



# Estate Services Policy

## 1. Aim of policy

To apply best practice to manage all our estates, ensuring we provide a quality safe environment for customers and visitors which goes beyond meeting all legal and statutory obligations around standards of work, health and safety and financial regulations.

## 2. Scope of policy

This policy covers all trees, communal spaces, greenspaces, hard standings, boundary fences, ditches and culverts, our response to adverse weather, playgrounds, resident responsibilities, sites with managing agents and communal cleaning. It should be familiar to all employees, particularly frontline staff and all within Operational and Commercial directorates.

We manage our estates and neighbourhoods with programmes designed on a site by site basis. This approach means we take into account the different use of each site, materials, types of green space, specific health and safety issues, involvement of management companies and other partnerships or organisations such as local authorities.

## 3. Policy statement

It's important that we ensure our estates are safe and clean for all those that use them, including residents, neighbours and employees. We want to give residents a sense of ownership and pride in the area they live in. This is part of our social purpose but we're also aware that when homes are in well looked after neighbourhoods, it tends to promote better care of the whole area and we see lower incidences of anti social behaviour. This has to be balanced with clear expectations on all sides around what we're able to deliver and how the areas should be treated by those who use them.

This policy is of relevance to all front-line staff as any failures could directly impact customer satisfaction levels and workload. It's important that our teams, while out in our neighbourhoods, understand the level of service that should be delivered so they can feed back correctly any issues they witness or that are reported to them. The policy is also important in making sure stakeholder expectations are realistic.



#### **4. Policy**

To manage our estates to a high standard in line with our corporate objectives, we will:

- make sure all employees are aware of this policy and what is required of them
- set aside sufficient resources (people and finance) to ensure we meet our commitments
- consult with stakeholders on the standards of the estates services
- run a grounds maintenance programme that is designed on a site by site basis, providing a best practice solution for each site
- design a specific programme of works for communal cleaning
- ensure value for money is achieved through effective contract management and additional periodic estate inspections by relevant frontline staff. This includes sites that are managed by external managing agencies.
- repair fences between our land and other landowners (boundary fencing between dwellings we own is a resident's responsibility).
- keep ditches and culverts clear and work and consult with the Environment Agency and other stakeholders when required.
- respond to adverse weather when required e.g. gritting offices and schemes, clearing snow and provision of sand bags
- maintain and repair playgrounds to a high standard
- expect residents to maintain their own gardens. This includes grass cutting and keeping trees and hedges in a safe and suitable condition according to their tenancy.
- manage our trees in accordance with The Health and Safety and Work act (1974) and the Occupiers Liability Act (1957 & 1984). Trees within residents' gardens are generally their responsibility unless the tree has a Tree Protection Order covering it or it's in a conservation area. We also acknowledge that when a resident becomes unable or unwilling to manage a tree, we must use a risk based approach in dealing with it.
- deal with fly tipping and graffiti promptly if it's unsafe or offensive
- to manage services in communal areas in accordance our asset compliance policy
- to keep un-adopted roads and paving in good repair.

#### **5. Statutory requirements**

We will comply with all relevant information and regulatory guidance in relation to the estate environment including:

- Construction, Design and Management regulations (CDM)2015
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991
- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- The Occupiers Liability Act (1957 & 1984)



- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998

We must comply with various legal duties to remove hazards and reduce the risk of harm to our residents, visitors and staff. This applies to areas in and around properties and land in our management or ownership.

## 6. Related policies

This policy supports or is supported by the:

- Asset Management Strategy
- Asset Compliance Policy
- Planned & Cyclical Policy
- Repairs & Maintenance Policy
- Housing Management Policy

And all procedures associated with the above.

## 7. Monitor and review process

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

We monitor our performance in complying with our legal obligations and report regularly through the VIVID Executive Team.

At intervals we complete internal audits and also arrange for an independent audit of our procedures and records to ensure they reflect good practice are being followed.

The responsibility framework:

Main action	Subaction	Head of Asset Mgt.	Head of Property Services	Asset Mgt Team	Property Services Team	N'hood Team	H&S Team	Head of N'hoods
Policy	Ensure compliance with policy	A	I	R	I		I	C
	Monitor performance & budget	A	R	C	C		I	I
Service Level Agreement	Lead on SLA for Client	AR	C	I	C	C		C
	Lead on SLA for Contractor	C	AR	C	I	I		I
	Delivery of contracts/services (in scope)	I	A	I	R	I		I



Delivery of contracts/services (out of scope)	A	I	R	I	C		C
Audits of work (external & internal)	I	A	I	R	I		I
Estate Inspections	C	A		R	R	C	A
Report any site H&S concerns	I	I	I	R	R	A	I
New sites	C	I	AR	I	I		I

*R – Responsible - achieve the task*  
*A - Accountable - final approving authority*  
*C - Consulted - opinions are sought*  
*I - Informed - kept up-to-date on progress*

**8. References/appendices**

Author	Owner	Date approved	Review date
Kevin Hartshorn	Carol Williams	21 March 2017 - Exec	March 2020