

Neighbourhood Management Policy

Linked strategies	Tenancy Management & Asset & Development strategy
Version	2.0
Date approved by (State by whom and when)	SMT February 2019
Policy level	3
Agreed by Union (If applicable)	Not applicable
Date effective (Subject to staff consultation)	February 2019
Date of next review	3 years from above date
Policy Owner	Head of housing & Support Services Head of Asset Management



1 Policy Statement

- 1.1** This policy sets out how we ensure that the areas where we have properties are maintained and managed so that residents are able to enjoy high quality living environments.

2 Scope

- 2.1** This policy applies to all areas where we own or manage properties.

3 Definition

- 3.1** Neighbourhood Management crosses a number of areas concerning the external environment (surroundings) of our homes which may not solely be within our direct control. In many instances we will need to work in partnership with other agencies such as the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW), Wellingborough Norse and the Police to manage our estates effectively.

4 Policy Principles

- 4.1** To ensure the provision of high-quality living environments within a legal, regulatory and Value for Money framework
- 4.2** To enable our residents to live in a safe, green and clean environment.
- 4.3** To monitor the quality of service provided within our neighbourhoods and seek to identify and carry out improvements.
- 4.4** To work in partnership with other agencies and aim to ensure that our neighbourhoods are places where residents want to reside, and people aspire to live.
- 4.5** To engage with and involve our residents in shaping and monitoring the standard and quality of our service.

5 How we will deliver these Policy Principles

- 5.1.1** We will seek to identify improvements from Neighbourhood Walkabouts, suggestions from our customers and partners as well as other work conducted within our neighbourhoods. The types of improvements we may make include graffiti removal, improvements to the existing landscape,



installing facilities, improvements to residents parking, such as painting parking bay lines or a car parking permit scheme, and will be dependent upon their being sufficient Environmental Improvement funding for the works to take place.

5.1.2 We will seek to carry out small improvement works from our Estates budget and look to include larger works within planned programme where these form part of our Asset and Development Strategy. We will invite our customer panels to participate in the prioritisation of works.

5.1.3 Neighbourhood Walkabouts will take place in all our key areas. Our customers and partners will be invited to take part and we will promote these events through the website and other communication channels such as newsletters. We will provide feedback to our customers following each walkabout to detail the findings and actions agreed. Greatwell Homes will also arrange ad-hoc Walkabouts where there are anti-social behaviour (including environmental nuisance) 'hotspots' or in response to reasonable requests from our customers.

5.2 Cleaning of communal areas in blocks of flats

5.2.1 We will deliver a cleaning service through an external contractor within blocks of flats with shared internal areas. Where possible we will seek to agree the frequency at a block/scheme level.

5.2.2 The cleaning specification includes sweeping (vacuuming where carpeted), mopping and wiping down of surfaces using the appropriate cleaning products.

5.2.3 The cleaning service will include a monthly clean of the inside of communal windows.

5.2.4 The external communal windows will be cleaned on a regular basis (no less than six monthly) using a pole system where required.

5.2.5 Where feedback is received from customers regarding the standard of cleaning, Greatwell Homes will use the data received and any other feedback received through the year to make any changes that are necessary.

5.3 Grounds Maintenance



- 5.3.1 We will provide a grounds maintenance service via our in-house estate services team.
- 5.3.2 The grass will be cut approximately 10 times within the growing season each year.
- 5.3.3 Shrubs and hedges will be pruned twice a year where appropriate and cuttings will be removed from site. We will replant as necessary within the spring and autumn.
- 5.3.4 Where residents carry out their own planting within communal areas this will be allowed but we will reserve the right to remove any planting that is not adequately maintained.
- 5.3.5 We will engage the estate services team for the majority of low level arboricultural works but will instruct specialist arborists where necessary for example emergency works to large trees.

5.4 Removing litter and bulk refuse

- 5.4.1 Our estate services team will visit all of our estates on a weekly basis to remove litter and bulk refuse from our land. Wherever possible we will seek to identify the person(s) responsible and, in all such cases, we will take action to recover our costs and/or work with the relevant authority to secure a prosecution where there is evidence that a crime has been committed.
- 5.4.2 Dangerous and hazardous materials which have been discarded on our land will be removed as quickly as possible, and certainly within 24 hours (weather depending and if there is a relevant vehicle available), where we believe the risk necessitates action.

5.5 Service Charge

- 5.5.1 In line with our Value for Money Strategy and in accordance with the tenancy or lease agreement we will charge our customers the full cost of providing neighbourhood services including cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance.
- 5.5.2 Letters will go out to all customers affected by service charges prior to the commencement of each financial year, advising of their service charge for the year ahead, and detailing any changes to the charge.




5.6 Graffiti removal

- 5.6.1 Hate and/or discriminatory orientated graffiti on our land will be removed within one working day of being reported.
- 5.6.2 Other graffiti on our land which is deemed to be offensive will be removed within two working days of being reported.
- 5.6.3 Non-offensive graffiti on our land will be removed within 14 working days of being reported.

5.7 Abandoned vehicles

- 5.7.1 Where we identify abandoned vehicles on our land, we will make enquiries to obtain the current registered keeper details from the DVLA.
- 5.7.2 Where we are unable to identify the registered keeper of the vehicle we will place a notice on the vehicle stating that it will be removed within 14 days. We will remove after this period.
- 5.7.3 Where an abandoned vehicle is in dangerous condition we will work with the Police to remove the vehicle as soon as possible.
- 5.7.4 Where we identify abandoned caravans on our land we will place a notice on it stating that it will be removed within 14 days. We will remove after this period.
- 5.7.5 We will not be responsible for any loss incurred due to the enforcement of this policy.

5.8 Untidy Gardens

- 5.8.1 We will identify untidy gardens through home visits, neighbourhood walkabouts, reports from neighbours and other sources. Untidy gardens include gardens which are overgrown, include dumped items, or which contain rubbish or animal waste.
 - 5.8.2 If there is deemed to be a breach of the tenancy agreement we will contact the customer to request that they bring the garden up to an acceptable standard within an agreed timescale.
 - 5.8.3 If the garden is not brought up to the required standard we may take further tenancy action or seek legal action such as an injunction.
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5.8.4 Where the customer has a disability which could make maintaining their garden challenging and they have no support network to assist them with this responsibility we will sign-post the customer towards services who may be able to help. However, generally where the property is designated for general needs there is an expectation that the customer will make their own arrangements for the garden to be maintained.

5.9 Pets

5.9.1 Our customers should refer to their tenancy agreement regarding the keeping of pets as permission will be required in a number of circumstances.

5.9.2 Working in partnership with the Police and Environmental Health, we will take action in accordance with the tenancy agreement or Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 where animals are not controlled appropriately and cause nuisance within the neighbourhood.

5.10 Trees

5.10.1 We will take a programmed approach and survey all trees within its ownership (not within tenanted gardens) every five years. Surveys will be carried out by qualified tree surgeons.

5.10.2 We will prune trees where it believes there is a health and safety risk or a risk of damage to its property.

5.10.3 Responsibility for maintenance of trees rooted in individual tenanted gardens lies with the tenant.

5.11 Fencing

5.11.1 We will not generally allow our customers to erect fencing within any of the communal areas such as communal gardens. If a fence is erected without permission, we reserve the right to have the fence removed at the expense of the person(s) who carried out the work.

5.12 Ginnels (pathways between two properties that only give access to those properties, and are not public land)

5.12.1 We will not generally clear or maintain ginnels. The maintenance and upkeep of these areas would normally fall within the responsibility of the customers who live in adjacent homes.

5.13 External structures



5.13.1 Our customers should seek our prior consent before erecting any garages, greenhouses, sheds, kennels, satellite dishes or other external structure. All requests must comply with planning or other statutory regulations as applicable.

5.13.2 We will not unreasonably withhold permission to erect any structures but will take into account the appearance of the area and how neighbouring customers could be affected.

6 Land Ownership

6.1 A proportion of land within our neighbourhoods is not owned by us. A large proportion of land belongs to either the Borough Council of Wellingborough or Northamptonshire County Council. Where this is the case we will work with these local authority partners and their agents to ensure a consistent, high standard within our neighbourhoods. Where we are unhappy with the standard we will raise issues accordingly.

7 Health and Safety

7.1 We will inspect our areas through our Estate Services Team, Neighbourhood Walkabouts and block inspections to ensure we comply with Health and Safety legislation.

8 Monitoring

- 8.1 We will use a variety of ways to monitor the delivery of this policy including:
- Engaging our estate services team to monitor the quality of cleaning within communal areas.
 - Neighbourhood Walkabouts with partners, staff, and customers to assess standards and identify improvements.
 - Neighbourhood Champions to feedback on the quality of neighbourhoods and help identify improvements.
 - Neighbourhood Panel to feedback and identify improvements in the delivery of this policy.
 - A variety of satisfaction surveys to gauge customer satisfaction levels and perceptions of the neighbourhood.

9 Feedback

9.1 Where a customer wishes to provide feedback concerning our neighbourhood management services or standards they should be directed towards contacting our Customer Services Team in the first instance, following which a single point of contact will be appointed to deal with any



customer related enquiries.

10 Equality Statement

- 10.1 The Equality Act of 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise on the basis of any protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity). Greatwell Homes supports its principles and is committed to the values of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.

Implications for equality have been assessed through an Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) undertaken as part of the Privacy Impact Assessment.

A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is a process which assists organisations in identifying and minimising the privacy risks of new projects or policies. Conducting a PIA involves working with people within the organisation, with partner organisations and with the people affected to identify and reduce privacy risks

The PIA will gain assurance that we have considered the impact that it may have on our customers' and/or colleagues' privacy, and that we are compliant with GDPR.

A PIA has been carried out on this policy and is available upon request. In summary, the main aspects covered in the PIA are ensuring that customers understand and give consent to the data sharing that will be necessary in order for their Mutual Exchange application to be considered (e.g. sharing information with other Social Landlords involved in the exchange application). Additionally, the PIA covers the nature and method of Greatwell Homes sharing data with other Social Landlords, in order for Mutual Exchange applications to be considered for approval.

11 Implications for Customers

The implications for customers are that they are affected directly by the services contained within this policy. Not all customers will be affected by all items covered in this policy, but most will see at least some impact of this in their neighbourhood. Customers have a requirement to be aware of the services they can expect to receive.

Ensuring that the policy is implemented effectively will have a significant impact on the experience customers have of where they live and their



surrounding neighbourhood.

12 Responsibilities

12.1 The Head of Repairs and Maintenance in conjunction with the Head of Housing and Customer Services will have overall responsibility for this Policy and ensure it is underpinned by effective working procedures.

12.2 Relevant staff within the Repairs and Maintenance, Estate Services and Neighbourhood Housing teams will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this Policy and associated procedures.

13 Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years or in line with changes in legislation, whichever is the sooner, updates or recommendations for changes will be presented to the Executive team.

Associated Policies	Associated Procedures
Repairs	
Anti-Social Behaviour	
Service Charge	
Health and Safety	
Customer Service Standard	

