



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust

The Trust

ESTATE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Trust's approach to our management and delivery of our internal and external communal areas and green estate. We are committed to delivering clean, green and safe estates and acknowledge the way we manage our estates directly affects the quality of life and environment enjoyed by our customers.
- 1.2 Where we refer to an estate, this may mean homes with shared communal areas or a block of flats. This policy will apply where the Trust is the freeholder. The Policy principally concerns the Trust's communal areas and green spaces, but it also addresses issues regarding tenants' homes, garden spaces and individual areas of land.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to outline how the Trust will:
- Deliver clean, safe and well maintained communal and green spaces;
 - Work in consultation with customers, to outline how we intend to deliver and manage communal areas and estates;
 - Meet the requirements set out by the Government's Regulator of Social Housing (RSH);
 - Ensure the way we manage estates represents good value for money.
- 2.2 As part of our commitment to deliver an economical, efficient and effective service, we will use external benchmarking services and best practice groups to monitor our costs and service outcomes.
- Where we're legally able, we will service charge all costs of our estate management to customers who benefit from this service.
 - We will ensure that value for money is considered in the management of estates.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 **The Regulator of Social Housing's *Neighbourhood and Community Standard* (April 2024) states that:**

- 3.1.1 Outcomes landlords must deliver about engaging with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes:

1.1 Safety of Shared Spaces

Registered providers must work co-operatively with tenants, other landlords and relevant organisations to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of shared spaces

- 3.2 **The Regulator of Social Housing's *Safety and Quality Standard* (April 2024) states that:**

- 3.2.1 2.2 Health and safety

Registered providers must identify and meet all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas.

- 3.3 We will manage our estates in accordance with the requirements set by the Regulator of Social Housing, applying recognised best practice and all relevant legislation. This includes meeting the statutory obligations of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), which form part of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and require all registered providers to collect, calculate, and publish performance data annually.

4. DEFINITIONS

The meaning of words used in this document:

- 4.1 **IHMT** – In House Maintenance Team (internal staff)

- 4.2 **Communal Space** includes:

- Entrance doorways
- Stairs
- Bin store areas
- Shared garden areas
- Drying areas
- Pathways
- Car parks
- Bike Stores
- Windows

5. OUR POLICY

5.1 Cleanliness and Maintenance

- 5.1.1
- For aesthetic, as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance will be adequately addressed. Working with customers, local authorities and managing agents, we will keep estates clean and safe.
 - We will conduct regular inspections of our communal and green spaces using well trained staff to identify health and safety risks and ensure service standards are maintained.
 - Where there is a local need, officers will arrange and attend estate inspections with customers in the neighbourhoods. Where problems have been identified, action plans will be drawn up to resolve these. This could include properties in need of repair or improvement such as internal decoration.
 - Properties with internal communal spaces will be cleaned on a monthly basis. This will include cleaning floors, window ledges, removing cobwebs and dusting.
 - Properties with communal windows will be cleaned quarterly. Window cleaning does not include individual flats.
 - Where additional cleaning is required because of resident behaviour—such as muddy floors or internal dust caused by residents’ own improvements—the cost of this work will be recharged to the resident responsible, where the individual can be identified.
 - Litter, graffiti, and vehicles damaging grassed areas will be effectively managed.

- We will tackle environmental crime which includes fly tipping; littering; dog fouling; and abandoned vehicles. We will work in partnership with our neighbourhood team and with local enforcement agencies in doing this and the maintenance of such issues will be addressed in a reasonable time frame.

5.2 Sustainability

5.2.1 The methods used in maintaining green spaces and the facilities within them will be environmentally sound, relying on current knowledge and best practice. The Trust's contractors will be aware of the range of techniques available to them and demonstrate that informed choices have been made and are regularly reviewed.

- Wherever possible we will replace trees that have to be removed by replanting – although this may not be at the same location.
- We will minimise and justify pesticide use and wherever possible recycle waste plant material.
- We will take appropriate energy conservation, pollution reduction, waste recycling, and resource conservation measures.

5.3 Invasive Species

5.3.1 The Trust is aware of problems associated with the spread of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed. When invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed (or similar species) are identified on land for which the Trust is responsible (this includes customers gardens), we will accept responsibility for eradication of the local occurrence and work with licenced contractors to manage the area. Chemical treatment alone typically takes a minimum of two to three growing seasons to achieve significant reduction, with complete eradication potentially extending to five years or more depending on site conditions, the maturity of the infestation, spread and environmental constraints such as proximity to watercourses.

5.4 Community involvement

5.4.1 Our communal and green space management will offer opportunities for the involvement of as many customers and wider members of the community as possible. We will seek customers' views on the way we manage communal and green spaces, and use any feedback from complaints or TSM responses to identify improvements to our services.

5.4.2 We will promote membership of our Grounds Maintenance Resident Group (GMRG) on a regular basis across a variety of streams, including to encourage resident involvement on the open spaces in which they live or visit.

5.4.3 We will invite customers to the estate clean up days and inspection visits held throughout the year. These will be publicised to our residents where the activity is taking place.

5.4.4 The Trust have in place neighbourhood plans which will be reviewed and updated in conjunction with customer groups.

5.5 **Tenants' garden space**

5.5.1 The Trust will encourage and support our customers to utilise and care for their garden spaces.

5.5.2 This work will include:

- Ensuring a consistent and effective approach to enforcing garden maintenance standards.
- Proactively identifying properties where gardens are in a poor condition, and
- Promptly reporting any concerns to the Neighbourhood Team for further action and support.

5.6 **Boundary Vegetation**

5.6.1 The Trust will maintain hedged boundaries wherever possible. It is recognised that hedged boundaries add to the green character of Cheshire and surrounding counties. Where the hedge is rooted within a tenant's garden, it is the tenant's responsibility to maintain the hedge in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

5.7 **Trees**

5.7.1 We will maintain trees sited on public realm and communal land, in accordance with the relevant legislation and best practice. Trees that are situated within a tenant's garden are the responsibility of the tenant.

5.7.2 The Trust will conduct a regular tree survey and maintain a database of the tree stock for which we are responsible. We will ensure that all trees are maintained in accordance with the recommendations of the tree survey.

5.7.3 The felling of trees will only be undertaken where a tree is clearly diseased or unstable, or where it is causing structural damage to property. Where a tree is felled, consideration will be given to potential replacement of that tree with another, whether in the same area or as a program of planting.

5.7.4 Work will not normally be undertaken to trees where they are claimed to be blocking light to a property, dropping leaves or affecting television or telephone reception.

6. **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

6.1 An EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) has been approved by the Executive Management Team. This assessment is available upon request.

6.2 This policy will be followed in conjunction with the Trust's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy.

6.3 We will ensure that all persons will be able to enjoy the use of our communal areas and green spaces and will make reasonable adjustments to our approach to ensure that this happens.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Executive Team

- 7.1.1 The Executive Team have overall responsibility for approving and ensuring this policy is adhered to.

7.2 Head of Repairs

- 7.2.1 The Head of Repairs has responsibility for ensuring the aim and scope of this policy is being adhered to.

7.3 Contract Maintenance Manager and IHMT Maintenance Manager

- 7.3.1 The Contract Maintenance Manager and IHMT Maintenance Manager have joint responsibility for delivering this policy across the Trust portfolio.

7.4 Involved Customer Grounds Maintenance Group

- 7.4.1 This group have responsibility for ensuring that the Contract Maintenance Manager and IHMT Maintenance Manager are delivering operational day to day activities in line with this policy.

7.5 All staff & customers

- 7.5.1 All staff and customers have the responsibility for reporting any concerns or health and safety failures within the Trust's communal spaces and green estate.

8. MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 8.1 The Trust will ensure consistency in contractor performance through regular meetings to ensure contract standards are maintained.
- 8.2 We will record customer satisfaction and complaints with Estate Management performance and report this detail to the Executive Leadership Team and Performance Management Group through KPI production.
- 8.3 We will report performance regularly to tenant groups, including the Challenge Group and Grounds Maintenance Resident Group.
- 8.4 The Head of Repairs, Contract Maintenance Manager and IHMT Maintenance Manager will deliver an annual performance report to Board.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Trust's Challenge Group, AMT (All Managers Team) and SMT (Senior Management Team) have been consulted about this policy.

- 9.1.1 The Challenge Group have aided in the creation of this policy and minutes of consultation can be found within the Challenge Group records.

10. REVIEW

- 10.1 The Estate Management policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless there is a change in legislation or a failure in service which requires an earlier review.

11. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Tenancy agreements
- Good Neighbourhoods policy
- Rent setting and service charge policy
- Rechargeable repairs policy

POLICY INFORMATION

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