

EASTENDHOMES

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The concept and practice of 'neighbourhood management' was gradually formally developed during the 1990s and highlighted through the Social Exclusion Unit, set up by the Government in 2000. At this time it was envisaged that neighbourhood management could provide a key vehicle as a focus for the renewal of deprived neighbourhoods. The role of neighbourhood management was defined as '...to help deprived communities and local services improve local outcomes, by improving and joining up local services, and making them more responsive to local needs.'

1.2 A London School of Economics (LSE) paper on neighbourhood management¹ identified the following core services of neighbourhood management as:

- security,
- environmental maintenance,
- refuse collection and rubbish removal,
- community liaison,
- co-ordination of services coming into a neighbourhood,
- links with local businesses and other local services,
- the development of local initiatives and support for local voluntary groups.

A neighbourhood is also defined as a delineated area within physical boundaries.

1.3 EastendHomes have developed the 'neighbourhood' as the basis for the provision of services through delivery of housing management functions from a local office and by working with partner organisations at a neighbourhood level. For example, EEH have partnered with the Bromley by Bow Centre a social enterprise group who provide monthly welfare and financial advice sessions from each of the Local Housing Offices. Other services such as for ASB issues and Estate services, Rents and Leasehold Management are either directly provided from the Local Office or the department provides regular surgeries at the Housing Offices. This approach ensures accessible and responsive service provision for EEH residents.

¹ Power A, Neighbourhood Management and the future of Urban Areas, January 2004

- 1.4 Estate Management Boards (EMB) have been established for each of the neighbourhood areas. These Boards are elected from eligible residents (tenants, leaseholders and freeholders as appropriate) in the respective Housing area. Meetings of the EMB are attended by local housing management staff and other service managers.
- 1.5 There is also attendance at the meetings from other neighbourhood services representatives such as the Metropolitan Police, community safety officers, local schools and shopkeepers. These groups provide regular updates or issue based reports to the EMB. The Boards receive disaggregated performance information (data relating only to their estates). This ensures that the performance of EastendHomes' local estate centres, and localised performance by contractors, is monitored and reviewed by local residents, and that particular strengths and weaknesses are identified.
- 1.6 EastendHomes are members of local and borough based forums, for example:
 - Tower Hamlets Housing Management and Development Forums;
 - Tower Hamlets Partnership;
 - Community Involvement Network.

and collaborate with Tower Hamlets Council and other local RPs by sharing good practice and participating in joint projects.

2. Objectives

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Framework and Accreditation

- 2.1.1 The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England was introduced by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) in 2010 and was subsequently issued in April 2012 by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Further revisions were made to the standard, principally to the Governance and Viability Standard and the Rent Standard, which came into effect in April 2015.
- 2.1.2 The applicable Regulatory Standard within this Framework for Neighbourhood and Community required the following outcomes from registered providers for Neighbourhood Management:

- Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe.
- Registered Providers shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.
- Registered Providers will consult with their tenants, in developing a published policy for maintaining and improving the neighbourhood associated with their homes...The policy shall include any communal areas associated with the registered providers homes.'

2.1.3 EastendHomes Local Offer published in 2011 reflected the national standard for Neighbourhood and Community with a focus on anti-social behaviour and the cleanliness of EastendHomes estates. The Corporate Plan 2014 – 19 also identifies key themes of ‘...support...to prevent anti-social behaviour occurring...working with appropriate partners’ and to ‘Ensure our cleaning and horticultural maintenance create a pleasant environment in which to live’.

2.1.4 EastendHomes introduced independent validation of its neighbourhood (estate) management when it achieved Cleaner, Safer, Greener intermediate performer accreditation administered by the Keep Britain Tidy group in September 2014. By maintaining clean, safe, green and well-maintained communal environments, EastendHomes makes a positive contribution to the wellbeing of its communities.

3. Scope

3.1 The following policies and procedures are directly relevant to estate services and therefore EastendHomes approach to the management of communal areas and working in partnership at a neighbourhood level to provide an effective service:

Locality Policy

Green Policy

Fire Safety Strategy

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

For Sale and To Let Signs and Advertising Hoardings Policy

Dumped Rubbish Procedure

Miscellaneous Lets Policy

Management of Communal Areas

Abandoned Vehicle Procedure

Gritting Policy
Open Spaces
Estate Inspections

4. Policy Statement

The following statements highlight the policy position for the respective management functions and areas:

4.1 Management of Communal Areas and Grounds Maintenance

4.1.1 EastendHomes is committed to providing clean, well maintained communal areas and estates. To support this key objective, EastendHomes directly employs a team to carry out all estate cleaning and bulk refuse collection with horticultural maintenance services provided by a combination of directly employed staff and external contractors..

4.1.2 Estate Service Coordinators take part in regular estate inspections and provide gradings of the standard of cleanliness (A-D). Performance indicators and targets are provided across a range of estate cleaning and horticultural activities and reported to the EastendHomes Board, Estate Management Boards, Homeownership Forum and Service Review Committee with the gradings provided by activity and block.

4.1.3 Residents are encouraged to attend and participate in the estate inspections. Training in the respective standards is provided including a pictorial guide to the gradings. Once trained, residents receive a voucher incentive for every inspection they attend. Cleaning inspections are scheduled every eight weeks.

4.1.4 All cleaning tasks are assigned a frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. Where follow-up action is identified in an estate inspection, it will be allocated a priority relevant to the task frequency. Progress on follow up action is reported back to the resident inspector. As part of their daily duties, estate services staff record evidence of anti-social behaviour or enviro-crime encountered and this feeds into neighbourhood plans and the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for the organisation.

4.1.5 Fire prevention is a key aspect of the Fire Safety Strategy and forms an integral part of the day to day work of the Estate Services caretaking staff.

4.1.6 Estate inspections provide a structured review of health and safety issues across all communal block and external estate areas. The scope of the Estate inspections includes key fire protection measures including security and resident use of block communal areas. EastendHomes provides clear guidelines to residents regarding the use of communal balconies, stairs and

walkways which are regularly monitored through Estate inspections and cleaning.

- 4.1.7 EastendHomes aims to, as far as reasonably possible, maintain passable surfaces during periods of inclement cold weather, and will take actions to minimise risks to residents and staff members caused by ice, snow or frost.

5. Trees and Planting Schemes

5.1 EastendHomes values the contribution of trees and plants to both the environmental and visual quality of the neighbourhood. EastendHomes works with a number of national and local partners to promote tree planting and green spaces within its communities including the Council's biodiversity officer; "Trees for Cities", a national tree champion; Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, which is a local nature reserve and with Eco-Therapy, a horticultural therapy project provided through Providence Row Housing Association.

5.2 EastendHomes will develop planting schemes and projects which are appropriate to the local estate area. These will include the following:

- Preserving trees where practicable through a sustainable management model ensuring loss to diseases, damage and neglect is minimised.
- Incorporating new tree planting into landscaping schemes.
- Developing a register of trees and planting schemes with appropriate maintenance regimes.
- Regular inspection of trees.
- Incorporating planting schemes which support biodiversity and visual interest.
- Planting schemes will be designed to reduce the need for weed control.
- Weed-spraying will be used as part of a range of weed control techniques.
- Provide therapeutic opportunities (i.e 'Eco-Therapy') for residents in the maintenance of open spaces.

5.3 The benefits of communities working together to improve estates is recognised and supported by EastendHomes. EastendHomes will seek to actively promote 'greening' of estates through measures such as community tree planting and the promotion of gardening clubs and through good practice awards such as London in Bloom.

5.4 Biodiversity

The Tower Hamlets Biodiversity Partnership (known also as Tower Habitats) has mapped the various habitat types which exist across the borough. From this classification, EastendHomes estates primarily fall into the category of residential areas. Some of the stock however, abuts local park areas, including Mile End, Tower Hamlets Cemetery, and Mudchute Park and Farm. EastendHomes estates are dispersed throughout the Borough and may provide a corridor for nature to move through the borough. EastendHomes will seek to encourage and support wildlife to inhabit our open spaces.

5.4.1 This will be achieved by:

- Working with Tower Habitats and other specialist groups to promote biodiversity awareness and opportunities.
- Creating wildlife friendly environments within our open spaces such as wildflower meadows, trees and bushes as natural boundaries where appropriate.
- Planting schemes designed to attract specific pollinating insects such as butterflies and bees.
- Reviewing open spaces to increase biodiversity potential.

6. **Healthy Communities**

6.1 EastendHomes support the work of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) Healthy Communities Team and will develop initiatives relevant to local communities and issues. These will include where appropriate:

- Encouraging use of appropriate open spaces to support community cohesion, good mental health and well being.
- Encouraging outdoor play by children to support reduction of obesity and Vitamin D deficiency.
- Introducing and supporting “grow your own” projects on EastendHomes estates.
- Participating in Tower Hamlets Food Growing Network.
- Support LBTH Making Connections policy and Cycling Connections plan by providing cycle storage on EEH estates and training in partnership with the LBTH Active Travel Officer.

7. **Anti-Social Behaviour and Design**

7.1 EastendHomes will work with the police and local communities to identify appropriate design responses to neighbourhood crime issues for example using ‘Secure by Design’ principles in component specification and using

robust products when maintaining communal areas ie anti graffiti coatings and introducing lighting upgrades.

8. Parking

8.1 EastendHomes will seek to ensure that garages and parking spaces are allocated in a fair and timely manner so as to make best use of its assets and provide additional facilities for residents. EastendHomes operates a Priority Band system for letting of garages and parking spaces. Residents aged over 65 years and those with a disability have the highest priority. Parking spaces must be used by a vehicle that is taxed, insured and in a roadworthy condition. In the event that a permit is revoked EastendHomes will take enforcement action should the parking bay continue to be used. Parking for motorcycles and bicycles will be provided where this is possible.

8.2 However if a motorcycle or bicycle is parked in a non designated area a parking ticket will be issued or a Notice to remove within a specific timescale.

8.3 EastendHomes will promptly deal with abandoned vehicles on communal land.

9. Household Refuse and Recycling

9.1 EastendHomes will provide and maintain appropriate facilities for refuse disposal and actively promote recycling and will work with the local Council and recycling organisations to ensure that easily accessible recycling facilities are available. New residents will be advised at the start of their tenancy about the refuse collection (including for larger items) and recycling arrangements for their home.

9.2 Dog owners are expected to act responsibly by taking dog waste home or placing it in dog waste bins if provided. We will ensure that dog waste bins that we own are emptied regularly.

10. Play Areas

10.1 EastendHomes will promote play on its estates by:

- Creation and maintenance of accessible public space including positive signage to promote use.
- Regular and maintenance and inspection of all play spaces.

11. Policy Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if best practice, regulation or statute requires it.