

Quarterly Neighbourhood Report

Date: 1 July 2009 to 30 September 2009 – Quarter 2

Neighbourhood Area: Cowes & East Cowes

1. Introduction

This is the second collection of information and data relating to neighbourhood profiling, services, performance and priorities. Where possible, information is provided specific to the Cowes and East Cowes neighbourhoods, however it is not always possible to provide information at this level. It is also the case that some reports still require further development. This report will be developed further for future meetings.

2. Profile of Neighbourhood

This element of the report is still under development.

3. Neighbourhood Based Data

DECENT NEIGHBOURHOOD AUDIT					
Area:-	Cowes Town	Cowes Central	East Cowes South		
Date of Audit	17.10.08	17.07.08	02.04.08		
Physical Standard	80	80	63		
Resident Involvement Standard	50	50	50		
Maintenance Standard	80	80	80		
Neighbourhood Services	54	58	53		
Overall Score	66%	67%	62%		

The minimum target that should be achieved is 75%. MHA carries out an annual Residents survey where we can drill down as far as street level for our results and information.

TENANT STATUS SATISFACTION 2008 (WHOLE OF MHA STOCK)

Maintenance (<i>Repairs & Maintenance</i>)	87%
Resident Involvement (<i>Account Taken of Views</i>)	71%
Neighbourhood Services (<i>Neighbourhood</i>)	82%
Homes (<i>General Condition of Home</i>)	82%

DB - The Tenant Status Satisfaction survey is carried out every 3 years but cannot be completed at Neighbourhood level.

PARTNERS

Medina currently has the following service level agreements or partnership arrangements:

Law Centre – for the provision of welfare advice, tenancy sustainment and general independent advice services. The SLA has performance requirements and is reviewed 6 monthly.

CAB – for the provision of debt advice. The SLA has performance requirements and is reviewed 6 monthly.

IOW Credit Union – for the provision of loans and savings accounts.

IOW Council Revenue and Benefits Service – for the provision of services relating to benefits and for the provision of HB verification work by Medina staff.

Sanctuary – for the provision of security and support assistance to victims of domestic abuse or violence.

Mediation Consultancy – for the provision of mediation services at nil cost to residents.

DB - The New Forest Consultancy proved to be very expensive and therefore MHA have now become partners with the Mediation Consultancy group. The SLA is currently being reviewed and rewritten so that the length of the contract will increase to 2 years. Currently MHA have a 90% success rate of cases resolved through Mediation Consultancy.

ES – This partnership is working extremely well and MHA are being kept completely informed and updated.

Action point: SMS – The Mediation Consultancy SLA to be forward electronically to LP

4. Key Issues

KEY ISSUES FROM WALKABOUTS

Vectis Road

Youth Nuisance and fly-tipping.

ES – Youth nuisance has escalated since the summer and the fly tipping is occurring behind the garages. Letters have been sent to all the residents and she has spent some time door knocking to try to find out the culprit. The items being fly tipped are large. Gating the access is not feasible and nor is additional lighting. DB suggested installing a fake CCTV sign.

Action point: *DB & ES – To view the site the following day. (16.12.09.)*

Wellington Court

Untaxed cars & parking issues.

ES – This is a huge problem as there are not enough spaces for one car per household. Inconsiderate parking is creating a safety issue, as emergency vehicles would potentially be unable to gain access to attend any incidents. Some families are currently taking up 2 or 4 spaces per property. A request from a disabled neighbour for a disabled bay has been rejected through the Prizes for Projects scheme.

Action point: *GS – To investigate the possibility of getting concrete posts erected along the strip of ground where car parking prohibits access for emergency vehicles.*

Wroxall Close

Unauthorised parking and fly-tipping in the area behind 1-13 Wroxall Close.

ES – There has been speculation that the residents can claim the land as they have been using it to park their cars for a number of years. ZWA – MHA have maintained the land and therefore have maintained their control of the land. It would not be possible for the residents to claim it back.

Action point: *ES – To contact MHA solicitors Coffin Mew so that they can write to residents to advise them to remove any fencing erected and return to their own allocated perimeter boundaries.*

Maxted Close

Fly-tipping in the external communal areas of the flats.

ES – Although a bin store has been supplied there is still illegal dumping occurring

Action point: *ES – To go through illegally dumped garbage to identify the offender(s)*

AC – Brought the attention of the group to the article recently published in the Beacon written by Cllr Lora Peacey-Wilcox. She states: 'I am currently trying to get the dangerous leaves removed from the path on this area and to ensure lighting is working – it's quite a dark alley way and one in which a number of you have commented. ES – was unaware of this and had received no comments herself.

Love Lane

Garden condition issues.

ES – this is a difficult situation as some properties are owner/occupier and therefore there is a mixture of private and tenanted units which are all affected or are culprits. Although ES writes to the tenants concerned on a regular basis and the problem is

rectified, it is a re-occurring issue. After a debate the group all advised that cutting of grass during extreme damp conditions means that some gardens are not viable to being tidied up and therefore good judgment and reason must prevail.

VALUE FOR MONEY POINTS/ACTIONS

Recent Developments include:

- Surgeries are being reviewed.

DB – due to lack of attendance at these sited surgeries and because the Housing Officers are now more active and visible within their designated neighbourhoods, MHA are intending to stop running these. There are many other events, initiatives, surveys and opportunities that tenants can voice their opinion or their views at. This proposal is currently under consultation with the TCC. Dates and venues have been set for the 1st quarter of 2010 only.

- MHA Repairs Team using text messages to advise of appointments.

- MHA Tenancy Packs have been revised.

The maintenance pack and the general information pack have been amalgamated together.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POINTS/ACTIONS

Recent Developments include:

- Creation of a MHA Financial Inclusion Strategy.

- Service review of Aids and Adaptations.

- The development of a MHA Tenancy Sustainment Strategy.

- The development of an Older Persons' Action Plan.

No additional comments made

CUSTOMER ACCESS POINTS/ACTIONS

Opening Hours

Spectrum Housing Group are harmonising office opening hours, with effect from the 4 January 2010. MHA Head Office Lugley House will be open Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and on Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. Rent payments will only be able to be taken until 4pm each day.

Between the hours of 16:30 and 17:00 there will only be reception cover and a Neighbourhood Housing Manager on duty. Primarily the business will just be open as a message taking facility.

Internet Access to Homeswapper at Lugley House

A new computer console has been installed in the Reception area at Lugley House so that any MHA tenant can access the Homeswapper internet site. Wheelchair user's can also access this site using a newly installed computer in one of the Interview Rooms at Lugley House. This is a free service.

5. Performance

5.1 Physical Standard:

Park Court

GS – The replacement of the external doors has not been put out to tender yet, as the installation of new doors at St Cross has proved to be problematic. Once these issues have been resolved at St Cross, the tender will then go out.

ZWA – Northwood House wants to reclaim back some of the land that Park Court have. Currently MHA owns ½ the car park and Northwood House the other ½. ZWA advised the group that contact with Northwood House is proving to be extremely difficult.

Gordon Lodge

ZWA – Some of the overhanging shrubbery and trees that were at the back of bungalows 8 to 10, have been cut back and cleared away. Tenants have now requested extra lighting to be installed.

Trees

ZWA – In response to queries regarding Sutton Close and Mountbatten Drive trees not being trimmed, ZWA informed the group that MHA had paid for an independent surveyor to look at all of the trees that MHA is responsible for. 300 trees need essential work which will take priority. Dead trees will be removed by appointed separate contractors and new planting of replacement trees will happen much later.
DW – MHA are only able to trim trees if there are no wires going through them. If there are, then British Telecom must trim the trees.

5.2 Maintenance Standard:

Mill Hill Road

Fencing completed

Coburg Court

New kitchens have been fitted

Gordon Lodge

The surveys for new kitchens and bathrooms will be undertaken shortly

Vectis Road

The trial cladding for the front of the properties is not going ahead. Instead the whole area is being completed. The tender for the canopies to be replaced will be going out after Christmas

Love Lane

The survey for new roofs has been completed. Not all properties will have their roofs replaced only those that leak. GS anticipated that these will be replaced by March 2010.

Maxted Close

The new bin store has been erected. The cycle clamps have been delivered and MHA are waiting from a price from the contractor to have them fitted.

Moira House

The large 3 square meter shed that will provide an extra storage facility for the residents, has been purchased and is waiting to be sited.

Victoria & Albert Cottages

These are listed buildings and after many discussions over heating the buildings, the eco air-source heating system is now not viable. Secondary glazing can be installed but MHA would not be allowed to install double glazing.

MHA has been in negotiation with a gas supplier however GS commented that MHA have already received some letters from tenants stating that they do not wish to have gas installed.

5.3 Resident Involvement Standard:

Meadow Road

Following a mapping exercise, attempts were made to engage with residents of Meadow Road. Low level of interest prevents the setting up of a TRA. Mainly owner occupiers support idea but not actively taking part.

Hawthorn Meadows

Interest in setting up TRA by one resident led to setting up of meeting between RIU & the supportive residents. Lead resident did not share information regarding meeting as discussed. Meeting did not take place and resident not contacted RIU to express interest in pursuing a TRA.

Consort Road

Following a mapping exercise, attempts made to engage with residents of Consort Road. Low level of interest prevents the setting up of a TRA.

5.4 Neighbourhood Service Standard:

Neighbourhood Walkabouts Scheduled 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2010

East Cowes South 17 March 2010 @ 9am

Cowes Town 30 March 2010 @ 9am

Cowes Central 30 March 2010 @ 10am

MHA is currently revising the Neighbourhood Walkabout template and the working practice associated with undertaking a Walkabout.

Action point: *The new Walkabout template will be available for viewing at the next NHG meeting in April*

5.5 Community Enterprise:

Growing Spaces

Growing Spaces has installed 154 raised vegetable beds into the gardens of residents in our neighbourhoods. 63 in Ryde, 88 in Newport and 3 in Cowes. We already have a further 70 on the waiting list for next year and have funding secured to deliver this. Priority areas for the project next season will be the Vectic Road area of E.Cowes, Maxted Close area in Cowes and Preston Close in Ryde.

A second funding application has been submitted to Local Food Grants to deliver the project to another 180 households over the 2011 and 2012 Growing Seasons. Funding support has been provided from Newport, Ryde and Cowes Town Councils. East Cowes TC declined to support the project.

Future Jobs

MHA bid into the Future Jobs Fund earlier in the summer as part of a 3rd Sector consortium Group (3SC). Future Jobs is a central government initiative aimed at getting young unemployed people, ages 18-25, back to work. The fund provides resources to employ a young person for 6 months at the minimum wage for a minimum of 25 hrs per week and gives the young people work experience and the opportunity to broaden their skills and improve work-readiness.

MHA has been awarded 14 Future Jobs to be started before the end of March 2010. It is likely that there will then follow another year of funding. We have already employed 4 young people within the DLO who will be with us now until June 2010

6. Key Impacts / Outcomes

KEY IMPACTS –

Positive View of MHA's Neighbourhood Action Plan's

The mini-neighbourhood event held on the 15 October 2009 saw strong attendance on the day. Consultation with regard to the Neighbourhood Action Plan's for the Cowes Central, Cowes Town and East Cowes South neighbourhood's was extremely positive and has completed the first round of consultation.

The Association now intends to consult on a more detailed basis at a Neighbourhood level in the early part of 2010.

AB – Tea Mobile initiative was piloted at Woodbine Close in Newport on the 15.12.09. As no tenants visited the scout hut where the event was being staged, the MHA team, along with the ENO for that area, completed a street mapping exercise. The information gathered proved to be very informative.

There are 4 other Newport Tea Mobile events planned for early next year. Dependent on the success of these events it will then be possibly rolled out across all MHA neighbourhoods, targeting specific streets / areas.

OUTCOMES –

Summary : What's working/not working – overall assessment

No comments made