

# Neighbourhood and Estate Management Policy

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Version number	3
Date agreed	For approval – 26/10/23
Agreed by	Operations Committee
Review Date	October 2026
Equality Impact Screening Complete Date	
Equality Impact Assessment Required/Date	
Data Protection Compliant	
Health and Safety Compliant	

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## **1. What this policy is about and why we need it.**

- 1.1 This policy relates to all Acis Group Limited (AGL) properties and neighbourhoods and any other parcels of land in the ownership of AGL. It does not apply to the company's student or learning (Riverside and Clip) portfolios. This policy sets out the framework within which AGL operates to manage neighbourhoods and the communal areas associated with the homes that we own. This policy applies to all tenures including shared ownership, leaseholders and homeowners. Neighbourhoods are defined as a number of homes in a geographic area.
- 1.2 We need this policy to ensure we deliver well-managed and safe neighbourhoods which provide aspirational places to live. This is in line with our strategic objective of providing the best possible service to people in our communities. It is also required to ensure we meet legislation and our regulatory requirements as set out in the Neighbourhood and Community standard. AGL identifies how it will manage anti-social behaviour and individual tenancies in specific complementary policies.
- 1.3 We are committed to local area co-operation in our neighbourhoods and working with partners to achieve the best results for our customers as an essential element to longer term sustainability. Relationships with Local Authorities, Police, Fire, Social Care Services, schools, health and other locally based organisations are important to achieve wider holistic results. We also encourage our customers to directly engage with relevant agencies.
- 1.4 We will use customer insight and feedback gained from surveys, inspections, local groups, and from complaints and compliments to inform improvements, and the procurement of neighbourhood and estate management services such as grounds maintenance and cleaning.
- 1.5 Landlord and customer responsibilities are detailed in individual tenancy or leaseholder agreements and in the Tenancy Management policy. Customer improvements or alterations are covered in the Repairs and Maintenance Policy, and charges for the costs of services to communal areas are referenced in the Service Charge Policy.
- 1.6 The main aim of this policy is to ensure we provide safe and well maintained places for our customers to live. Our approach to achieving this is underpinned by :-
  - Complying with regulatory and legislative requirements
  - Ensuring a pro-active approach to neighbourhood and estate management
  - Encouraging and responding to customer feedback and working with customers and partners to achieve the best outcomes for neighbourhoods and estates

- Working with customers to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities
- Working to support, maintain, and improve the sustainability of communities living in our neighbourhoods and estates
- Using resources effectively to secure value for money

## **2. Who does this policy apply to?**

2.1 This policy applies to all AGL people, Board Members, contractors working on our behalf and our customers

## **3. Our policy is...**

3.1 The scope of this policy includes our approach to:

- Neighbourhood Audits and inspections
- Neighbourhood planning
- Management of communal areas
- Grounds maintenance
- Vehicles in neighbourhoods including caravans and trailers
- Trees
- Neighbourhood improvements
- Pest control
- Needles and syringes
- Untidy gardens
- Garages
- Fly tipping, litter and household refuse
- Graffiti
- Management companies
- Programmed Health and Safety inspections
- Environmental impact and sustainability

### **3.2 Neighbourhood Audits and Inspections**

Neighbourhood Audits are a holistic, in depth review of defined areas, looking at and reviewing everything that affects the customer experience. They give us the opportunity to review and inspect areas we might not normally view in detail. They provide us with a longer term view on the strategic vision for the neighbourhood going forward.

We carry out Neighbourhood Audits annually as a minimum but more frequently where our risk assessments show that is required. This risk assessment is based on customer satisfaction, tenancy turnover, levels of ASB, fly tipping and vandalism. Where these issues are problematic the frequency of audits will be greater. The Neighbourhood Audit procedure explains this process in detail.

The strategic aims of the Neighbourhood Audits are:-

- Sustained Tenancies
- Increased Customer Satisfaction
- Better places to live and work
- Reduced costs
- Improved reputation

We will also carry out neighbourhood inspections at regular frequencies in between audits in order to:

- Ensure we identify, manage, and resolve any health and safety issues in communal areas - all required health and safety inspections and checks will be carried out on a programmed basis, for example: fire risk assessments, electrical safety inspections, asbestos inspections, legionella testing, lift servicing and gas safety checks
- Identify of any issues which might impact on people with a disability and require action in response
- Identify any communal repairs
- Identify areas for improvement in terms of environment or ongoing management
- Check quality of any contracted services such as grounds maintenance and cleaning, and ensure that standards are being met
- Check that tenancy conditions are being adhered to in respect of gardens, vehicles, damage to property, pets, and unapproved alterations
- Respond to any customer feedback on local issues and check progress in resolving them

We will proactively engage with customers whilst undertaking all Neighbourhood Audits and inspections to understand the issues they are experiencing and what they would like us to prioritise and improve. This will include knocking on doors and seeking customer views closest to the issues on site. Where specific issues are known or where customers have requested we will invite customers and any other local stakeholders to accompany us prior to the audit/ inspection.

Results from neighbourhood audits will be publicised through social media in ways which explain actions and outcomes clearly to customers. Our aim is to make known our actions in a quick and timely way.

Where we see any issue or repair whilst in our neighbourhoods we will report it to the relevant team or agency. We encourage customers to do so too.

### **3.3 Neighbourhood Planning**

We will implement a joined up approach to the management, improvement, and provision of services in neighbourhoods as identified on a risk basis through metrics including (but not limited to) tenancy turnover, arrears, recharges, crime and fear of crime, ASB, satisfaction levels and customer feedback.

The planning process will be cohesive and holistic and involve customers and agencies such as local authorities, emergency services, and schools. The intention will be to support a sustainability in our neighbourhoods and estates.

We recognise the importance of responding to local needs and the approach to neighbourhood planning will not be a one size fits all solution but consist of different actions and solutions for each area where it is required.

Actions which will be considered through this approach include:-

- Local Lettings policies
- Targeted intensive management of tenancies
- Crime reduction measures e.g. CCTV, cycle barriers, defensible space, smart water etc
- Increased service levels for e.g. removal of graffiti, landscaping/gardening, customer support services
- Blitz campaigns on particular issues e.g. rent payment, ASB
- Digital inclusion work and use of social media
- Communication strategies with customers and partners
- Improved customer engagement and joint working
- Neighbourhood Improvements

### **3.4 Management of Communal Areas**

Communal areas include:-

- Shared entrance doorways and windows
- Hallways, stairs, and landings
- Lifts
- Communal amenities, green areas owned by AGL
- Bin stores and drying areas
- Unadopted roadways, pathways and parking areas
- Unadopted lighting columns and bollards

We will work to ensure communal areas are regularly inspected, maintained, kept clean, safe and secure, promptly repaired, kept free of graffiti, litter and unwanted items and are adequately serviced and lit.

Working in partnership with other landowners in a neighbourhood, we will seek to ensure standards are maintained across the wider area and use partnership working to increase service provision and efficiency wherever possible.

Through robust monitoring systems we will ensure effective quality control and value for money of all contractual services that maintain our communal and external areas. All repairs to and upkeep of communal areas will be completed in accordance with identified timescales set out in our Repairs and Maintenance Policy. The level, frequency and quality of services for communal areas will be outlined in any contractual arrangements. Where communal services are

funded by customers' service charges, this will be highlighted to customers if they request any services which are over and above agreed contractual specifications as this may impact on future service charge costs. The Service Charge Policy should be referenced for further information on this.

We will engage with and support customers to ensure that communal areas and facilities are not misused. We will take appropriate action for any misuse/damage to AGL land or property in our neighbourhoods and estates, where perpetrators can be identified. This may be in conjunction with other agencies.

### **3.5 Storage of Items in Communal Areas**

The storage of goods in communal areas is prohibited. Goods left in communal areas can be a source of ignition or combustible material, as well as causing slip and trip hazards and potentially blocking escape routes.

Goods left in communal areas are risk assessed and those which pose a high risk will be removed immediately without notice. We may recharge customers for the removal of goods and take appropriate action against their tenancy.

The Mobility Scooter Policy covers the storage of mobility scooters.

### **3.6 Grounds maintenance**

We will maintain all communal areas which belong to AGL. Grounds maintenance will be carried out in accordance with agreed contractual arrangements and to specified standards. We will quality inspect these areas regularly, including joint visits with our approved contractor. We will continue to seek customer feedback, which is reported back at our monthly contractor meetings.

### **3.7 Tree maintenance**

We employ a suitably qualified contractor to survey trees we own on communal areas to identify any required works. Where necessary, work will be prioritised on the outcome of the survey.

We are not responsible for trees in individual customer occupied gardens, the maintenance of which is the customer's responsibility.

We may inspect, undertake works, or remove trees whether on communal areas or (by exception) in customer occupied gardens where they have the potential to cause damage to people or property, are out of keeping with the environment in which they are sited, or otherwise cause a neighbourhood nuisance. Whether these are directly reported or identified by our people, we will seek to work with customers and have full regard to individual circumstances.

Where any works to trees within customer occupied gardens are required as a

consequence of the customer's wilful action or neglect of their maintenance responsibility, then the customer may be re-charged.

We will check for Tree Preservation Orders and seek relevant permission before undertaking any works.

Removal of trees will only be considered in the circumstances detailed above and which cannot be reasonably otherwise remedied, or if the tree is diseased or damaged beyond recovery.

### **3.8 Vehicles in Neighbourhoods**

By effectively managing our neighbourhoods, AGL aims to reduce irresponsible parking and resulting access difficulties for emergency vehicles. We will work in partnership with customers, local groups, and statutory agencies to do this.

Additionally, we aim to deal effectively with nuisance or health and safety risks caused by abandoned and un-roadworthy vehicles illegally parked in our neighbourhoods. We will work with the appropriate authorities including police, local authorities and the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to arrange appropriate removal and disposal. All associated costs will be recharged to the owner of vehicle where possible.

### **3.9 Caravans and trailers**

Written consent is required before a caravan, trailer, motorhome or oversized vehicle can be parked on the driveway, parking area adjacent to a home, or any other communal area. In considering whether permission will be granted, regard will be had to local circumstances and take the tenancy agreement or lease into consideration. Permission will be reviewed as required.

We do not allow anyone to reside in a caravan parked in an AGL neighbourhood.

### **3.10 Neighbourhood Improvements**

We will consider neighbourhood or environmental improvements if they support our aim of making communities safe, well maintained, and places where people want to live. We will consult with customers when deciding the scope of works and prioritisation is likely to be given to works that support outcomes such as reducing turnover, increasing demand, or reducing complaints. Neighbourhood improvement works will be subject to available budgets. We also look to joint fund with partners where possible.

### **3.11 Pest control**

We will address pest control in communal areas only (occupied individual properties are a customer responsibility). Where an infestation is due to a structural defect, whether in communal areas or individual properties, we will



undertake repair on the recommendation of a specialist. Where the actions or behaviours of customer(s) is identified as the cause of infestations, we will request that they take the appropriate action. If they fail to act and AGL continues to incur charges for pest control, we may recharge these costs.

### **3.12 Needles and syringes**

We recognise the risks posed by discarded needles and syringes. We will arrange for the removal of these if found on AGL land or property within one working day wherever possible.

### **3.13 Untidy gardens**

We routinely inspect and assess individual property gardens on a regular basis. Where we identify a garden is untidy, we will ask a customer to bring the garden back in line with the terms of their tenancy agreement or lease agreement.

If a customer does not tidy their garden after initial requests from AGL, we will take action to enforce the conditions of the tenancy or lease agreement.

Where possible and appropriate, we will work with or signpost to agencies who may be able to help with providing gardening assistance.

### **3.14 Garages**

The policy is concerned with AGL garage sites and garage plots (not garages attached to individual homes).

We will let garages on licences to AGL tenants, leaseholders, and those with no such interest. Rent is charged weekly in advance. An annual fee is charged for garage plots.

We will routinely inspect garage sites and the communal areas around them. We reserve the right to immediately remove any goods stored in garages which pose a health and safety risk without notice. We may recharge customers for the removal of goods and take appropriate action against their tenancy.

Where garages are not being used for their intended purpose, left insecure or if they are wilfully damaged in any way AGL will take steps to end the licence and regain possession. Recharges may be made.

We require the removal of any structure at the end of a garage plot lease.

### **3.15 Fly tipping, litter and household refuse**

Litter and fly tipping in our neighbourhoods has a detrimental impact. We aim to keep our external communal areas free of litter, and litter picking has been incorporated into our grounds maintenance contract.

Where fly tipping/dumping is identified by AGL, we will usually remove it within seven days unless there are health and safety implications in which case it would be removed in 24 hours. Disposal of items will take place in as environmentally friendly a way as is practicable.

We will try to identify the source of any fly tipping, with partners if appropriate. Where we have sufficient evidence, we will seek to take action against perpetrators. If the perpetrator is an AGL customer or visitor of an AGL customer, then action may be taken for a breach of tenancy.

We will remove waste left in communal areas and the cost of this may be recharged where those responsible can be identified.

We will put in place processes which aim to reduce the incidence of fly tipping including measures such as signage, CCTV, community education and engagement, and provision of alternative waste disposal.

We will work with local authorities to ensure appropriate refuse facilities are provided. It is not AGL's responsibility to provide individual waste bins.

### **3.16 Graffiti**

We will remove graffiti in our communal areas as we recognise the detrimental impact this has. Offensive and/or racist graffiti will be removed within one working day; other graffiti will be removed within a maximum of 28 days in line with the Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Graffiti is criminal damage and where possible we will work with partners to identify perpetrators of graffiti and take further action. If the perpetrator is an AGL customer or visitor of a customer, then action may be taken for a breach of their tenancy.

### **3.17 Anti-Social Behaviour and Good Neighbour Management**

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the actions of neighbours have a major impact on the cohesion of communities and neighbourhoods. Our anti-social behaviour policy covers clearly how we deal with incidents of ASB.

There are however times when behaviour which is normal to one customer can exceed the tolerances, expectations and perceptions of neighbouring customers. In these cases we would expect customers to talk to each other in the first instance to resolve their issues. However, we will also offer assistance to resolve issues amicably or through reasonable interventions in an attempt to avoid these issues escalating further. These types of cases are covered in our Good Neighbour Management Procedure.

### **3.18 Management companies**

In some neighbourhoods, management companies are responsible for ensuring that communal areas are safe and well maintained. We will work with

management companies to ensure they are working to prescribed standards. Payment of invoices may be withheld if contracted services are not provided.

The full cost of management company services will be charged back to customers through service charges.

### **3.19 Environmental Impact and Sustainability**

This policy will have regard to environmental impact and sustainability by:-

- Recognising the recreational value of green spaces in supporting healthy lifestyles and improving neighbourhoods
- Ensuring that AGL (and our contractors) give due regard and are sympathetic to natural wildlife habitats whilst carrying out work
- Only considering the removal of trees where they are dangerous and/or causing damage to property which cannot be reasonably otherwise remedied, or if the tree is diseased or damaged beyond any reasonable recovery
- Actively supporting and encouraging the provision and use of appropriate recycling facilities for customers within our neighbourhoods
- Disposing/or requiring disposal by any third party contractors of any fly tipped items in an environmentally friendly manner and actively working to reduce incidents
- Wherever practicable, aiming to support a minimisation of AGL's carbon footprint by using recyclable products and low emission tools and processes in the management of neighbourhoods
- Encouraging and supporting projects such as local food growing groups and community gardens

## **4. How we will monitor this policy**

4.1 We will monitor this policy by the following metrics:-

- Customer Satisfaction results
- Tenancy turnover Figures (sustainability)
- Outcomes of Neighbourhood Inspections
- Void levels
- Recharge statistics

## **5. Procedures and other documents that link into this policy**

5.1 Procedures that link into this policy are:

- Non occupation and Illegal occupation Procedure
- Lettings processes guide
- Tenancy Fraud Procedure
- CCTV and E surveillance procedure
- Good Neighbour Management Procedure

5.2 Other documents that link into this policy are:

- Customer Experience Strategy

## **6. Links to other policies, legislation and/or regulations**

6.1 Policies, legislation and/or regulation that links to this Policy are listed below:-

### Policies

- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Customer Feedback Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Legionella Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Resident Involvement Strategy
- Customer Experience Strategy
- Service Charge Policy

### Legislation

- Law of Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
- Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
- Removal and Disposal of Vehicle Regulations 1986
- Removal and Disposal of Vehicles (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2002
- End of Life Vehicles (Producer Responsibility) Regulations 2005
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Housing Act 2004
- Town and County Planning Act 1990
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Regulation

Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England - Neighbourhood and Community Standard

**7. When this policy will be reviewed**

7.1 This policy will be reviewed for October 2026

**8. Jargon buster**

Reference	Definition
N/A	This is a jargon free policy

**9. Appendices (*if any*)**

None