

Neighbourhood Management Policy – Managing and Improving Neighbourhoods	
Approved by Executive Leadership Team	Issue number 8
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	Executive Sponsor Executive Director of Housing
Previous Version Issue number 7	Responsible Officer Head of Asset Management and Sustainability

1.	<p>Aims and Objectives</p> <p>Effective neighbourhood management is key to keeping Hightown's estates in excellent condition. Hightown is committed to maintaining estates to a high standard, working in partnership with customers and third party agencies to ensure that our customers live in a safe and clean environment in neighbourhoods they can be proud of.</p> <p>The Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard sets out outcomes that social housing providers are expected to meet in respect of neighbourhood management including safety of shared spaces and partnership working.</p> <p>The aims and objectives of this policy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out Hightown's proactive approach to the management of our properties, estates and neighbourhoods. • promote partnership working with customers and third-party agencies • clearly set out customers' responsibilities in maintaining communal areas <p>Our customers' voice is important to Hightown, we welcome feedback and encourage customers to contact us. Customers can contact us or report any issues of concern in relation to their neighbourhood in writing, via email, via our website or portal, in person, through surveys and feedback forms or by phone.</p>
2.	<p>Definitions and Scope</p> <p>This policy applies to all staff working in Housing Management, Asset Management, Home Ownership, and Care and Supported Housing and to Hightown's contractors.</p>

3.

Policy Statement

Hightown strives to deliver an excellent neighbourhood management service that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, customers.

Hightown will meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of our customers.

3.1

Involving Customers and Co-production

Hightown is committed to providing excellent services and will work with customers to provide an attractive and safe setting for their homes so that customers can feel a pride in their immediate surroundings and have a sense of ownership. Hightown recognises that a customer's overall satisfaction with their home is impacted by their satisfaction with their neighbourhood.

It is important for customers to be given the opportunity to engage in local decisions and provide feedback on neighbourhood standards. Resident involvement allows us to understand the needs of our customers, co-produce services and ensure the services we provide are effective in meeting customer needs.

We will work with customers through the Residents Voice and Scrutiny Panel, forums, estate events and surveys as well as working with estate champions on joint estate inspections.

We will publish clear and relevant information for our customers about the services provided. Where applicable, we will consult with our customers to enable them to influence decisions affecting communal areas and the service we provide in their neighbourhoods.

We will maintain communal noticeboards where the design of the block permits. These will contain specific information about accessing services and the management of the block.

We will work with Customers to co-produce the policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhoods associated with their homes.

We will publicise estate inspections on the Hightown website and encourage customers to attend, so they can engage on their estate.

Customers will be invited to take an active part in monitoring and scrutinising performance. Standards will be set in consultation with customers through the Residents Voice and Scrutiny Panel and adherence to these will be monitored on a regular basis by Hightown officers.

Customers will have access to information in suitable formats that enables them to understand the specification for contracts in place for their areas, e.g. frequency and standard of cleaning and gardening. Customers will be invited to take part in arrangements set up to scrutinise performance.

Hightown will offer practical support to groups of customers who want to form associations or societies that will benefit their community. We will facilitate Good Neighbour Agreements where appropriate to set out standards of behaviour that all customers expect their community to adhere to.

In accordance with the Regulator's Tenant Satisfaction Measures requirements, annual tenant perception surveys will be carried out, which will include questions

	<p>about how customers feel about the contribution Hightown makes to their neighbourhood.</p> <p>Views will also be sought through other involvement opportunities such as area based events, general customers meetings and the Residents Voice and Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>Customers will be encouraged to take part in events that enhance the life of the community and the appearance of the area, such as gardening competitions, clean up events, and designing planting schemes for grounds.</p> <p>Hightown will facilitate community events for customers to build good relationships with each other to support the development of strong communities. Hightown may use Good Neighbour Agreements on some estates to support this.</p> <p>Where leaseholders are subletting, information on matters relevant to living in the property will be sent to the occupant as well as the leaseholder to ensure that they are aware of any local issues, such as parking restrictions, refuse disposal arrangements, the pets policy, and any neighbourhood agreements around expected standards of behaviour etc.</p> <p>3.2 Contract Management Neighbourhood management services, such as grounds maintenance and communal cleaning are provided by external contractors. We will ensure that contractor performance is monitored through a combination of inspections, contract meetings and customer feedback to ensure high quality service and value for money.</p> <p>3.3 Estate Inspections Hightown carries out regular estate inspections of neighbourhoods and communal areas on a programmed basis to ensure they are safe, clean and tidy. The frequency of the inspection programme for each estate is determined by its size and risk nature.</p> <p>These inspections ensure that estates are maintained to a high standard, identify any potential repairs and ensure that any health and safety concerns are identified, recorded and addressed.</p> <p>Hightown will encourage customers to get involved in estate inspections by inviting them to take part in estate walkabouts where staff and customers jointly inspect the standards of the communal areas. Customers who wish to attend can do so by contacting the appropriate Property Services Inspector. The results will be recorded and actions required will be followed up. Where appropriate, notice boards situated in blocks of flats may include a signing sheet so that customers can see when a contractor or caretaker has attended a site. This information will also be provided to customers upon request.</p> <p>3.4 Communal Cleaning In buildings owned by Hightown where there are shared internal communal areas Hightown is responsible for cleaning these areas. This service is carried out by an external contractor to a standard specification which details the tasks and frequencies to keep the area clean and tidy.</p>
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<p>3.5</p>	<p>Window Cleaning In some buildings, Hightown provides a window cleaning service for communal windows. Window cleaning for individual properties is the responsibility of the resident.</p>
<p>3.6</p>	<p>Grounds Maintenance Where there are shared external communal areas such as gardens, pathways and car parks Hightown will maintain these through a grounds maintenance service provided by an external contractor.</p> <p>The specification and frequency of the service will vary by area; we will provide this information to customers on request.</p> <p>Customers are responsible for the maintenance of any external space allocated to them or within the curtilage of their home such as gardens and driveways etc.</p>
<p>3.7</p>	<p>Tree Works Hightown will maintain all trees in external communal areas and ensure that any necessary work is carried out by specialist tree surgeons. Trees that are positioned within the boundary of a private garden are the responsibility of the resident, however, we encourage customers to contact us if they have trouble maintaining a tree that poses a health and safety concern.</p>
<p>3.8</p>	<p>Hazardous Materials Where we receive reports or identify issues of syringes, needles, bodily fluids or other hazardous materials in communal areas we will arrange for safe removal and/or cleaning by a specialist contractor within 24 hours. We encourage customers to report such issues to us as soon as they identify them and to never attempt to touch or remove the items themselves.</p>
<p>3.9</p>	<p>Graffiti and Vandalism We will remove any graffiti reported to us or noted through estate inspections. Offensive graffiti will be removed within 24 hours. Where we are able to identify the perpetrators of graffiti or vandalism we will pursue them through our anti-social behaviour procedure, including working with the police where appropriate.</p>
<p>3.10</p>	<p>Parking and Garages Hightown will advise customers of any parking arrangements during the allocations and lettings process. Applicants for housing are advised to check if there are sufficient facilities to meet their parking needs prior to accepting an offer of accommodation.</p> <p>On schemes with limited parking facilities, parking spaces may be let on a separate licence agreement with an associated charge.</p> <p>Inappropriate or dangerous parking or use of parking areas within Hightown's ownership or control will be addressed through Hightown's anti-social behaviour procedure. This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parking in a way which obstructs other vehicle users or pedestrian access • car repairs • neighbour parking disputes <p>Customers can report parking issues on land owned by third parties to the local authority. Hightown will support with this where appropriate.</p>

	<p>Hightown reserves the right to amend local parking allocation arrangements following consultation with customers. This may include the introduction of parking control measures.</p> <p>Cars parked on land owned by Hightown should be roadworthy, have a valid MOT and vehicle tax. Hightown will endeavour to remove any abandoned or unroadworthy vehicles from our land and will work with the relevant authorities, such as police and local authority.</p> <p>Where parking areas are managed by a third party Hightown will advise customers of this and who they should contact to report any issues.</p> <p>3.11 Lifts Hightown will ensure that lifts are maintained and inspected regularly to ensure safe and efficient travel. Customers who would struggle to use stairs in the event of a lift being out of service or in an emergency should notify us immediately to ensure that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is completed.</p> <p>Hightown will aim to complete lift repairs as soon as possible. If a lift repair cannot be completed quickly, for example due to a delay in obtaining parts, Hightown will liaise with customers to offer appropriate support.</p> <p>3.12 Disposal of Refuse and Bulky Items Customers must ensure that they dispose of rubbish appropriately, using the correct bins in communal bin stores or ensuring, where they have individual bins, that these are put out and removed on the day of collection. Any issues over the collection of waste should be directed to the relevant Local Authority.</p> <p>Customers should contact their Local Authority to arrange for any bulky items to be removed; these must not be left in external communal areas.</p> <p>Hightown will inspect bin stores as part of the estate inspection programme to ensure health and safety and that they are kept clean and hygienic. Misuse of or damage to bin stores will be treated in line with Hightown's anti-social behaviour procedure.</p> <p>3.13 Dumped Rubbish and Fly-tipping Where we identify problems with dumped rubbish, fly-tipping or bulk waste in our neighbourhoods we will take reasonable steps to investigate, working with partner agencies such as the police and local authority. Where necessary we will pursue alleged perpetrators through our anti-social behaviour procedure.</p> <p>3.14 Pests and Vermin Hightown is responsible for the treatment of any pest or vermin infestation in communal areas only. Infestations occurring within individual properties are the responsibility of the resident to remove.</p> <p>3.15 CCTV CCTV is in place in some schemes and estates, and is installed to promote the safety and wellbeing of customers. Hightown will use CCTV recordings to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deter and detect criminal activity and anti-social behaviour in and around our neighbourhoods • ensure safe environments for our customers, staff and contractors • protect our property and business interests • investigate alleged breaches of tenancy
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	<p>Staff with access to CCTV footage will be adequately trained to ensure compliant use of the system and sharing of footage/imagery in accordance with data protection legislation.</p> <p>3.16 Playgrounds Hightown will ensure that playgrounds within our responsibility are managed and maintained as safe places for our customers. We will inspect these in accordance with relevant legislation and on a frequency based upon the management requirements of each site.</p> <p>3.17 Third Party Management of Communal Areas and Partnership Working For blocks and estates which are managed by external managing agents, Hightown will work with these agents to try and ensure that they maintain similar standards to those set out in this policy.</p> <p>Where the internal and/or external communal areas are managed entirely by a third party, internal and external maintenance and many of the duties set out in this policy will fall to the managing agent. Any duties that Hightown is responsible for will vary dependent on the management agreement in place at each site. We will ensure where we do still undertake duties that these are carried out as outlined in the policy and will provide feedback to the managing agent where necessary.</p> <p>Hightown will undertake regular estate inspections in these neighbourhoods and arrange for any issues to be addressed by the managing agent.</p> <p>Where other property owners make up part of an estate Hightown will seek to work collaboratively with them to ensure a consistent approach to maintaining the communal areas and improving the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Hightown will seek opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations that have a presence in the neighbourhood, which may include tackling such issues as financial inclusion, fire prevention, mediation services and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>3.18 Design of new homes and neighbourhoods In designing new homes and in making changes to existing homes, Hightown will take into account crime prevention and safety measures, energy efficiency and the way public space can be used to enhance the environment and quality of life of the community. We will also have regard to the standardisation of components wherever possible to simplify servicing and repairing arrangements.</p> <p>3.19 Planned Maintenance Hightown is committed to maintaining communal areas and keeping them in a good condition. There will be timely redecoration, repair and, where appropriate, improvement to communal buildings, paths, washing areas and fencing etc. to maintain an attractive overall appearance. We will carry out cyclical programmes and may rephase works where this will help to reduce the need for and the cost of responsive repairs.</p> <p>Hightown will also provide advice and support to customers to help improve ventilation, eradicate condensation and mould. This will include advice on the most efficient way to heat homes to reduce fuel poverty.</p>
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3.20	<p>Estate Improvements</p> <p>Hightown will seek to establish customers' priorities for action in their area and in setting its annual budgets will consider what level of budget may be available to facilitate ideas put forward by customers. Customers can suggest improvements to communal areas that would benefit their community/neighbourhood. These can be submitted at any time and are considered annually by the Residents Voice and Scrutiny Panel for prioritisation of a budget set aside for that purpose.</p>
4.	<p>Legal/Regulatory Background</p> <p>The Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard April 2024</p> <p>The Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures</p>
5.	<p>Other considerations:</p> <p>Customers have been consulted on the review of this policy through the use of focus groups.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in the review of this policy</p>
6.	<p>Policy/document References:</p> <p>This policy should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social Behaviour Policy • Anti-social Behaviour Procedure • Resident Involvement Strategy • Asset Management Strategy • Equality and Diversity Policy • Sustainable and Cohesive Communities Strategy • Parking Control, Parking Spaces and Garages Procedure • Untaxed and/or Abandoned Vehicles Procedure • Hightown's Local Arrangements on Neighbourhoods and Communities. • CCTV Use of Equipment Policy • Cyclical Decorations and Major Works Procedure • Estate Management Procedure