

Estate Services approach 2022-2025

Introduction

As part of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Buildings Directorate, Estates Service operates at the heart of our Housing Estates delivering our service purpose - which is:

‘To help keep the city safe, clean and tidy and to provide support and advice when needed.’

The service purpose helps Estate Services stay focused on what is important to housing tenants and the buildings and estates we care for, which is aligned to the Social Housing Charter.

Estate Services is made up of four main teams:

- **Green and Clean** - responsible for all communal cleaning and grounds maintenance within Portsmouth City Council's (PCC) housing stock and land.
- **Estate Wardens** - responsible for estate-based functions such as fire alarm checks, block checks, investigations of ASB or fly tipping within PCC's Housing stock / land.
- **Housing depot** - responsible for collecting bulky waste, high reach window cleaning, jet washing and green waste collection within PCC's housing stock / land.
- **Landport Community Garden** - A free space designed to connect community through nature, by taking part in gardening and learning related skills. Whilst the garden is open to everyone there is a focus on engaging with PCC housing tenants.

Service areas in-depth

Green & Clean

A large in-house team responsible for the cleaning and grounds maintenance of over 1000 PCC housing sites across the Portsmouth city, and large areas of Leigh Park, Crookhorn, and Wecock Farm.

1. Cleaning

- 1.1. Cleaning of our communal housing areas is demand-led with demand captured on a database fed from several sources including reports from tenants, other departments, and our own staff. This database is used by management to determine where resources should be best utilised based. Demand is captured and work issued by our Resource Controllers based on priority/location. Being demand-led ensures work is focused where it needs to be, and resources are used efficiently. Cleaning teams are made up of a mixture of operatives on foot and in vehicles.
- 1.2. Data collection within Estate Services enables quantitative analysis important for future compliance with the Social Housing white paper. This includes tracking tenant service requests by housing block, distinguishing between unique and repeat issues - ensuring quality neighbourhood management.
- 1.3. As well as our PCC housing areas we also undertake the cleaning of other sites under what we call Service Level Agreement (SLAs (Service Level Agreements)) where we are

paid by other parts of the council or other outside organisations, such as schools, to undertake cleaning work on a regular or seasonal basis. For these sites work may be more scheduled to ensure compliance, or the demand may be more predictable. These sites include offices, such as the Civic, family hubs, secondary schools etc.,

- 1.4. The benefit of an in-house service means we can react quickly and efficiently to changes in demand to ensure the best possible service for the customer.
- 1.5. Whilst tenants already can contact Estate Services to report demand, the detail of the service is not available to them. It is intended to place descriptive information onto the PCC external website specific to the services offered and provide tenants information about the service and how to report cleaning demand (and other demands for Estate Services). This will be helpful in engaging tenants and reporting on future requirements of tenant satisfaction.
- 1.6. Report Cleaning - An example of how to report Estate Services demand is as follows - If you wish to report a cleaning issue, please call 02392 688444 or email sharedmailbox.housingdepot@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or use the [report it form](#).



2. Gardening

- 2.1. The Green and Clean team oversees the maintenance of communal gardens and open spaces, including parks, across various areas of Portsmouth's housing stock. Operating in five key areas - Leigh Park & Wecock, Paulsgrove, Buckland, Landport & Portsea, and Somerstown - the team ensures the upkeep of all communal housing land owned by Portsmouth City Council in these areas.
- 2.2. Gardening of our PCC housing areas is seasonal and managed via gardening rounds. Through site visits and measures we have learned that ground maintenance tasks are more predictable than cleaning and are best managed via gardening rounds that operate over a set rotation. Typically, we complete gardening cycles between 21-28 calendar days. From March – October our teams are cutting grass, hedges, watering and maintaining flower beds to ensure the areas are well kept.
- 2.3. During this season we also maintain gardens on the complementary gardening scheme - a service we offer to residents receiving certain benefits who are unable to maintain their gardens. This involves cutting their grass, cutting back hedges and making safe and tidy. The scheme has proven successful, and we currently have many people that we assist in this way. While spaces do become available occasionally

there is currently no capacity to expand the scheme. Please call 02392 688444 or email sharedmailbox.housingdepot@portsmouthcc.gov.uk if you need to discuss this with a member of the team.

- 2.4. We also complete gardening work on void properties when they are vacant before being handed over to the new tenants, meaning the gardens are in the best possible condition for the new tenant to care for going forward.
- 2.5. Between November - February we undertake planned work including planting trees, shrubs and bulbs, removals and reductions, moss treatment, clearing of leaves and laying of wildflower meadows.
- 2.6. Whilst tenants already can contact Estate Services to report demand, the detail of the service is not available to them. It is intended to place descriptive information onto the PCC external website specific to the services offered and provide tenants information about the service and how to report gardening demand (and other demands for Estate Services). This will be helpful in engaging tenants and reporting on future requirements of tenant satisfaction.
- 2.7. Report Gardening issues - If you wish to report a gardening issue, please call 02392 688444, email sharedmailbox.housingdepot@portsmouthcc.gov.uk, or [use the report it form](#).



Housing Depot

1. The Housing Depot is at the centre of our Estates Service. This is where the Resource Controller team work from, taking demand 'pulls' for our service and deploy all resources within Estate Services on a priority basis. This ensures consistent use of a database which is integral to feeding performance data used by management to inform them about the estates they care for.
 - 1.1. In addition to the Resource Controllers, the Housing Depot Operatives work from this location who carry out bulk collection and specialist cleaning tasks across all areas of PCC Housing stock. This is likely to work well in future with measuring how satisfied tenants are with the service.

- 1.2. Whilst tenants already can contact Estate Services to report demand, the detail of the service is not available to them. It is intended to place descriptive information onto the PCC external website specific to the services offered and provide tenants information about the service and how to report demand for Estate Services. This will be helpful in engaging tenants and reporting on future requirements of tenant satisfaction.

Estate Wardens

- 1.1. The Estate Warden team support our cleaning and grounds maintenance teams by carrying out investigations of estate-based issues such as fly tipping, misuse of waste bins and anti-social behaviour and will work with the community to engage, educate, and inform tenants ensuring compliance with their tenancy agreements and other PCC policies. In addition, investigating anti-social behaviour and carrying out block/site checks for damage, misuse, safety, fire risks and arranging for repairs when needed.
- 1.2. Our Estate Wardens also perform routine tasks such as block checks and fire alarm/equipment checks. This helps us keep sight of any issues before they lead to accidents or dangerous conditions.
- 1.3. On our housing stock/land in areas like Leigh Park, our Estate Warden's regularly liaise with other services/councils such as Havant Borough Council and Hampshire Highways to report and resolve issues that impact our service. This can include issues such as waste collection and land ownership queries.
- 1.4. Estate Services are responsible for ensuring communal areas are safe, clean, and tidy. Estate Wardens are there to engage with tenants about communal areas and work with tenants to resolve any issues. Communal areas include hallways, stairwells, lifts, drying areas, and communal balconies and any space outside housing blocks that is shared with other residents. However, drying areas and gardens can be more risk tolerant if these areas are outside of the main building, meaning the focus is on keeping these areas tidy and free from high-risk items. Portsmouth City Council's position on communal areas is covered under the tenancy / leasehold agreement and fire safety policy.
- 1.5. The Estate Wardens are a presence on our estates, often serving as the first point of contact for our tenants and residents seeking help or information on estate-based issues.
- 1.6. Whilst tenants already can contact Estate Services to report demand, the detail of the service is not available to them. It is intended to place descriptive information onto the PCC external website specific to the services offered and provide tenants information about the service and how to report demand for Estate Services. This will be helpful in engaging tenants and reporting on future requirements of tenant satisfaction.

Landport Community Garden

1. The Community Garden based in Landport is a free and safe space designed to connect the community through nature. We do this in several ways including:

- Offering plots to community groups and residents to be able to grow their own fruit and vegetables; prioritising PCC residents that have no access to a garden.
 - Working with other organisations including the Hampshire Wildlife Trust to create fun events that educate, inform, and involve children and adults on relevant topics such as climate change and greening.
 - Running a gardening club based off island at Arthur Dann where we are growing flowers that can be planted throughout our housing areas to improve the look and feel of the estates.
- 1.1. We are always looking for opportunities to improve biodiversity, greening, air quality and give the community access to healthy living through local projects such as the installation of beehives and community orchards.
- 1.2. Whilst tenants already can contact Estate Services in relation to the community garden. The detail of the role of the community gardener, and the associated community projects that operate are not available to them. It is intended to place descriptive information onto the PCC external website specific to this service and provide tenants with information about how to enquire about taking part with community projects. This will be helpful in engaging tenants and reporting on future requirements of tenant satisfaction.



Estate Services Strategy and link to the day-to-day operation

- 1.1. We regularly refresh our service strategy most recently in 2019 and 2022 - aspiring for outcomes by 2025.
- 1.2. Engagement in creating this strategy included reviewing customer demand, liaising with internal services, and horizon scanning and reviewing current legislation.
- 1.3. Customer voices were captured through the review of demand and are always valued at the point when local projects are being designed. For future revisions of this strategy, we will seek resident engagement and allow residents to influence the strategy going forward.

Introduction to the Integrated Strategy for Environment, Sustainability, and Staff Development in Estate Services

- 1.1. Estate Services take a holistic approach to building a cleaner, greener community while nurturing the growth and development of our staff. Therefore, our strategy focuses on two main elements: 'environmental sustainability' and 'staff development'.

2. Operational Approach

- 2.1. Estate Services operational approach encompasses a framework tailored to the specific services offered. Committed to ensuring each aspect of the operation reflects overarching goals of environmental ambitions and staff empowerment.
- 2.2. Cleaning Services - We have transitioned to eco-friendly cleaning products and practices, minimising our ecological footprint while maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness. Our staff are trained in the use of these sustainable cleaning solutions, ensuring that our operations align with our environmental goals.
- 2.3. Additionally, we employ demand-led cleaning approaches, ensuring resources are utilised efficiently and effectively, further reducing our environmental impact.
- 2.4. Grounds Maintenance - Our grounds maintenance services are guided by principles of biodiversity enhancement and environmental conservation. We prioritise native plant species and sustainable landscaping practices, creating green spaces that promote environmental resilience.
- 2.5. Furthermore, our staff are trained in specialised skills such as chainsaw operation, enabling them to undertake grounds maintenance tasks with precision and efficiency while minimising environmental harm.
- 2.6. We utilise a range of greening options to enhance our estates, including grass, wild meadows, green walls, hedging whips, flower beds, and trees. Grass is predominantly used for softening the landscape, promoting biodiversity, and providing cost-effective green spaces. Wild meadows feature a variety of native plants that attract wildlife and require minimal maintenance. Green walls are employed in built environments to improve air quality, regulate temperature, and enhance biodiversity. Hedging whips are planted alongside roads to mitigate carbon emissions and noise pollution. Flower beds incorporate native species to improve biodiversity and resilience, with intermittent flowering for year-round colour and minimal maintenance requirements.

Trees are strategically planted to suit the environment, with measures taken to ensure health and disease prevention, including sourcing from reputable suppliers, using native varieties, and implementing regular monitoring and maintenance programs. Fruit trees are also introduced near schools and communities to promote access to fresh produce and encourage healthy living.

3. Staff Management and Development

- 3.1. Staff management and development are integral components of our operational approach. We invest in the continuous professional development of our staff through training and opportunities for qualifications and apprenticeships. By enhancing their skills and knowledge, we empower our staff to deliver exceptional service.
- 3.2. The following are some examples of sustainability Initiatives that are linked to the Estate Services strategy
- 3.3. In alignment with our commitment to environmental stewardship, Estate Services has implemented a range of sustainability initiatives aimed at reducing our ecological footprint and promoting responsible resource management. These initiatives are integrated into our operations as follows.

4. Cleaning chemicals

- 4.1. In 2019, we undertook a review of the cleaning products utilised within our cleaning operations, aiming to enhance results while aligning with our sustainability goals. The review highlighted several key areas for improvement:
 - Disposable Materials: Each management area was disposing of significant numbers of cloths and mop heads monthly, many of which contained integrated non-recyclable plastic components. This not only had significant environmental impact but also represented an unnecessary expense for Estate Services.
 - Water Usage: Our operations were characterised by high water usage, with operatives transporting significant volumes of water, leading to inefficiencies and wastage.
 - Product Quality: Despite being designed for Green and Clean use, the quality of existing chemicals had diminished over time due to changes in the product provider.
- 4.2. Following testing, we made the decision to transition to key eco-friendly cleaning products. The key Benefits of these included.
 - Concentrated product supply: The new products are in concentrate form, significantly reducing storage requirements and the frequency of store orders - minimising the need for storage space and reducing throwaway plastics.
 - Reusable Packaging: Each new product comes in a reusable bottle, further reducing the reliance on single-use plastics and optimising storage space.
 - Reduced Disposable Materials: Red cloths will be the only disposable cloth used, with reusable cloths and mops lasting for hundreds of uses before they need disposing, minimising the need for storage space and store orders. This does require each area to have a washing cycle in place to ensure reuseable materials are cleaned.
- 4.3. By transitioning to these eco-friendly cleaning products and implementing efficient storage and usage practices, we are enhancing the quality of our cleaning operations but also reducing our environmental impact and promoting sustainability within Estate Services.

5. Enhancement in grounds maintenance

- 5.1. In our commitment to promoting sustainability and biodiversity, Estate Services places a strong emphasis on enhancing green spaces within our communities. When selecting areas for greening, we consider factors such as air quality, deprivation rates, canopy cover, resident feedback (all elements of PCC's greening strategy), and the current condition of sites. By prioritising locations that align with our goal of creating a cleaner, safer, and greener housing sites, we ensure that our greening investments have the most significant impact where they are needed most.
- 5.2. Collaborating closely with other departments such as Landscape Architects and Arboriculturist teams, we develop tailored planting plans for each site.
- 5.3. Additionally, we incorporate features such as wildflower areas, spring bulb planting, and strategically placed trees to provide long-term habitat for birds and insects while contributing to the overall aesthetic of our housing estates. By using a mix of native and non-native species, we enhance the diversity and resilience of urban ecosystems which are visually pleasing.

6. Pesticide use

- 6.1. In line with Portsmouth City Councils commitment to the phasing out of pesticides over a 3-year period, we aim to control weeds where needed and to allow growth where we can accommodate the biodiversity this creates. For example, many of the plants we deem as weeds are beneficial for our insects and do not need to look unsightly. Some grassed areas do not need to be kept as lawns but can be left to grow longer to encourage biodiversity or even planted as wild meadow areas to create beautiful sites, that benefit insects and birds.
- 6.2. Pesticides are no longer routinely used to treat weeds on the Housing estates except for essential ad hoc use of selective herbicides on wild meadows and glyphosate treatment on Japanese knotweed.

7. Engagement with residents

- 7.1. This strategy outlines our approach to consultation, resident involvement, and community partnership in greening projects.
- 7.2. Tailored Engagement for Public and Open Spaces - For public realm sites, owned by PCC housing, we recognise the importance of engaging with stakeholders to ensure project alignment with community needs and preferences. Estate Operations Managers will communicate via letters, door knocking, or consultation events to inform residents and users about upcoming greening projects relevant to them.
- 7.3. Resident Consultation for Housing Communal Gardens - Consultation for communal gardens is necessary as it directly affects residents' living environments. Estate Operations Managers, in collaboration with Landscape Architects, the Resident Engagement Team, and the Community Gardener, will conduct resident consultations during the planning stages of greening projects. Various consultation methods are used including door-to-door communication, noticeboard postings, resident meetings, and specific consultation events to gather feedback and ensure projects meet residents' needs and preferences.

8. **Waste Reduction and Recycling** Estate services are focused on educating residents about recycling and proper waste disposal while reducing fly-tipping on housing land. Through

systematic processes led by Estate Wardens, these strategic ambitions are met through two work streams.

8.1. Reporting and Investigation:

- Residents are encouraged to report incidents of bulk fly-tips, black bags on balconies, and side waste.
- Estate Wardens investigate reported incidents, gathering evidence to identify responsible parties.

8.2. This fosters awareness among residents about the importance of proper waste disposal and recycling.

8.3. Enforcement and Resolution:

- Residents failing to comply with waste disposal guidelines receive warnings and may face charges for non-compliance.
- Repeat offenders or problem areas are addressed through coordinated efforts by management, emphasising the seriousness of proper waste management.
- By enforcing consequences for improper waste disposal, residents are motivated to adhere to recycling guidelines and avoid fly-tipping.

8.4. Continuous monitoring and improvement

- Ongoing monitoring ensures that follow-up actions are taken promptly to resolve waste issues.
- Regular inspections by Estate Wardens reinforce the message of responsible waste management among residents.

8.5. Through consistent education, the service aims to encourage a culture of recycling and proper waste disposal, reducing fly-tipping incidents on housing land.

9. Energy efficiency and green technology adoption - battery powered equipment for gardening.

9.1. In our operational approach, Estate Services prioritises the utilisation of technologies by scanning the market for available and suitable equipment.

9.2. To date, our focus has primarily been on transitioning petrol-powered hand-held equipment such as hedge guns, strimmers, and hand blowers to battery-powered alternatives. This strategic decision is the result of careful consideration and testing to ensure that these tools are not only effective but also safe and environmentally friendly.

9.3. By adopting battery-powered tools for hand-held equipment, we mitigate the risks associated with Hand Arm Vibration (HAV) for our staff while simultaneously enhancing operational efficiency. Additionally, these tools offer benefits such as reduced noise levels, lower maintenance requirements, and zero emissions during use, aligning with our commitment to sustainability.

9.4. Providing a safe and environmentally conscious working environment for our staff while delivering high-quality service to our residents.

10. Fleet and buildings

10.1. Estate Services, working with key stakeholders within PCC, have implemented innovative solutions to reduce carbon emissions and enhance energy efficiency across fleet and building operations.

10.2. At two sites in the city, The Housing Depot and Paulsgrove Housing Office, solar panel and battery systems have been installed to harness renewable energy and reduce

carbon emissions. Equipped with Tesla Powerwall batteries, these systems capture solar energy for use in the buildings, significantly reducing energy costs and emissions. Since installation, these systems have supplied a substantial portion of the electricity needs at both locations, contributing to the council's goal of achieving a net-zero carbon Portsmouth by 2030.

- 10.3. In addition to building management, Estate Services fleet management forward thinking has introduced electric vehicles (EVs) for its Green & Clean team. Where possible, these EVs are powered by the green energy generated by the solar panels at the housing depot.
- 10.4. For some fleet vehicles such as caged tippers used for bulk collections there is currently no viable electric vehicle option on the market. To reduce carbon emissions from these vehicles Estate Services have transitioned to using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel in its large transit-style vehicles. HVO fuel reduces tailpipe emissions by up to 80%, with no impact on the performance of the vehicles.

