 staff are committed to working across our estates doing this work on a daily basis. This strategy sets out aims and objectives for the Council's Estate Services and outlines the service standards that our residents can expect from the team.

Tony English, Estate Services Manager and Katri Wilson, Assistant Director Housing Operations

Estate Services strategy aims to:

- Maintain and improve the visual appearance of the communal area of our estates
- Support victims and communities to report anti-social behaviour and issues arising from homelessness on our estates
- Reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour by working in partnership with the Housing Officers, police, internal Enforcement team and the local community through targeted response and enforcement powers
- Support vulnerable perpetrators of antisocial behaviour through intensive support provided by internal partners
- Maintain caretaking standards across all our council estates and ensure our communal areas are clear and safe through an inspection regime, and by providing additional storage solutions and using tenancy enforcement action when necessary
- Work across housing and with our community partners and residents to make our estates clean, attractive spaces where our residents feel safe, using lighting, CCTV and environmental improvements to do this
- Develop and improve greenspace to benefit all residents

As part of the Estate Service review, benchmarking was conducted to understand the service models being used by other Councils.

Although they may be structured differently, in essence they are providing the similar service package as our model.

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1. Our Service Model

The Estate Officer will

- carry out 6 weekly site inspections
- monitor standards of cleanliness with tenants and publish the results
- when cleaning is delivered, residents receive a good service which is value for money
- report antisocial behaviour, homelessness, abandoned vehicles and fire safety issues
- work closely with Council colleagues to improve estates
- work closely with Resident Services, Resident Safety Team, Housing Officers and Sheltered Scheme Officers
- work closely with residents to manage and improve the estate
- work with local tenant groups to help set and monitor our standards
- encourage residents to attend site inspections
- develop the service to make sure we are meeting our residents' needs
- Estate Officers work with Enforcement officers in the Environment section to serve Fixed Penalty Notices as appropriate.

Estate staff work closely with colleagues in Grounds Maintenance and Tree team to identify, inspect and manage trees, and identify dangerous or diseased trees on Housing land. Inspections will take place on a three year cycle with appropriate action taken where a tree is classified as unsafe. This includes checking Ash trees for signs of Ash die-back.

With regard to trees on Housing land, whilst we will take appropriate action to prune or fell a dangerous tree, we will not prune or fell a tree to:

- remove or reduce the incidence of bees, wasps and other insects or wild animals
- enable installation or improve reception of satellite or television receivers because the tree is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall'.

The Caretaker will

- clean communal areas in and around flats and maisonettes
- check and deal with any issues that affect the environment of estates, such as rubbish and recycling
- look out for elderly and vulnerable residents
- remove rubbish and health hazards such as syringes as quickly as we can
- arrange the removal of graffiti: if the graffiti is offensive then it will be removed within 24 hours of being reported
- report unauthorised, badly parked, abandoned or untaxed vehicles
- report communal repairs
- work with the Resident Services Team and the Antisocial Behaviour Team to reduce and tackle antisocial behaviour
- sweep and litter pick
- remove fly tipping
- respond to emergencies
- assist Sheltered Housing schemes with bulk item clearances
- target estate clearances in partnership with other services



The Estate Officers work jointly with the Waste, Recycling and Enforcement teams to deliver targeted community based recycling events across our estates and to issue fines and take enforcement action as appropriate, for example: fly-tipping. These events are a pro-active measure aimed at raising awareness on the importance of recycling, for both the environment and the Council's duty to meet its recycling target. The caretaking team clear unwanted items which have been placed on the kerbside.

Caretaking team work with Community Payback scheme to clear pathways, painting, litter picking etc.

How often sites should be cleaned

All low rise sites are cleaned two weekly, internally and externally.

Tower blocks, including lifts and lobbies, are cleaned daily, internally and externally. Landings are cleaned on rotation.

How standards of cleaning are monitored

Every site must achieve a minimum standard of cleanliness. We carry out regular (6 weekly) site inspections to check the cleanliness and site management of each block. They also help identify any repairs that are needed or any tenancy issues. The inspections involve:

- Tenants and or Estate Officers walking around the site. They will check a number of elements such as external areas, bin rooms and staircases.
- Each element is given a score, which is recorded on a site inspection form. The site must meet a set minimum score for it to be judged as being satisfactory.
- If any element is judged to be unsatisfactory, actions to resolve this will be agreed with the Caretakers that are responsible for the site.
- The results of each inspection, including any actions required, will be displayed on the Resident & Estate services webpage.
- Photo Book is used to record and monitor standards. It allows us to monitor quality and value for money aspects of services provided by the Estate services.

When do site inspections take place?

- Most sites are inspected 6 weekly
- If residents have time they are very welcome to join us on an inspection. Inspections usually start by the main entrance.
- Residents can find out when inspections take place at their site by looking on the Caretaking services webpage or by contacting Caretaking services.

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2. How much does the service cost?

The amount that residents pay for the caretaking service depends on how much cleaning the site requires.

3. Structure

Current structure and model



New structure



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4. Performance

Estates Target 23-24	Measure	Year end 2022-23	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	December 2023	Estates Target 24-25
95%	% of planned inspections carried out	94%	95%	95%	95%	91%	95%	95%
97%	% of planned caretaking block cleans carried out	95%	95%	95%	94%	95%	97%	95%
97%	% of reported weekly fly tips removed from estates	95%	95%	95%	94%	91%	97%	97%
100%	% Graffiti removed within 24 hours of notification	100%	94%	98%	98%	92%	98%	100%

Performance remained strong throughout 2022-23. In 2023-24 team targets were tightened and have been more challenging to meet. Performance and targets have been reviewed for 2024-25.

5. What our residents have said

We have received resident's feedback through the annual tenant satisfaction surveys. Housemark feedback 2023:

Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained: **57.6%**

The survey results confirm we are performing at 3rd quartile level for satisfaction when comparing with other providers. We have set a target of meeting upper quartile satisfaction of **68.4%** by December 2024.

We have introduced monthly telephone surveys since March 2024 to help get regular feedback from our residents.

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6. Financials

2021 - 2022	
Budget	£3,147,270.00
Actual	£3,004,792.00
Surplus	£142,478

2022 - 2023	
Budget	£3,247,360.00
Actual	£3,211,408.00
Surplus	£35,952

2023 - 2024	
Budget	£3,464,030.00
Actual	£3,473,103.00
Deficit	£-9,073

Overall expenditure has been within the allocated income.

7. Improving standards

Our strategy is for the next four years. Underpinning the objectives and actions there will be a focus on improving standards and collaboration and involving residents:

Objective 1: To ensure Council housing estates are kept free of litter and fly tipping, with open spaces maintained

To achieve this objective we will continue to carry out litter picking, regularly inspect streets and blocks, inspect existing trees and flower beds, maintain grassed areas, continue to encourage tenants to use waste collection services appropriately and recycle so that tenants see an improvement in the cleanliness of their wider environment.

Objective 2: To ensure Council housing estates are safe environments with opportunities for children to play and in which tenants and residents have a vested interest and sense of belonging.

We will consider providing play areas for our children and young people on our estates. Our Resident Engagement Team will engage with young people on what is important to them. We will improve communal areas to encourage individuals to make positive connections and develop a sense of community. We will look to provide informal and formal play opportunities so that children can play freely.

Objective 3: To ensure anti-social behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively, to minimise the impact on individuals and the wider community.

To achieve this objective we will deal with fly tipping on housing land and provide feedback in relation to complaints. We will deal with youths congregating and drug related ASB by working closely with partners in Residents Services, the Enforcement Team and the police.

8. Summary in brief

The service offer and standards set are fair and deliverable, on the basis of improving the current structure and staffing compliment.

Benefits of the estate strategy moving forward

- Structure review will freed up Service Manager from operational tasks to take a strategic lead
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Autonomy for the Estate Officers in line managing staff
- Improved technology
- Effective performance and standards monitoring using technology
- Proactive and preventative actions
- Joined up working across housing, Grounds maintenance, Parks etc.
- Smarter working – eliminate waste e.g. time, process, and travel
- Improved staff visibility and availability
- Service stability and continuity
- Increased resident satisfaction
- Review of play areas on estates
- Effective management of fly tipping and ASB

In terms of the future, the above developments will bring about continuous service improvements that will benefit our residents. It is anticipated that the service manager will work closely with the Assistant Director (AD) of Housing Operations to research and benchmark other initiatives and innovative ideas in order to elevate the service further and have a clear strategic vision supported with an action plan.