

Quarterly Neighbourhood Report

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

Neighbourhood Area: Newport

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 Newport 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

Area:-	<i>Pan</i>	<i>Hunnyhill</i>	Nineacres	Gunville
Date of Audit	04/04/08	01/09/08	19/03/08	16/06/08
Physical Standard	72%	80%	72%	68%
Resident Involvement Standard	85%	75%	50%	75%
Maintenance Standard	80%	80%	78%	80%
Neighbourhood Services	76%	58%	53%	53%
Overall Score	76%	56%	56%	56%

The minimum target that should be achieved is 80%. 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 (Association wide Figures)

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%

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.

MARAC hears and views 20 cases per month. The funding for CCTV and secure housing currently comes from the Public Protection Unit.

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

It is in the tenancy agreement that residents live peaceably with their neighbours.

4. Key Issues

RE-OCCURRING ISSUES / KEY THEMES FROM WALKABOUTS, SURGERIES, SURVEYS, PROVISION FORMS,

The neighbourhoods of Newport are on the whole fairly settled and the biggest concerns tend to be around garden condition. We have the very successful Growing Spaces project on **Pan**, which is starting to roll out to other areas and we are also referring Residents who are unable to manage their gardens to Needs and Seeds, which is a church based organisation with volunteers carrying out gardening works. We rent a garage on Pan free of charge to Needs and Seeds to allow them to store their equipment and provide a more localised service. Discussion point around acceptable garden condition in winter months.

Planning permission has now been granted for the Pan development we are now in the process of finalising the selection of the contractor and we expect building works to begin March 2010 with first homes being ready for occupation towards the end of 2010.

Wallace Court is undergoing improvement works which are much needed, a bungalow has been set aside as a “refuge” for those whose properties are being worked upon.

Play has been an issue on **Pan** but the introduction of the MUGA has improved this, PNP have applied for Playbuilder funding and we now have 3 proposals to consider Medina have obtained funding for play areas at **Hookes Way** and **Nelson Road** and we have widely consulted with local adults and children to design new areas, work will start shortly on these projects.

John Street is causing increasing concern regarding ASB at present and Stephen Dickins is working exceptionally hard to overcome this, he has had CCTV installed there and then had the lighting upgraded to improve the camera vision. He has worked with the police to identify visitors to the properties who are causing nuisance, tenants have been asked to sign Acceptable Behaviour Contracts agreeing not to allow these named people into their properties. The police will provide extra patrols and will take action against any of these named people if they are found in John Street. Consistent failure to keep away from John Street will result in the organisation seeking a legal injunction against them and may result in tenancy action being taken against the residents involved.

The recent Neighbourhood day was not well attended in part because of the weather, however, we are rolling out TeaMobile in our neighbourhoods to capture residents, issues and concerns. This is very much a needs led exercise with street mapping taking place to identify the priority areas to visit. **Woodbine Close** was visited on 15th December no Residents visited the Scout Hut which is where we advertised we would be so staff went to the Close and knocked on everyones front door asking them to complete a survey about life on the Close. We spoke with apprx. Half the residents and left questionnaires for the rest, we are starting to collate the information collected from this.

It is hoped that this will start to replace surgeries which are not well attended although we will continue to hold the surgery at **St Cross Court**

VALUE FOR MONEY POINTS/ACTIONS

- Surgeries are being reviewed.

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

- Creation of a MHA Financial Inclusion Strategy.

- Service review of Aids and Adaptations.

– If the cost is less than £1k, MHA will complete the work. This will save the resident from having to apply to the Council and waiting for the work to be completed by contractors.

- The development of a MHA Tenancy Sustainment Strategy.

– This helps tenants to look at options and ways of remaining in their properties.

- The development of an Older Persons' Action Plan.

– This is not just for tenants in Sheltered Schemes. It looks at keeping older persons safe, well and warm in their properties.

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:

Grass

– MHA missed the opportunity to complete the last cut of the year due to the extremely wet conditions. Some areas are longer than we would wish them to be i.e. Garden Way. The next cut is due in January 2010.

The group decided that it was an acceptable situation to have longer grass in the winter months if the weather was wet.

DH expressed his concern around the elderly being unable to maintain their gardens. ZWA advised that if maintenance are made aware of the circumstances they will endeavour to help.

Trees

– In response to queries regarding 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.

Hookes Way – Southern Electricity had been contacted as MHA are only able to trim trees if there are no wires going through them or are within 2 meters of the tree.

Meadow Green

– Now gated. Rubbish will be cleared in the New Year.

Recycling

Recycling spots had been identified for the New Year.

5.2 Maintenance Standard:

– From the 1st April 2010 MHA will be using the cyclical painting plan to also complete other environmental work i.e. clearing, cleaning and repairs of paths, pavements, lighting, signage, fencing, guttering etc.

MHA also intend to complete a stock condition survey in 2010, which will entail reviewing every property in order to formulate a forward plan. Therefore within the 6 years, all MHA stock will be reviewed and maintained / improved.

Hookes Way residents had requested new signage. A plan had been completed and submitted to the Residents Association for consultation and approval. Currently MHA are waiting on the Chairman of the R.A. to sign this off.

MHA are in negotiation with Sainsburys to erect a fence up around the back of the play area. It is still overgrown, but once the planned clearance is completed PB expects it will highlight the safety aspect.

The issue of lighting for Manor Crescent garages and Nelson Road play area have been investigated. Costs of £500 per lamp plus the expense of bringing in the power supply is currently being considered.

Garden Way garages will be having new doors and roofs.

Wallace Court kitchen and bathroom refurbishment programme was due to be completed by March 2010. However until the new gas pipe has been approved nothing more can be done. It is now anticipated that the kitchens will be finished by mid April.

5.3 Resident Involvement Standard:

For comments on the Mini Neighbourhood Event and the planned Tea Mobile events, please refer to section 6 of this report.

– Resident Associations in the Newport neighbourhoods are not engaging, other than Hookes Way.

There is money left from Prizes for Projects and R.I. has requested that the NHOs submit all requests as soon as possible. LJ replied that a submission had gone in for fencing to be erected along the pathway of Barry Close.

Communication methods to keep the residents in Wallace Court informed and up to date is being worked on.

Chichester Walk residents have been consulted on parking and responses due date has now closed. A new dog bin will shortly be sited there.

5.4 Neighbourhood Service Standard:

We have booked Walkabouts for 2010 and these are published in Medina News December edition. We have also agreed a new Decent Neighbourhood Audit Standard which is much clearer and focussed on the neighbourhood and clearer highlights the areas that need to be targeted in a specific neighbourhood. The Audits are carried out by Neighbourhood Services, Resident Involvement, Maintenance and The Community Development Team to achieve a complete picture.

Action point: *SMS to send out a copy of the new Audit template with the minutes*

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

SQ commented that the same individuals are creating problems in and around Newport town centre and that the Safer Communities team would be targeting them in the New year. It was noted that the postmen and MHA caretaker are now reluctant to visit John Street.

Action point: *SD and PB will visit John Street to view the area to see if anything further can be done to make John Street safer.*

Chandler Close does not have any allocated or agreed number of parking spaces assigned to the properties. The gravel car park creates further problems with inconsiderate parking taking up extra space. The group discussed the possibility of reclaiming some green space and to use chains to section off spaces in order provide one car parking space per property. The cost of this work could then be recouped if tenants were then required to pay an annual fee to park in a bay.

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 Vectis Road area of East 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.

Play Area Redevelopment

Planning Permission has now been granted for the redevelopment of the Play Areas at Preston Close, Hookes Way and Nelson Road. Additional funding has also been secure from the Youth Opportunities Capital Fund. £30,000 has been awarded to support the involvement of artists Eccleston George in the development of these spaces.

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 –

The mini-neighbourhood event held on the 7th October 2009 saw a poor attendance on the day due mainly to extremely bad weather conditions.

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 and most residents are happy living there and required no further improvements.

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

The group discussed street mapping exercises in general and SQ advised that the police had carried one out in Russell House recently which had also provided some very positive feedback. SQ and the police had found that if questionnaires were sent in advance and residents were not going to be in on the day the street mapping was planned for, then they left their completed questionnaires hanging out of their letter boxes.

OUTCOMES –

We need to rebuild the momentum of attendance to Newport NHG, attendance has dropped from partners, mainly due to heavy workloads. We still have excellent links with our partners and work well with them to achieve outcomes.