

Management of Open Spaces

Good Practice Guide



Service



Fairness



Transparency



Community

Overview



Rushcliffe's Good Practice Guide for the Management of Open Spaces has been designed to support housing developers and appointed management companies to provide the best quality service to Rushcliffe residents.

Rushcliffe Borough Council expects that developers and management companies consistently provide good levels of service in line with this Good Practice Guide.

The core principles of service, fairness, transparency and community underpin our expectations in respect of the service Rushcliffe residents will receive from developers and management companies in any arrangements for the maintenance of public open spaces.

Core Principles

The Rushcliffe Good Practice Guide is based on four core principles which aim to offer a supportive framework to residents, prospective buyers, developers and management companies.

Service

Provide a good quality service which adheres to development Written Statements of Services, as well as fair, accessible and effective processes for dealing with complaints.

Fairness

Residents will be given clear and complete information about the open space management agreement on that development from their first enquiry. Residents should also be given a minimum of 4 weeks' notice of any annual service charge increases.

Transparency

Residents will be provided with free access and clear signposting to the Written Statement of Services and Site Plan, including a breakdown of all fees and services included and not included.

Community

Developers and management companies will provide a trained and qualified Community Liaison representative who can act as the central reference point for concerns, issues and complaints.

Service



Provide a good quality service to all residents which adheres to development Written Statements of Services as well as fair, accessible and effective processes for dealing with complaints.

It is expected that residents will receive consistently good levels of service, ensuring that:

- Open spaces are maintained in line with Written Statements of Services.
- Residents have access to a Community Liaison representative for any queries, concerns or complaints.
- Residents will also have access to a dedicated Customer Care Team to handle queries.
- Any complaints are acknowledged and handled in line with the responsible organisation's complaints policy.
- Residents have access to flexible payment plans in the event of a bill increase.

Fairness



From house sale to moving in, residents will be given clear and complete information about the open space management agreement on that development.

Residents should also be given a minimum of 4 weeks' notice of any annual service charge increases.

It is expected that all aspects of open space management remain fair for residents and prospective buyers:

- Residents should receive a minimum of 4 weeks' notice of any increase in annual service charges.
- Service level agreements will be freely available to residents within the relevant development.
- Prospective buyers will be informed about the open space management agreements when first enquiring about the purchase of a new home.
- Charges relating to changes and/or additions to their homes are not permissible.
- Extra charges for handling residents complaints are not permissible.
- All housing will be charged at the same rate, including affordable housing.

Transparency



Residents will have free access and clear signposting to the Written Statement of Services and Site Plan, breaking down the services and fees for open space management on their development.

It is expected that there is transparency in operations, service levels and billings:

- Itemisation of costs associated with all bills.
- Increases in billings will be explained and/or itemised at the point of notice of increase.
- Residents will have access to work history upon request (for the relevant development) and free access to Written Statements of Services for their development.
- Prospective buyers will be given a description of any management services (and providers) which they will be committed to. This will extend to services not included in the Written Statements of Services.
- Prospective buyers will be given an affordability schedule, with a reasonable indication of the costs that are likely to be directly associated with the tenure and management of the new home over the next five years, also including any projected increase in service charges or sinking fund charges.

Community



Developers and management companies will provide a community liaison representative who is trained and qualified to handle concerns, issues and complaints regarding a development's open space management.

It is expected that positive relationships are developed with residents in the community:

- Residents will have access to a Community Liaison representative and Customer Care Team for queries, concerns and complaints.
- The Liaison representative will be available in person or online and will take an active role in communicating and engaging with resident groups.
- Residents will receive support from the management company to establish a forum to provide their feedback and suggestions.
- Where there are residents groups, the management company will provide an in person contact at annual AGMs.