
Garage Strategy 2009 / 2012

Version 6 – 16 April 2009

Garage Strategy

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Year 1 Service Action Plans-Being Developed
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Garage Strategy

1. Introduction

The strategy details the approach being taken to manage and maintain the Councils' Garages and Garage site plots during the life of this Strategy.

The implementation of the full scope of this strategy, which depends upon available resources has been developed in partnership with North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) .

This strategy facilitates the approach towards ensuring that Garage sites can be easily let, secure, and are maintained within available resources. Those which can't are being considered as disposable, as part of the Long Term Regeneration Strategy.

2. Stakeholder Analysis

There are a number of different stakeholders affected by the Garage Strategy:-

- NEDDC (Landlords & Elected Members)
- Rykneld Homes (Managing Agent for the sites and plots)
- Garage Plots & Sites Tenants
- Potential Tenants for Garage Plots & Sites (On Waiting List)

Each of these stakeholders has differing needs some of which are complementary and some of which aren't.

NEDDC

NEDDC requires well managed sites which are fully let, well maintained, meet the needs of tenants and prospective tenants, and contributes towards safe and cohesive neighbourhoods.

Rents which are reviewed on an annual basis should offer VFM.

Rykneld Homes Ltd

Rykneld Homes is paid a Management Fee by NEDDC from which it must manage / maintain the garage sites and plots on behalf of NEDDC in accordance with the Management Agreement.

Tenants – current / future

Tenants require a well maintained garage or site which is secure and at a reasonable rent.

3. Strategic Vision and Values

One of the strategic aims of Rykneld's 2009/10 business plan is "To sustain and regenerate North East Derbyshire District Council's local communities through neighbourhood management involving customers in decisions affecting their quality of life". This strategy identifies options for addressing the management /maintenance of both garage sites and plots and will contribute to the delivery of objective 3 (To contribute towards sustainable, safe and cohesive communities and neighbourhoods) of the 2009/10 of Business plan

4. The Current Position

Rykneld Homes manages garage plots and sites on behalf of NEDDC as part of its Tenancy and Estate Management Service. There are 112 garage sites which range from single garages, to sites with 30 lock up garages. There are 72 garage plot sites in total; 18 of these are included in the 112 sites as these contain both lock up garages and garage plots. Garage sites containing the lock up garages have a low void rate of 7.8%. The plots however are currently 55% void.

The Council's housing estates were designed and built in an age before car ownership had become widespread, and provision of parking facilities had therefore not been a significant feature of their design. However, as times changed and car usage increased, the design stood still. Over the years many of the green areas on estates have been converted into parking bays funded from a Small Area Improvement Budget following consultation with tenants, residents and local members. Further improvements have been carried out and funded from the Neighbourhood Improvement Budget (NIB).

Security is a problem on many Council garage areas which are often located in blocks behind properties in medium density areas of semi-detached housing. The physical separation of dwellings and the garage area means that there is no natural surveillance of these areas. These sites are under-used, and the residents prefer to park outside their homes, on verges, open space or on the public highway because these are more convenient and overlooked.

Due to the perceived threat of anti-social behaviour people are less prepared to walk a few hundred meters or more to park their car in an isolated unlit garage site.

As a consequence the demand for some garage plots has declined, and some plots have been used less. Some garage plots on housing estates have become the focal point for serious problems, being subject to vandalism and anti social behaviour which in turn has led to a low take up of garages plots. Some of these plots only have a few tenants, look uncared for and derelict and are having a negative impact on the efforts to improve the environment for our resident

5. Priorities for Strategic Change

Priorities for Strategic Change are:

- Implement a Maintenance Programme over a 3 year period based on identified priorities as part of the Revenue / Capital Maintenance budgets.
- Identify surplus to requirement sites and progress outcomes of the Long Term Regeneration Strategy.
- Ensure that the annual rent review relates to the delivery of the Management /maintenance programme –that garage users are paying a VFM rent.

6. Strategic Objectives

Rykneld Homes needs to address a number of issues to deliver **outcomes** of the Garage Strategy.

- Deliver a planned maintenance programme for garages sites. Within available resources.
- Increase demand for garage plots and sites.
- Through measures taken to address ASB as set out in the ASB Strategy and work carried out relating to the Estate Assessment Matrix Create safer environments where residents will feel secure when parking.
- Maintain clean environments delivered through the Grounds Maintenance SLA.
- Consequent on the delivery of the above, address on-street parking issues.
- Identify sites which can't be managed / maintained which meet VFM and feed such sites into NEDDC Long Term Regeneration Strategy.
- Rents which offer VFM.

7. Implementation

The above is being delivered through the following key actions;

- The review of garage sites / plots – 2008 - based on occupancy, demand, condition - will be assessed as to retention-maintenance and management or disposal- and considered as part of the Long Term Regeneration Strategy.
- By making sure all garages are secure – that there are garage doors available that cannot be "peeled" open, that garage structures meet Health and Safety requirements – Maintenance Programme - based on priorities over a 3 year programme.

- Gating sites where appropriate -In conjunction with the Crime Reduction partnership where an evidenced case is agreed.
- Ensuring sites are well maintained both in terms of structures and the environment. – Delivered through the Grounds Maintenance SLA 2009/10 and onwards.
- Delivering the ASB Strategy- Actions set out within the ASB policy and procedures - BSc monitors outcomes
- Delivering robust housing management action and co-ordination with the Crime Reduction Partnership - This means regular inspections of sites and acting promptly on fly-tipping, vandalism and repairs, which has now been included in the Estate Assessment Framework, by the Neighbourhood Champions.
- Improving lighting (although this can have a negative impact by encouraging, for example, night time football or gathering of groups). It is more effective with gated sites. This will be considered as part of the 3 year planned maintenance programme.
- Keeping accurate statistics of garage sites on fly tipping, other anti social behaviour issues and police crime statistics. These statistics should include costs. The information obtained will assist in targeting problem areas and give accurate information to base decisions on. This information will be collected and monitored via the Estate Inspection Scheme by the Neighbourhood Champions.
- Reviewing Rents / charges on an annual basis against improved Management/Maintenance outcomes and Customer satisfaction
- Area Housing Offices were previously operating the garage waiting list from either a paper based waiting list or an electronic list, creating inconsistencies. All paper applications have now been transferred to the electronic list and all garage allocations are now allocated from this list only.
- Long Term Regeneration - From the Garage review -2008 -option appraisals will be carried out as part of the delivery of the Long Term Regeneration Strategy on those sites identified in the current assessment which are in low demand or a poor condition.

8. Evaluation, Learning and Review

The Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains Fit for purpose. The success of the Strategy will be measured via garage vacancy rates, tenant satisfaction, the reduction of ASB complaints, Estate Assessments. This will be monitored via estate inspections, an annual tenant satisfaction survey, BSc PIs.

9. Communication Plan

The Garage Strategy will be publicised to all stakeholders to ensure positive messages are given.

Key positive communication message should be:

- Improving and maintaining the quality of remaining garage sites and plots so they encourage customers to use them.
- Reducing antisocial behaviour and garage misuse
- Improving the Estate Environment, Increasing cleanliness, reducing incidences of fly tipping.
- Proactively Market empty garage plots and garages

10. Contact Information

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Appendix

Year 1 Action Plan

To be developed in 2009/10 Service Action Plans – Neighbourhood Services /Asset Management

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Year 2/3 Service Plans

To be developed - as above

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