

Estate Services Policy

2021 – 2024

Document control

Policy approval	Customer Services Committee, May 2021
Replacing	Neighbourhood Management Policy, Boundary Treatment Policy, Tree and Hedgerow Maintenance Policy and Winter Maintenance Policy
New review date	April 2024
Responsible Executive Director	Executive Director – Property
Author	Business Manager - Assets
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Version	1

Version	Date of review	Details of review
1	March 2021	Amalgamation of the Neighbourhood Management Policy, Boundary Treatment Policy, Tree and Hedgerow Maintenance Policy and Winter Maintenance Policy

1. **Introduction**

This policy outlines how we will comply with the Neighbourhood and Community Standard (2015). This is one of the four Consumer Standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing that all providers of social housing must comply with.

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.

2. **Scope**

The implementation and scope of the policy applies and is applicable to:

Livv Housing Group	X
Livv Homes	
Livv Maintenance	
First Ark Social Investment (Operating as Livv Investment)	
All entities	

3. **Compliance**

The policy is in place to support:

Regulatory Compliance, in particular the Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2015, section 1.1	X
Legislative Compliance	
Best Practice	

The Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2015 requires us to:

- Keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so
- Co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.
- Consult with tenants in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes. This applies where the registered provider has a responsibility (either exclusively or in part) for the condition of that neighbourhood. The policy shall include any communal areas associated with the registered provider's homes.
- Identify and publish the roles they are able to play within the areas where they have properties

- Co-operate with local partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives

Please note that our requirements set out in the standard that relate to anti-social behaviour are covered by a standalone policy as required.

4. Policy Statement

The specific objectives of the policy are to:

- Ensure that we fulfil our obligations under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2015
- Outline how we aim to play our part in the areas in which we provide homes
- Outline our offer to customers in relation to external and communal servicing and maintenance
- Manage the environment with partner agencies and residents to create sustainable neighbourhoods
- Ensure that all residents are aware of their respective responsibilities

We aim to put residents at the heart of their neighbourhood by encouraging customer involvement in neighbourhood management.

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.

Communal Garden and Green Space Maintenance

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 the local authority are inspected and works are raised from the inspections
- Leaf collection is completed 3 times a year during October, November and December
- Hedge cutting and base maintenance 3 times a year
- Grass edging 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.

Tree Maintenance

Tree maintenance is currently mostly 'reactive' in nature and conducted in response to reports received by customers or members of staff regularly inspecting communal areas concerning specific trees.

It is our aim to continually increase the data we have about trees that are in our communal areas and assess all trees to see if any regular maintenance is required.

Domestic 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 customers who do not maintain their garden and endeavour to provide support. However, where a customer fails to meet any of these obligations, 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.

We will, where appropriate, refer matters to the local authority Environmental Health team. 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.

Internal Communal Areas

We will provide a caretaking and/or cleaning service to communal areas of all of our buildings. All areas will be inspected every four weeks to ensure they are kept clean and tidy.

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.

Due to the 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 communal areas. If any high-risk items (e.g. mobility scooter, motorcycle, moped or any machinery having a petrol or diesel engine.) are found, the customer who owns the items will be contacted and asked to remove the item

immediately. Failure to do so is seen as a breach of tenancy and would be treated as a serious risk to other tenants.

Continual failure of customers 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.

Winter Weather Services

We will, so far as is reasonably practicable, maintain safe access to and from our premises. As such snow clearing and/or gritting will be carried out for the following premises:

- Offices belonging to the Livv Housing Group
- Agreed Sheltered and Extra Care Schemes with Independent Living
- Community Centres belonging to Livv Housing Group

Please see Appendix A for list of locations.

The sites will be monitored by an external contractor, which will result in a recommendation to grit the sites in Appendix A. The decision to grit is based on Met Office information and is made prior to expected hazardous weather conditions.

Areas that are most likely to be affected will be walkways, building entrances, car parks, sloped areas etc. of which effective salt gritting will be undertaken.

During the period between 1st November and the 1st March each year, all properties that are empty at any point will have all water carrying pipework (supply and heating system) drained down. This does not apply to properties that are heated by a communal system or new build properties with pump assisted heating systems.

It is unreasonable for us to be held responsible for all weather conditions, but certain hazards can be foreseeable with the use of weekly weather forecasts.

External contractors will be responsible for monitoring weather forecasts and the gritting of office accommodation.

Every effort will be made to deliver these services; however, no guarantees can be given if the adverse weather conditions present a high risk to employees or contractors undertaking the works.

All employees and customers have a responsibility to assess their own health & safety risks when journeying outside their home and place of work.

In the event of a heating failure to office accommodation, electric or oil filled heaters will be provided.

Departments with employees operating outside of office locations during adverse weather will need to ensure that suitable plans have been developed and put in place to ensure their safety e.g. Livv Maintenance Operatives, Housing Officers.

Where vulnerable customers have been identified, we will adapt our services to provide appropriate support. Examples of this approach may include:

- Re-classification of repair priorities for heating emergencies
- Proactive contacting of vulnerable customers in particular older residents in supported housing
- During winter months if existing heating facilities within a resident's home fail, we will provide temporary heaters.

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. 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 customers to ensure that the parking areas are considerately used.

Boundaries

Livv Housing Group will keep in good repair existing built boundaries which it owns through its Responsive Repairs, Empty Homes and planned programmes.

An annual programme of new fencing will take place in identified areas when budgets are available.

Details of these programmes can be found below:

Responsive Repairs

We will repair and / or replace existing built boundaries in the following priority circumstances:

- To front boundaries on A and B classified main roads. This is to improve pedestrian safety on busy roads and will make sure that the most visible parts of our neighbourhoods look attractive
- To boundaries next to open spaces such as fields, railways and streams. This is to provide privacy and to prevent access to places of danger.
- To protect a significant change in levels. This can be between different gardens or within the same garden area.
- Where a new boundary is required to maintain the safety or security of a vulnerable customer. Vulnerable customers may include older people or people with physical disabilities or other health needs.

Planned Maintenance

A programme of installing new fencing will take place when financial resources allow this. Priority for this programme will be given to areas where stock condition data has identified areas of external boundary fencing that are at the end of their serviceable life.

Empty Homes

When work is carried out on an empty property we will repair or renew all boundary and dividing fencing as per the Empty Homes Standard.

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.

Customers 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.

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.

We will liaise and work with Environmental Health to ensure that there is collaborative approach taken to addressing issues either in our homes or communal spaces.

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.

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

All customers 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. Customers are also responsible for the disposal of large items such as household furniture and must comply with the local arrangements for the collection of refuse.

We will work in partnership with the local authority to encourage our customers 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 customer is unable to manage their household waste, we will work with the local authority to provide the necessary support and assistance.

Bins should be stored in the designated areas and regularly cleaned by customers. 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. This will ensure that we correctly manage the disposal of waste in accordance with current regulations.

Infestations

When a customer 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 customer's living conditions or habits, we will advise them on how best to address the problem to ensure it does not reoccur. We will visit all customers who report an infestation within their home or garden.

Where a customer 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.

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

If an infestation occurs in one of our common areas, 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.

Regeneration and Investment in our neighbourhoods

As part of ongoing Option Appraisal work, we will work closely with the local authority to identify locations where regeneration is required and feasible.

Where major projects are identified, they will be fully rationalised and where appropriate, presented for Livv Housing Group Board approval prior to the commencement of any works.

We aim to improve neighbourhoods and the energy efficiency of homes with projects that benefit both our customers and the wider areas in which we are a key stakeholder.

Partnership working

We will co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties. We will also engage in local partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where we are able to assist them in achieving their objectives.

We will identify and publish the roles we are able to play within all areas we work and/or provide homes.

Walkabouts / Inspections

To ensure we provide a good neighbourhood management service, we will complete inspections in a variety of ways. Neighbourhood Housing Advisors and Estate Services Officers 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.

5. **Policy Outcomes**

The outcome of this policy will be that we continually comply the Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2015 and are able to evidence this to the Regulator of Social Housing with our annual self assessment.

It also provides customers with an outline of how we intend to keep all our neighbourhoods and communities clean and safe

6. **Monitoring and Review**

To ensure that the policy is effective and delivering the intended impact, regular customer satisfaction surveys will be taken to provide feedback on how we are performing in our neighbourhoods. The survey will focus on the following:

- Estates services
- Block cleaning
- Grounds Maintenance
- ASB

In line with the Group's Policy Framework, this policy is scheduled to be reviewed every 3 years. Unless, due to a change in Government legislation or regulatory requirements, then the review period will be brought forward to ensure compliance.

7. **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Policy Framework documents the approval routes for all Policies & Strategies, however under this policy the following teams/employees have the following responsibilities.

Customer Services Committee	Has responsibility for final sign off of the policy
Executive Director's Team (EDT)	EDT have responsibility for initial sign off of the policy
Director of Assets	Ensure operational implementation of this policy
Business Manager - Assets	Ensure key services are delivered and that there are robust contract management arrangements in place for all services covered by the policy
Manager – Advisory Services	Oversee the management of Environmental ASB

8. Equality & Diversity

In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, an equality analysis (EA) was completed as part of the policy review. Upon completing the EA it was found that the implementation of the policy would support and encourage the aims of the public sector duty. The equality analysis was completed and approved April 2021.

Appendix A – Gritting Site List

Location	Type of accommodation	Area to be gritted	Comments
Lakeview, Kings Business Park, Prescot	Office	Car park, entrances & pedestrian pathways	External contractor
Page Moss OSS, Princess Drive, Huyton	Office	Car park, entrances & pedestrian pathways	External contractor
Livv Maintenance Stores	Building supply stores	Car park, entrances and pedestrian pathways	External contractor
Fairview Park Community Centre, Sherbourne Avenue, Halewood, L25 9RL	Community centre	Paths to community building	External contractor
Park Close, Kirkby, L32 2BU	Community centre	Paths to community building	External contractor
Highfields, 4 Highfields, Prescot, L34 1NY	Community centre	Paths to community building	External contractor
South Avenue, Whiston, L34 1LT	Community centre	Paths to community building	External contractor
Fairhaven Community Centre, Tower Hill	Community centre	Paths to community building	External contractor
Gaywood Green	High rise flats	Car park & entrances	External contractor
Quarry Green	High rise flats	Car park & entrances	External contractor
Knowsley Heights	High rise flats	Car park & entrances	External contractor
Montreal Court, Huyton	Low rise flats	Communal pathways inside curtilidge of block	External contractor
Ottawa Court, Huyton	Low rise flats	Communal pathways inside curtilidge of block	External contractor
Quebec Court, Huyton	Low rise flats	Communal pathways inside curtilidge of block	External contractor
Vancouver Court, Huyton	Low rise flats	Communal pathways inside curtilidge of block	External contractor
Woolton Views, Ashton Park, The Fairways (WAFTA), Halewood	Multi storey flats	Communal pathways inside curtilidge of block	External contractor
Highfields, Prescot	Gregory flats	Communal pathway up to the front door	External contractor
Homer Road, Knowsley Village	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor

Frederik Lunt Avenue, Knowsley Village	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Wiltons Drive, Knowsley Village	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Tarbock Road, Huyton	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Byron Avenue, Whiston	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Oak Road, Whiston	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Shelly Place, Whiston	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Park Close, Kirkby	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Calgarth Road, Huyton	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Calgary Way, Huyton	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Saunders Avenue, Prescot	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
South Avenue, Prescot	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Preston Avenue, Prescot	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Hillside Avenue, Huyton	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Maple Leaf Drive, Huyton	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Ontario Way, Huyton	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Milton Avenue, Whiston	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Dryden Close, Whiston	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Fairhaven, Kirkby	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Knowsley Lane	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Church Lane	Bungalows	Path to bungalows	External contractor
Bluebell Park	Apartments	Car park, entrances & pedestrian pathways	External contractor
Watchfactory	Apartments	Car park, entrances & pedestrian pathways	External contractor