



# ESTATE IMPROVEMENT POLICY

**Responsible Director:** Director of Homes and Wellbeing

**Responsible Manager:** Head of Homes and Wellbeing

**Last updated:** November 2018

**Next update:** November 2021

## C09 Estate Improvement Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The provision of good quality well maintained housing coupled with good services make a big difference to people's lives. NCHA is committed to making this difference by ensuring we effectively maintain NCHA estates. The Estate Improvement Policy sets out a framework that contributes to our vision of creating a sense of community and home for NCHA's customers with an environment which is safe, secure and is where people want to live.

### 2. Estate Improvement Consultation and Involvement

- 2.1 In recognition of NCHA' geographically diverse communities, we will use various consultation processes that will lead to local customer involvement when considering the local community needs and aspirations in response to Estate Improvement requests.
- 2.2 NCHA will consult with our Customers, Community Voices, Scheme Managers, Virtual Consultation Group and NCHA Estate Officers to ensure that we receive feedback from customers who are seeking to improve their estate or home environment and /or address environmental / communal areas issues.
- 2.3 NCHA will ensure the proposals delivered are cost effective, address the problem and make an improvement and provide value for money.
- 2.4 NCHA will consult with customers to agree a policy for allocating this budget.

### 3. Keeping You Updated

- 3.1 NCHA will inform and update Customers, affected by the proposed Estate Improvements works and details of the approved works prior to commencement where applicable.
- 3.2 Following completion of the Estate Improvements NCHA will undertake yearly Impact Assessments.

## C09 Estate Improvement Procedure

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Estate Improvement Procedure sets out a framework whereby groups of NCHA Customers will be given the opportunity to influence and benefit from estate improvements. This in turn will contribute to our vision of creating a sense of community along with well-maintained NCHA estates.

### 2. Purpose of Communal Estate Improvement Funding

- 2.1 The purpose of the Estate Improvement funding is to empower local customers, communities and front line services to improve the look of our estates and the quality of life for the people living and working within those communities. Therefore, we will ensure that there is minimal delay in our processes, when delivering agreed improvement works to our customers and communities.
- 2.2 The Estate Improvement fund will be allocated to each of the following operational service areas:
- Affordable and Social housing (South)
  - Affordable and Social housing (Central)
  - Affordable and Social housing (North)
- 2.3 The fund is to be utilised for the purpose of Estate Improvement initiatives which benefit groups of customers/residents and the wider communities where we have mixed tenure estates.

Below are examples of qualifying works:

- Improving physical layout or design of a communal area.
- Measures to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour occurring in communal areas.
- Minor pruning to trees on NCHA communal land/gardens.
- Repairs to shared areas.
- Renewing shrubs and hedges located on NCHA communal land.
- Improving NCHA estate signage.
- Erecting secure bike sheds on NCHA estates.
- Improving security of NCHA communal areas.
- Dealing with rubbish/fly tipping.

### 3. Budget Setting

- 3.1 NCHA will utilise the Estate Improvement Fund to improve and / or address environmental and communal areas issues and ensure the proposals address the problem and make an improvement whilst providing value for money.

3.2 NCHA will set an annual budget to fund solutions in response to issues identified by those either living on, or managing estates with communal areas. The funding will be managed and administered by NCHA to facilitate environmental and or communal space improvements within NCHA estates.

3.3 This Estate Improvement budget will be allocated to the three NCHA regions on the basis of service demands and priorities as deemed appropriate by the Head of Affordable and Social Housing. Delegated responsibility for financial expenditure, monitoring and budgetary control is passed to the Service Manager(s), Estates, for efficient operational practices.

#### **4. Estate Representation and Consultation**

4.1 The Head of Affordable and Social Housing will liaise with their Service Manager(s) about Estate Improvement works.

4.2 In liaison with the Service Manager (Estates), the Estate Officers will be instrumental in obtaining proposals from the Scheme Managers, Community Voices, Estate Inspectors and Representatives and Customer Involvement Officers who will have received proposals via the following mechanisms.

- Obtaining feedback and suggestions from Customers, Residents, Estate Community Voices and NCHA Estate Officers.
- CAP Groups.
- Customers and Residents Associations

#### **5. Identifying Estate Improvements**

5.1 The Estate Officers, Housing Officers (IHT), Scheme Managers, Community Voices and Customers will identify possible estate improvements. The Estate Officer will compile a list of requests for proposed estate improvements on their patch (including potential environmental improvement proposals derived from the Estate Inspections) and present the proposals to the Estate Service Manager.

5.2 The Estate Improvement proposals will be presented to the Estate Service Manager along with quotes and a time table for expenditure. The Head of Affordable and Social Housing will be updated on a monthly basis by the Service Manager(s) about the proposed works/ projects being undertaken.

#### **6. Target Hardening**

6.1 During the course of the year the Anti-Social Behaviour Team may in response to ASB issues, propose estate Improvements, the aim of which is to bring about a reduction and or eradicate anti-social behaviour.

## 7. Prioritisation/Customer Consultation in Estate Improvements

7.1 The Head of Affordable and Social Housing will be directly responsible for their Estate Improvement Budget and will review the Estate Improvement requests ensuring the proposals qualify and prioritise accordingly with services demand and requirements.

7.2 In view of the fact that each region has geographical differences the Service Manager(s) Estates will provide information about the budget expenditure and the work to be undertaken. The information will be accessible to the CAP's at all times, located on the NCHA intranet (S-drive, Estates)

The following information will be displayed:

- Details of the work being carried out (if applicable including photographs, plans and/or supporting evidence) highlighting the nature of the request and how the proposal would benefit those living on the estate.
- Where applicable, reasons why a proposal has been rejected

7.3 Where applicable after discussion with the customers and taking into account the views of the customers consulted with, a decision will be made by NCHA about which improvements are agreed. The decision will be communicated to affected customers and to the appropriate CAP - NCHA will have the final say in how the budget is spent.

## 8. Alternative Funding - Community Maintenance Budget

8.1 The Property Services has a designated budget which can be used to enhance communal areas. The qualifying conditions are as follows:

- Applications will only be accepted for Affordable and Social Housing properties and estates.
- Applications will normally only be accepted for groups, not individuals.
- Only one grant will be made to a scheme per financial year.
- Grants will normally be limited to a maximum of £1,500. However, if a grant is approved in excess of this sum, staged payments may be made.

8.2 For more information please refer to Policy F7 Community Maintenance Budget.

## 9. Communications

9.1 Prior to the commencement of work NCHA will write to those who may be affected by the approved work. NCHA will provide:

- A brief description of Estate Improvement works
- Estimated date of works commencement and completion.

**10. Impact Assessments**

- 10.1 NCHA will survey and gather feedback from its residents living on NCHA estates where it is deemed that the work carried out has had a significant and direct impact on the local community/ local residents following the completion of the Communal Estate Improvement works. Impact assessment will be sent up to 1 year after project completion.
  
- 10.2 The Service Manager(s) Estates will produce an Impact Assessment, identifying benefits and learning outcomes which may influence future Estate Improvements.