

# Neighbourhood Management Policy

## 2019 – 2022

### Document control

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<b>Responsible Executive Director</b>	Executive Director - Customer Insight
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Version	Date	Author(s)	Notes on Revisions
1	March 2018	Business Manager Neighbourhoods & Income & Facilities Manager	New Policy
2	May 2019	Head of Neighbourhoods & Business Manager Manager – Assets	Minor revisions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update Job Titles</li> <li>• Update cleaning frequencies following Customer Consultation</li> <li>• Update PIs</li> <li>• Section 13 updated to reflect the current approach</li> </ul>

## 1. Introduction

We recognise that neighbourhood management is an integral part of our landlord role through the provision of safe, secure and well maintained neighbourhoods.

Well managed neighbourhoods provide a better quality of life for our residents and can act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and crime. We aim to provide high quality services, create sustainable communities and promote pride in our neighbourhoods.

We will comply with the Regulator of Social Housings Neighbourhood and Community Standard through partnership working with our tenants and external organisations and our commitment to keeping neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe.

## 2. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to set out our commitment to maintaining and improving neighbourhoods and providing services to residents which enables them to have quiet enjoyment of their homes in a safe and secure environment and neighbourhoods they are proud of.

The specific objectives of the Neighbourhood Management policy are to:

- Develop a pro-active approach to the management of our properties and neighbourhoods
- Manage the environment with partner agencies and residents to create sustainable neighbourhoods
- Ensure that all residents are aware of their respective responsibilities
- Develop service standards to measure performance delivery and resident satisfaction

We aim to put residents at the heart of their neighbourhood by encouraging customer involvement and consultation on neighbourhood management and we have consulted with our customers in the development of this policy.

We are committed to working in partnership with relevant partners and external agencies, such as the local authority and the police, to help promote the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of our neighbourhoods

We will work in partnership with relevant organisations and community safety partnerships, to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods in conjunction with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

## 3. Garden Maintenance

Residents that have exclusive use of a garden shall be responsible for ensuring that all parts of the garden are maintained to an acceptable standard and are not allowed to become overgrown or untidy. They must ensure that the garden does not endanger the health and safety of others or cause damage to any property.

We will work with residents who do not maintain their garden and endeavour to provide support, but this will be dependent on resources available at the time.

Where a tenant fails to meet any of these obligations appropriate action will be taken to encourage the tenant to adhere to the conditions of their tenancy. Continual failure of the tenant to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the tenancy agreement.

All avenues for resolving tenancy breaches will be utilised including the powers of external agencies, recharging tenants for works not carried out and legal remedies.

Although we have no ability to take action against land owners who do not maintain their garden or property, we will, where appropriate, refer matters to the local authority. Where a property has been purchased under the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire schemes, we will look to enforce any covenants relating to garden maintenance.

All gardens to empty properties will be brought up to the defined clean and safe standard before being let. Please refer to the Lettings Policy and Empty Home Standard.

#### **4. Maintenance of open plan areas**

We will be responsible for maintaining external common areas and open spaces. This includes grassed areas, boundary fencing and shrub beds. Some of the costs incurred in meeting these obligations may be incorporated into a service charge for tenants and included as part of the annual service charge bill for leaseholders.

We will ensure that we have a grounds maintenance contract in place to maintain all identified open spaces and work in partnership with our approved contractor to ensure:

- Common areas of grass are regularly cut throughout the growing season
- Shrub bed areas are trimmed and cut back as required and shrubs are not allowed to overhang footpaths
- Footpaths, parking bays and roads that have not been adopted by KMBC are inspected and works are raised from the inspections
- Leaf collection is done 3 times a year during October, November and December
- Hedge cutting and base maintenance 3 times a year
- Grass edging in throughout the growing season

We will periodically meet with our contractor to ensure the services provided are of the highest standard and to discuss customer satisfaction

We will liaise and work with KMBC to identify any areas that are their responsibility to ensure they are regularly maintained to an acceptable standard.

#### **5. Caretaking and Cleaning Service**

We will provide a caretaking and cleaning service to neighbourhoods and communal areas where required. All areas will be inspected at least every four weeks to ensure the area is kept clean and tidy. Appendix one details the tasks our caretaking and cleaning

team will undertake, however this list is not exhaustive and tasks will vary in order to achieve the aims of this policy.

We will undertake cleaning tasks to all communal areas of our high rise blocks, sheltered schemes, flats and maisonettes. The frequency and level of the cleaning will vary and depend on the requirements of the location. Where we carry out the cleaning of common areas the costs incurred will be recharged back to tenants as a service charge and to leaseholders as part of the annual service charge bill. Some of our cleaning services may be provided by an external contractor and we will periodically meet with our contractor to ensure the services provided are of the highest standard and to discuss customer satisfaction.

## **6. Winter Weather Services**

We will undertake winter weather services to ease the access to homes and around selected neighbourhoods. Services will include the clearance of main walkways and sheltered and retirements schemes. We will remove snow and use preventative measures to minimise icy conditions in the communal areas, where we have vulnerable or elderly residents. The location of the sites has been agreed with the Independent Living Team. We will use a winter maintenance contractor, who will provide the information on road surface temperatures, which will then allow us to make the decision whether to grit the locations. Please see the Winter Maintenance Policy for further information.

## **7. Garage site and parking areas**

All garage sites and parking areas, not including driveways to individual properties, will be maintained by a contractor as required.

The purpose of garage sites and parking areas is for the storage of motor vehicles. Garage sites and parking areas must not be used for the repairing or fixing of vehicles without prior permission from ourselves. No trailer, caravan or boat should be stored in parking areas or on garage sites.

All tenants, leaseholders and garage licensees must adhere to the obligations set down in their respective agreements relating to driveways, garage sites and parking areas. Where a tenant, leaseholder or licensee fails to meet any of these obligations appropriate action will be taken to encourage them to adhere to the conditions of their agreement. Continual failure to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the agreement and all avenues will be explored to resolve the breach including the use of legal remedies.

Where parking areas are provided, we will work with residents to ensure that the parking areas are considerably used.

## **8. Environmental Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**

Environmental ASB affects our ability to maintain and improve our neighbourhoods. We aim to minimise the incidents of environmental ASB and respond promptly when incidents are identified. Environmental ASB covers a variety of acts such as:

- Vandalism
- Dog fouling
- Graffiti
- Dropping litter
- Fly tipping

We will investigate all instances of environmental ASB and work with partner agencies to identify the offender and take the appropriate enforcement action, please refer to the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Pet Policy. We will encourage residents who witness environmental ASB to report it to ourselves and any other relevant organisation such the police or Environmental Health.

We will undertake any task to rectify the result or environmental ASB, which is not the responsibility of a tenant. Please refer to appendix one and the Repair Policy for the relevant timescales for remedial work.

Tenants are responsible for making good or paying for damage caused by deliberate acts of vandalism or any results caused by environmental ASB by themselves, any member of their household or visitors. Please refer to the Recharge Policy

Where we witness the result of environmental ASB on land or property not owned by ourselves, we will report the matter to the landowner and the local authority where appropriate.

## **9. Waste management**

We are responsible for addressing litter and fly-tipping within the boundaries of the properties and land that we own and will arrange clearance accordingly. Please refer to section 6 on the duties of our Caretaking and Cleaning Services.

Tenants will be notified at the start of their tenancy of arrangements for the removal and recycling of refuse and bulk items.

All tenants and leaseholders are expected to take all reasonable care to ensure that their household rubbish is properly stored and disposed of. Refuse must be adequately bagged and stored until collection in bin stores or other designated areas. Tenants and leaseholders are also responsible for making arrangements for the disposal of large items such as household furniture. Residents must comply with the local arrangements for the collection of refuse.

We will work in partnership with the local authority to encourage our residents to recycle and re-use their household waste. We will, where possible, provide locations for the positioning of recycling facilities. Furthermore we will work with the local authority regarding the provision of litter and dog bins and the disposal of such waste. Where a tenant is unable to manage their household waste, we will work with the local authority to provide the necessary support and assistance.

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Bins should be stored in the designated areas and regularly cleaned by residents. We will maintain communal bin stores and their surrounding areas.

We will ensure that we have the appropriate Waste Licenses to allow our staff and partners, to remove waste from properties, or lease. This will ensure that we correctly manage the disposal of waste in accordance with current regulations, and are not liable to legal action as a result of any negative steps we may take.

## **10. Infestations**

Tenants have a responsibility to report all issues with regard to vermin, pest or insect infestations to ourselves. Representatives of Livv Housing Group will also identify locations where infestations are present.

When a tenant reports the presence of vermin, pests or insects within their house or garden, they will be advised to contact the local authority or a pest control company. Where infestations can be directly attributed to a tenant's living conditions or habits, we will advise the tenant on how best to address the problem to ensure it does not reoccur. We will visit all tenants who report an infestation with their home or garden.

The tenant will be responsible for any remedial work required to bring the property or garden up to standard in order to resolve and prevent infestations.

Where a tenant fails to meet any of the obligations to rectify any infestation, appropriate action will be taken to encourage the tenant to adhere to the conditions of their tenancy. Support and advice will be offered when required. Continual failure of the tenant to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of the tenancy agreement.

All avenues for resolving tenancy breaches will be utilised including the powers of external agencies, recharging tenants for works not carried out and legal remedies

Where required we will work with the local authority to assist with any statutory nuisance arising from infestation.

If an infestation occurs at a location that is identified as a common area and not part of a tenants home. We will take steps to eradicate the infestation and prevent it from reoccurring. The response time for responding to infestations will depend on the type of infestations and the severity, however we will respond to all reports within 10 working days. Where a statutory nuisance exists we will respond within 24 hours.

We will ensure that all empty properties are free from infestations before being let which includes all external areas. Please refer to the Lettings Policy and Empty Homes Standard.

## **11. Regeneration and Investment in our neighbourhoods**

It is vital that large scale improvement work to our properties and neighbourhoods is completed to assist with the day to day management of our neighbourhoods. We will plan in advance a variety of improvement work which will complement the aims of all of our

service areas. Where an area is identified as requiring a large scale investment to improve its overall appearance, or to design out a neighbourhood management problem, we will prioritise improvement work based on financial resources and necessity.

## **12. Partnership working**

We will work with all relevant Partners, Contractors and local organisations to ensure our properties and neighbourhoods are managed and maintained to the highest possible standards.

## **13. Communal areas**

Tenants and leaseholders who pass through an internal communal area to access their home, or have use of an external communal area shall be responsible for ensuring that they, their visitors and household members abide by their tenancy and leasehold conditions. Tenants and leaseholders must ensure that no items are left in the communal area and that no rubbish or litter is deposited. Tenants and leaseholders must also not interfere or cause damage to any door entry system, security or safety equipment. Everyone living in a building with a controlled door entry system are expected to use the system correctly by keeping the entrance door shut at all times and only allowing access to identified visitors to their home. Furthermore tenants and leaseholders must ensure that no damage or vandalism occurs to any features of communal areas.

Due to potential dangers of obstructing access or means of escape in the event of a fire, we will operate a zero tolerance approach to items left in a communal area. If any high risk items (e.g. mobility scooter, motorcycle, moped or any machinery having a petrol or diesel engine.) are found, the tenant who owns the items will be contacted and asked to remove the item immediately. Failure to do so would be seen as a breach of tenancy and would be treated as a serious risk to other tenants.

Continual failure of the tenant or leaseholder to meet their responsibilities will be viewed as a breach of their agreement with ourselves. All avenues for resolving matters will be utilised including tenancy support and legal remedies.

We will investigate all instances of damage and vandalism, and will work with partner agencies to identify the offender and take the appropriate enforcement action, please refer to the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

We will visit each communal area as part of our cleaning schedule to inspect communal areas for items and damage.

## **14. Fire Safety / Fire Risk**

The Regulatory Reform Order (fire) (2005) requires every block of flats to undergo a fire safety risk assessment. This applies to common parts and is an obligation on the landlord. We will ensure that every communal area is covered by a fire risk assessment and that the assessment is reviewed annually. We will visit each communal area every two weeks to ensure it is free of hazards and that we are complying with the fire risk assessment please see the Fire Safety Policy for further information.

## **15. Walkabouts / Inspections**

To ensure we provide a good neighbourhood management service, we will complete inspections in a variety of ways. Neighbourhood Housing Advisors and Environmental Services Operatives have a regular presence on their patch and neighbourhoods and will monitor environmental conditions and respond appropriately to any concerns covered within this policy. We will work with the local authority and will, as appropriate, attend walkabouts or estate inspections where an area has been identified as a cause for concern.

The outcomes concluded from all the different inspection formats will drive the focus of our neighbourhood management services.

## **16. Making sure we do what we say**

The Board, Executive Director of Customer Insight and Director - Assets are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

The Head of Neighbourhoods and Business Manager - Assets have responsibility for monitoring the service and ensuring that it complies with the requirement of this policy.

All employees who are involved in the delivery of neighbourhood management services are responsible for ensuring they comply with the requirements of this policy

We will monitor customer satisfaction of service delivery through periodic surveys and by analysing trends in complaints, comments and compliments.

We will set and monitor targets relating to:

- % of customers satisfied with our neighbourhood based services
- Number of block cleans completed each year (per block)
- % of quality assurance inspections of communal areas
- Regeneration and investment programmes that improve the appearance of our properties and neighbourhoods
- The performance of our grounds maintenance contractor

## **17. Associated documents**

- Lettings Policy
- ASB Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Pet Policy
- Chargeable Repairs Policy
- Winter Maintenance Policy
- Fire Safety in Buildings Policy