



Environmental Management of Estates Policy

Directorate: Customer and Neighbourhood Services

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1. Introduction

This policy refers to the management of the physical environment around our properties on estates that are owned and managed by Salix Homes to ensure our neighbourhoods are an attractive, well maintained, safe and secure places. The scope of this policy does not include any broader neighbourhood regeneration initiatives.

Salix Homes will ensure the estate management services are planned, effectively resourced and comply with its legal requirements as a landlord.

Salix Homes reserves the right to add, modify or alter the services provided, subject to consultation with customers, in the interests of good estate management, for the benefit of residents or in order to demonstrate value for money.

Salix Homes will meet the requirements of the Homes and Communities Agency (formerly the Tenant Services Authority) national standards and the requirement for local standards in operating this policy. The most relevant standard in this case is the Neighbourhood and Community standard.

2. Aim / Purpose of the Policy

The aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- Reduce litter and fly tipping
- Improve the appearance of our local places
- Inspire and educate the next generation
- Encourage recycling and reduce waste
- Compliance with health and safety and other legislative and statutory obligations

3. Policy

Salix Homes is committed to maintaining our external communal areas to a high standard and will comply with all relevant legislation , regulatory codes and guidance.

Salix Homes will consult, listen and respond to residents and work in partnership with relevant agencies to help promote social, environmental and economic well-being within its communities.

This policy sets out the principles that Salix Homes will follow in the management of our estate environment. The specific issues and services covered are:

- Vandalism
- Graffiti removal
- Litter and fly tipping
- Bulky waste collection
- Grounds and landscape maintenance
- Street scene maintenance such as but not limited to: missing grids, street lights, road surface, bollards, trip hazards, ginnells
- Tree management
- Play areas and equipment
- Management of garages sites
- Abandoned vehicles (including illegally and improperly parked vehicles)
- Communal paved areas
- Infestations of pests and vermin
- Dog fouling
- Environmental audits and estate walkabouts
- Bonfires
- Clearance areas
- Neglected gardens
- Garden fences

Some Salix Homes services contained in this policy will be provided by a partner organisation in accordance with a service level or partnership agreement.

Salix Homes will work in partnership with Salford City Council, and/or other agencies to resolve environmental issues where enforcement action may be required

Salix Homes will ensure it works with customers, residents groups and other community stakeholders for the improvement of the environmental condition of our estates and implementation and delivery of this policy. Where there are resident groups in existence, monthly walkabouts with a representative of this group will be offered.

Vandalism and Graffiti

Damage to Salix Homes' property or land caused by acts of vandalism will be repaired as quickly as possible.

Salix Homes will fully investigate all acts of vandalism and graffiti to property in common areas. Appropriate enforcement action will be taken against all known perpetrators of vandalism to property

and where possible we will recover the costs of any works necessary to make good the damage.

Salix Homes will take a positive approach to working with other agencies to discourage acts of vandalism

Litter and Fly Tipping

Salix Homes will carry out regular litter collection on land under its control in accordance with all agreed schedules.

Salix Homes will report any fly tipping or dumping to other land owners as appropriate. Should a reported problem not be dealt with appropriately by the landowner and where we judge that the problem is causing a nuisance to our customers, we will ask permission to clear the land ourselves and seek reimbursement from the land owner.

We will work with our customers to ensure that refuse is disposed of safely, tidily and in the correct containers.

Salix Homes will work with partners to determine preventative measures to prevent fly tipping, encourage waste recycling, and will take enforcement action as deemed appropriate. We will continue to work with partners such as Emmaeus and Community Transport to find ways for the re-use of bulky waste collected by us.

Salix Homes will work with our communities to increase the amount of recycling carried out in our neighbourhoods.

We will expand our youth squad programme as part of initiatives we put in place to get customers involved in helping us make our areas attractive places to live.

Bulky waste collection service

Salix Homes will operate a weekly bulky waste collection service for the collection of household goods from our high rise blocks. We will review this service in 2015-16 to see if it can be expanded out to our low rise blocks as well.

Grounds and Landscape Maintenance Work

Salix Homes will ensure there is planned cycle of grounds and landscape maintenance for communal areas under its control. A full list is available in the grounds maintenance service level agreement.

Salix Homes will operate an assisted garden scheme for qualifying customers for which a charge will be payable.

Tree Management

Salix Homes will aim to retain all trees under our control as a positive asset. We will not remove or prune any tree which does not pose a risk or hazard in accordance with good arboriculture practice.

Salix Homes will regularly monitor the condition of trees under its control to ensure that risks they may pose to people or property are minimised. We will address any risk associated with trees on our land and will give priority to the most hazardous situations first.

Planting of any type of new tree can only be done following a written request to and agreement by Salix Homes.

General management of trees will be funded through the Environmental Maintenance Service Level Agreement.

Trees or roots that may pose an immediate danger to a person or property and require ground work as part of the treatment will be classed as responsive repairs and the work to rectify the problem will be funded through the repairs budget.

Trees that require removing or cutting back as part of programmed work will be funded through that programme budget.

A register of approved contractors for carrying out tree management work on our estates and who can be recommended to customers if they want to pay for the work themselves will be reviewed annually..

Play Areas and Play Equipment

We will take every precaution to ensure that any playground or play equipment under our control is regularly inspected and maintained. In accordance, Customers are expected to ensure that the equipment provided is not misused and damaged by their children.

Salix Homes will liaise with residents and external agencies such as the police to resolve any problems experienced by those living next to play areas.

Management of Garages and Car Parking

Salix Homes will regularly monitor the condition of our garages sites to ensure that these are adequately maintained and being utilised by customers in accordance with tenancy conditions. We will act swiftly to address any unauthorised and inconsiderate in parking in areas set aside for vehicles which are owned or managed by Salix Homes.

All vehicles parking on high rise blocks will be subject to a vehicle registration scheme and any vehicle not displaying the registration permit may be subject to a 15 day removal notice being applied

Abandoned Vehicles

Salix Homes will take appropriate action to deal with any abandoned and untaxed vehicles on Salix Homes owned land.

Communal Paved Areas

Salix Homes will regularly monitor the condition of communal paved areas under its ownership and will ensure these are well maintained.

Infestations of Pests and Vermin

Salix Homes is responsible for the treatment of infestations of pests and vermin in communal areas of its properties, both internal and external. Where appropriate, we will take quick and effective action to address any infestations on communal open space under its control.

The treatment of pests and vermin within the individual property of a customer and/or the individual garden attached to a property of a customer is the responsibility of the customer to treat, including payment of the treatment, and they must report all infestations within their property to the Council.

Pests or vermin that pose an immediate danger to a person or property will be investigated and dealt with appropriately via the responsive repairs team.

All reports and treatment of pest issues that arise as a result of programmed works taking place on a scheme will be paid for through the programmed works budget for that scheme.

Dog Nuisance

Salix Homes will take appropriate action where residents fail to properly control their dogs in our communal open space, as outlined within our Anti-social behaviour policy. Any dog owners who allow their dogs to foul public areas will be reported to the dog warden service for investigation and action.

All dog ownership in our buildings that have a communal entrance will be managed through the pet registration scheme.

We will carry out education initiatives in support of the pet registration scheme to help our customers to keep their dogs under control.

We will establish designated dog fouling areas on some of our unused open spaces designated for re-development (meanwhile sites).

Livestock

Salix Homes will not allow any livestock (such as horses, cattle, ferrets, goats, pigs, sheep, geese, ducks, reptiles etc) to be kept on any communal land under its control, or in any garden attached to a Salix homes property, and where this is not adhered to will take appropriate action to ensure their removal.

All ownership of animals in properties owned by Salix Homes will be managed in accordance with the relevant tenancy agreement.

Gardens

Maintenance of any garden attached to a Salix Homes property will be the responsibility of the tenant. Where tenants fail to maintain these gardens, we will take appropriate action. This may include charging the customer for any action undertaken by Salix Homes to clear up a customer's garden or withholding non-essential services until the garden is cleared.

Salix Homes will work with our customers to encourage them to keep their gardens looking well-kept for example through the annual In Bloom garden competition and through letter drops thanking them for looking after their garden.

Salix Homes aims to support customers to continue to live in their home. Where a customer is unable to maintain their garden, where appropriate, we will refer them to appropriate agencies for help with maintaining their garden. Where a customer is unable to pay for this service and cannot manage their own garden, they will be referred for assessment for assisted living in their own home, to ensure that they are living in the right home for their individual circumstances.

Salix Homes will establish our own garden support team to help residents who are vulnerable, elderly and infirm which will be a self-funding team made up of NEETS living in our areas.

Neglected Open Spaces

Salix Homes will monitor all open spaces that are the responsibility for us to manage and ensure they are kept free from fly tipping and don't become a nuisance to people living nearby. Where appropriate, Salix Homes will aim to bring back into use neglected open spaces under our control.

Salix Homes will bring back into use two neglected open spaces a year to create a positive influence on the wider area eg. creation of a designated dog fouling area or creation of a wild flower meadow.

Salix Homes will establish a fund that people can bid for to help improve neglected open spaces.

Garden fences

Garden Fences are the responsibility of the tenant to maintain and keep safe.

Where there is a dispute between two neighbours regarding the responsibility of the maintenance of a fence or hedge then Salix Homes will offer mediation in the case of such a dispute.

If a fence is a boundary to public highway it is the responsibility of Salix Homes to maintain.

Fires

Bonfires and/or mini fires on communal spaces owned by and managed by Salix homes will not be permitted. Salix Homes will work with partners to minimise the impact of illegal bonfires.

In exceptional circumstances a bonfire on a communal space may be permitted eg. Guy Fawkes night celebrations but only after written permission is requested and an inspection of the bonfire is undertaken by the Council's enforcement team and the GM Fire Service.

BBQs are allowed providing they are off the ground and no nuisance is caused to other people living nearby.

Street scene maintenance

Salix Homes has a responsibility to maintain the street scene in the areas we own or manage. The maintenance of the street scene will be carried out through the day to day repairs service.

A regular inspection routine will be created to monitor the street scene areas. Items such as missing grids, failing street lights, re-surfacing of road surfaces, replacement of bollards, removing trip hazards, treating drains that are blocked and causing floods, will be carried out through day to day repairs and all work will be carried out according the service standards for this business area.

The painting of benches, metal fences, and other street furniture will be carried out in line with the cyclical maintenance programme.

4. Service Standards & Performance Measures

Performance Monitoring

The successful implementation of this policy will be measured with the following PIs:

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- % of Salix Homes customers satisfied with their home as a place to live
- % of tenancy turnover
- Tenancy turnover
- Rent loss through properties being empty
- Re-let time
- % of properties accepted on first offer

Salix Homes will work with tenants to set maintenance standards for our communal open spaces. We will carry out inspections of our estates to ensure they are maintained to this required standard. Details of these inspections will be published in advance for the year ahead. The frequency of inspection will reflect the depth and level of inspection required and will vary depending on the size, design and grading of an estate. A local action plan will be developed for each area which receives a low grade score.

The maintenance of grounds around apartment blocks and in communal areas will be reviewed annually with residents.

Service standards

- We will remove all dangerous or hazardous materials left on land under our control within one working day. Other rubbish and dumped items will be removed within a maximum of five working days depending on location and quantity.
- We will remove offensive, racial or obscene graffiti from property or land under Salix Homes control within 24 hours of it being reported. Other graffiti will be removed within 5 working days.
- Grounds maintenance service standards will be in accordance with the Service Level Agreement with the contractor.
- An inspection for pests will be made within five working days.
- Tree inspection and dealing with tree issues will be done in compliance with the Council's standards.

5. Risks

Poor environmental maintenance leads to people being dissatisfied with their place to live resulting in undesirable areas. Bids for these areas may only be received from tenants who are a risk by being unable to maintain their tenancy. This results in some areas having high management costs, meaning

an increase in business costs overall, for example rent loss, increase in complaints, longer re-let times

Responsible for risk – Head of Neighbourhood Services

Mitigation of risk – Salix Homes will ensure there is a robust performance management framework in place that continues to ensure high performance is maintained. This will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and annual refresher training of staff will take place.

Salix Homes contractor goes into receivership and is unable to deliver the service

Responsible for risk – Head of Neighbourhood Services

Mitigation risk – Currently the grounds maintenance and street scene SLA is provided by Salford City Council's Environmental Directorate and the Council cannot go into receivership.

Changes in legislation result in a re-focus of environmental priorities

Responsible for risk – Head of Neighbourhood Services

Mitigation of risk – The Policy will be revised and the terms of any Service Level Agreement re-negotiated to take into account changes in legislation .

6. Related Procedures & Documents

Performance Management Framework

Grounds Maintenance and Street Scene Service Level Agreement

Better Places and Better Life Chances Strategy

Green Strategy

Estate Management Toolkit

Pictorial guide of local environmental quality standards

Abandoned car policy

Pet registration policy

Vehicle registration policy

Tenancy agreement

Tenancy management policy

7. Responsibilities

Customer and Neighbourhoods Directorate/Head of neighbourhood Services: Policy owner and responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented, employees in the environmental maintenance teams receive adequate training and colleagues across the business are aware of the policy and what is contained within it.

8. Related Legislation

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Criminal Damage Act 1971
Weeds Act 1959
Environmental protection Act 1990
Clean neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014