

Other performance news – half-year update

- **Awards and accreditations**

The highlights are summarised here and are also shown on www.colchester.gov.uk in the [achievements](#) section

Achieved April to September 2014:	
Anglia in Bloom	Gold award for Colchester and for the Castle Park. Silver Gilt for the Cemetery, and for West End Bowls club – also winning Best individual/Community Floral Display for their planting in club colours.
Green Flag Awards	Castle Park has received its twelfth consecutive Green Flag, with High Woods receiving its eleventh. Green Flags set a benchmark of standards for management and maintenance of publicly accessible urban and countryside parks, and promotes the community value of green spaces.
MJ awards	Finalists - shortlisted in top 5 in the 'behaviour change' category.
National Housing Federation - community impact awards	Hythe Forward , the first community land trust (CLT) in Essex was set up by the Council and Colne Housing. It was one of three finalists in the 'better neighbourhoods' category of these national awards in May 2014 – overall winner was London's Peabody Trust.
LEXCEL	Achieved the Law Society's practice management standard for the fifteenth consecutive year.

- **Other performance news for April to September 2014**

Work has been underway to prepare for the introduction of two new initiatives in the second half of 2014/15. They will help to improve the openness and accessibility of information about the Council, including our performance data.

The Local Government Transparency Code 2014 – the draft version was issued in May, and work started to get ready to meet its requirements. The regulations that will make part of the Code mandatory come into force on 31 October 2014 under section 2 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. A [wide range of information](#) must now be published under the Code, with a legal deadline of end December for data required quarterly and end January 2015 for the annual data.

Datashare - this tool was made available to 60 local authorities at no cost due to an LGA funding opportunity. After a successful application we now have this online tool free of charge to help us publish datasets and comply with our responsibilities to publish information. Datashare can also enable self-serve and reduce Freedom of Information requests by providing easily accessible online information to customers. After a period of development, Datashare went live on the Council's website [here](#) in October.

These two initiatives have been brought together so that we use Datashare for information and datasets which must be published under the Code, for other statutory requirements such as the longstanding Publication Scheme and the new 'Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which came into force in August, and for other items as appropriate. This includes the publication of the Council's key performance indicators. By bringing these items together into one place on the website, it will be easier for enquirers to go straight to the information they want, and to find it quickly and in a consistent and standard format.